Exegetical Lessons 201–300 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 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 201 Genesis 19:1–3 — The Angels Arrive in Sodom

You will recall that, in the previous chapter, Abraham actually bargained with God. God told Abraham that He would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham began to reason with God, asking, "Well, what if there are 50 believers there? Then how about 45? 40?" In fact, Abraham found that God would preserve this city, even if there were only 10 believers there. Abraham had calculated that this would be the least number of believers in this area, because Lot was there with his family.

The sin of Sodom was homosexuality. One of the great evils in this world is homosexuality, which fact is testified to throughout the Bible, from the Old Testament to the New. A homosexual act is not just sinful, but it is a sin of degeneracy. One of the fascinating things in this world is how some in the homosexual movement have tried to use the Bible in order to justify their sin. So there is no confusion, it is not a sin to be tempted. It is not sinful to have homosexual leanings or desires. We all have temptations and strong desires to do a lot of things. It is only sinful when you act on these desires.

What certain elements of the current homosexual movement attempt to do is, justify the sins that they commit, calling them legitimate human functions (and probably most of them honestly believe this). For many homosexuals, it angers them to be told that homosexual acts are sins, so that they have attempted to deal with the Bible in a variety of ways—from an outright attack by way of confrontations and lawsuits to infiltrating churches and religion to even starting and promoting their own brand of Christianity. They will not just attempt to justify their own sinful behavior but many will claim that the New Testament in general, and Jesus in particular, approve of homosexual acts and committed homosexual relationships, often through strained interpretations of the relevant passages from the Bible, as well as by distorting their own personal natures, desires and experiences to those who are not homosexual.

Because this is such a controversial topic today (40–50 years ago, there would have been no controversy over statements like these), these remarks will be expanded upon with a lot of Scripture thrown in to justify them at a later date.

Every man and woman is tempted by something; and, in some cases, by a number of things. Just because a person really wants to do something does not mean that what he wants to do is therefore approved by God. Married men are tempted by women all the time; however, nothing is more destructive to a marriage and to a family with greater far-reaching affects than adultery. Adultery not only has the ability to dissolve a marriage, but

it can negatively impact the lives of the children and their future relationships, thus impacting even the lives of their children in the future. So, simply having a strong desire to do something is not enough reason to follow through on that desire. And having a very strong desire does not make it legitimate or approved by God.

What we have in this chapter is attempted homosexual rape and strong homosexual desires; and it indicates the degree of degeneracy which these cities had descended to. Our salvation and our spiritual growth is obviously an individual matter, but God also deals with groups of men corporately, which concept we took a great deal of time to study already. A husband and wife form a corporate entity; a family is a corporate entity, those in a particular geographical area (the same nation, the same city, the same state, same family, same school, same business, same military unit) are all treated by God as corporate entities. God will treat the city of Sodom and the other nearby 4 cities as a corporate entity. These various entities can be blessed or cursed depending upon who is in them.

You will recall in the previous chapter that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was great. Two angels left to walk to Sodom, and Abraham was left with the Lord, and he "talked" God into sparing Sodom if there were 10 righteous men in that city. Abraham figured how many people were in Lot's family, added in a few converts (in-laws), and knew that there had to be 10 saved (righteous) people in Sodom. So when he got God to agree that 10 righteous would preserve the city, he believed that his nephew Lot was safe.

Meanwhile, the angels approach Sodom, and Lot is hanging out at the city gate. This is where often court cases were tried, out in the open by the city gate. This suggests that Lot had gotten to a high political position in Sodom.

Gen 19:1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth.

Robby Dean made the following observations:

The Physical Nature of Angels

1. Angels appear to exist primarily as non-material beings. They are not physically material as we are, they don't have to follow the same laws of biology, the same laws of physics.
2. From several passages it appears that angels have bodies that are composed of light or something like light. For example, in Hebrews 1:7 they appear as flames of fire.
3. Angels have the ability to transform themselves into material creatures that possess all of the characteristics of material bodies. For all intents and purposes, insofar Abraham can tell, the angels he meets are material creatures who appear to be men. They eat they drink, they rest, they sleep. He is going to wash their feet. Later on we see that when they are trapped inside Lot's home and the Sodomite perverts outside are trying to pull them out into the street their hands are outside the door and they have to pull Lot back in. These are physical terms. So these immaterial creatures of light are able to transform themselves to have some kind of material bodies. It appears that God determines when assuming a physical body is allowed.

The Physical Nature of Angels

4. Back in Gen. 6, we had fallen angels and mankind cohabiting together, and such sexual unions resulting in pregnancies and children. This is also alluded to in Jude 6–7. The exegesis of these verses it indicates that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is imitating the immoral sexual sins of the angels of a previous time. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."
5. From this we must conclude that angels are able to take on all biological functions of the material human body, apparently based upon God's sovereignty.

From. http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen098.htm, which is Robby Dean's Genesis study, lesson #98, accessed May 7, 2012.

Gen 19:1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth.

Lot once had a thriving business in cattle. Where is it? Why is Lot at the city gate? Lot is not some degenerate with nothing to do, hanging out in front of the city gate, just as some kids with nothing to do might hang out in front of a convenience store. Lot appears to have become a judge or a city official. Whatever the case, he is no longer overseeing this great company of livestock. Despite this position, he does not seem to have any respect from the people of Sodom, as we will later find out.

When it comes to a business, a small number of people are actually able to run a business and to do what is necessary to make the business prosper. This is Abraham. He had a huge cooperative with Lot, but he was the brains of the business. He was also well-motivated. Lot, apparently, was not. Abraham possessed experiential righteousness; and Lot did not. So, here we are, 23 years down the road (see the abbreviated timeline), and Abraham still has a thriving business and Lot is at the city gate of a degenerate city. Lot may have been one of those men who really did not want to run a business. He sort of inherited what he had through Abraham; he built it up in conjunction with Abraham, and God blessed him because he was associated with Abraham. But now, years later, he does not appear to be in charge of the great business, and, let me suggest, that Lot sold it and parlayed his wealth into some sort of political influence, as a judgeship, perhaps. Given his age and wealth, he became a city father or a city official—a judge, in fact—and that has become his interest in life (Gen. 19:9).

Gen 19:2 Lot then said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square."

Lot knows what will happen. He knows that if these men (whom he does not see as angels) will be raped and probably killed by the town's residents if they remain in the town square. Lot has spiritual deficiencies, but his concern for strangers here is important. Lot

may have a sorry spiritual life, but he has not been completely given over to the evil ways of his city.

As this chapter unfolds, bear in mind that, Lot is a judge; and yet, this city is lawless and immoral. This ought to be evidence that, a great president cannot do much good when faced with a lawless and immoral population.

There are a lot of problems with our *war on drugs;* but the chief problem is a lack of morality among the population. Most people who use drugs are aware of the mass killings which are occurring south of the U.S. border and yet, they still purchase drugs which, in many cases, help fund these murders. This is personal morality—which is necessary to the survival and prosperity of a nation—and a large segment of our population lacks any.

When a significant population lacks such morality, God sometimes intervenes directly (as He will in Sodom and Gomorrah) or He works through other agencies, e.g. natural disasters or other countries. As has been alluded to on several occasions, God has a set of steps that He goes through with Israel when they get out of line.

I find it interesting that these angels refused Lot's offer of hospitality. I would have thought that this would have been valued by the angels, as they certainly understood that Lot was a part of their mission. However, they refused Lot at first. They had no reason to be afraid of the local population, as the average person would; but this refusal has to make you wonder, did they simply have no interest in spending time with Lot and his family? Could these angels find Abraham interesting company, but Lot, not so much? How well do they know Lot? Have they been observing him over the years?

Gen 19:3 But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

It does not appear as if Lot warned them about what exactly would happen, but he insists that they come into his house that night.

Lot celebrates them being there with a great meal (interestingly enough, it appears that angels can enjoy fine dining). At this point, Lot appears to be very similar to Abraham, in the way that he is entertaining guests, and our only misgivings about Sodom at this point come from the fact that we know God will destroy it (unless, of course, you have been reading ahead).

When a city is unsafe, and when the people of the city will tolerate other people raping and murdering, such a city is no longer a corporate entity which God can allow. I mentioned all of the murders in Mexico. It appears as though some law enforcement agencies in Mexico decided to turn a blind eye to some of the drug violence, at its outset, in part because it was drug-gang on drug-gang violence. Even if this was the case, the violence spread to all segments of their population.

As we have discussed, God has warned this city. We know that they have been under the 4th stage of national discipline (subjugation to an outside power) and were nearly put under the 5th stage of national discipline (where an outside power removed them from their homeland and would have placed them into slavery—Gen. 14). However, at this point, they will face the 6th stage of national discipline, which is complete destruction of the population.[1]

We have a very similar thing occurring in the Middle East right now. There are many cities where a Jew or a Christian cannot live. The government does not protect them; in fact, in many cases, there are laws which allow the government to prosecute them. At the same time, the people of these cities will oppress Jews and Christians as a part of their religious expression. They kill families and celebrate. God will not allow this to go on forever.

What God desires to see in a national entity is law and order (that is, the laws of divine establishment), the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the teaching of Bible doctrine. God is not concerned if the government is a democracy or run by a vicious dictator or run by an outside country or run by a racial minority in that country. We as men have all kinds of opinions with regards to these things; but, within a national entity, God wants law and order, the gospel openly revealed and Bible doctrine taught. When people are not allowed to hear the gospel; when people are not allowed to worship Him; God has a problem with that.

What we are seeing with Islam is the unrestrained religious soul gone wild. We often picture the unrestrained soul as going wild with sex and drugs (or, in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, homosexual rape), but, in Islam, we have a people here nearly wholly given over to the worship of Satan. Essentially, they believe in a continual struggle, until everything around them is controlled by Islam. I personally believe that in this century, we are going to see literally millions of Muslims killed in war. We may see entire cities obliterated and more. There is a reasonable chance that, in defense of an attack, that Israel will use nuclear weapons. If we have a president at that time with any stones, he will back up Israel with nuclear weapons as well. My point is—and it is based upon what we learn from this passage—God will only put up with corporate behavior like this for so long.

Now, as an aside, God does use some evil nations to discipline other nations, and allows evil nations to live. However, wherever there is strong positive volition toward the gospel and toward Bible doctrine, there will be an oasis of blessing (South Korea, for example, which sends out Christian missionaries all over the world).

Lesson 202 Genesis 19:1–9 — Homosexual Rapists in Sodom

Here is a corrected translation of what we have studied so far:

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[1] God did not warn Israel of the 6th stage of national discipline because He would not allow the Jews to be completely destroyed.

Gen. 19:1–3 So two angels came to Sodom in the evening while Lot is sitting in the gate of Sodom. Then Lot observes [them arriving] and he rises up to meet them. Then he bowed his face to the ground [before them]. Then Lot [lit., *he*] said, "Listen, please, my lords: turn aside, please, to the house of your servant and lodge [there] the night and wash your feet. Then you can wake up early and go on your way." But they said, "No, because we will spend tonight in the plaza." Lot [lit., *he*] strongly urged them so they turned aside to him and they went into his house. He then made a drinking feast for them with unleavened cakes that he had baked, and they ate.

The two angels, who enjoyed a meal with the Revealed Member of the Trinity and with Abraham, went to Sodom, a city about to be destroyed by God, and they met Lot, Abraham's nephew, at the city gate. He insisted that they come home with him, which they agree to do.

Gen 19:4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house.

So the angels are at Lot's home, eating and being made welcome. However, before it was bedtime, the men of the city of Sodom knew about these angels (who appeared to be attractive men to them) and they physically desired them.

We mistakenly believe that homosexuality is simply males being attracted to other males rather than to females, as simple a genetic aberration. There is one very dramatic difference—all situation comedies with homosexual male characters aside—it is not unusual for a male homosexual to have 100 sexual partners; in fact, it is not unusual for them to have 1000 partners or more.[2] Furthermore, we are led to believe that sexual preference is simply innate. However, it is not unusual for homosexuals, males and females, to have had sex with members of the opposite sex, to be attracted to members of the opposite sex, and to have been in love with members of the opposite sex.[3]

However, a male who is sexually attracted to both males and females is going to find more opportunities for sexual encounters with other males. Furthermore, a woman who finds out that this man is having sex with other males is not going to want to continue a sexual relationship with him.

As a further aside, the key to love is in the soul, not in the body. The key to a committed lifetime relationship is one male soul paired up with one female soul. It is the souls that are made to coalesce, and the bodies, for a portion of this marriage, express this soul coalescence. The male soul without the female soul tends to get out of control; and the

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[2] http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles/DaileyGayAdopt.php which statistic is based upon a study of 2,583 older homosexuals published in Journal of Sex Research by: Paul Van de Ven et al., "A Comparative Demographic and Sexual Profile of Older Homosexually Active Men," Journal of Sex Research 34 (1997): 354. Accessed May 24, 2011.

[3] From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Cameron3.html accessed May 24, 2011.

female soul without the male soul tends to get out of control. They are moderated by one another.

Gen 19:5 And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."

I want you to get a picture of this in your mind—there are dozens and perhaps hundreds of homosexuals gathered around Lot's home. Notice what they do not do. They do not have an orgy among themselves; they want to have sex with those who have come into their city or to observe them being raped and to be titrated by that. Monogamous sex among male homosexuals is rare. A 1981 study showed that only 2% of homosexuals were monogamous or semi-monogamous (which is generously defined as having 10 or fewer lifetime partners).[4] When it comes to variety, if you will, a 1978 study found that 43% of male homosexuals estimated having sex with 500 or more partners and that 28% estimated their having sex with 1000 or more partners.[5] So, even though these men surrounding Lot's house are filled with homosexual lust, it is for the two strangers, not for one another.

This is because a man has a male soul with male weaknesses. A woman who is aware of her male significant other or husband sleeping around with 500 other partners is going to call it quits somewhere between #1 and #10. No woman would tolerate this. Two males together will tolerate infidelity, simply because they recognize that the other person is a male with male weaknesses.

In this particular circumstance, there are probably other things involved: the desire to exert power over others, the desire to hurt and injure others. However, the means of doing this will be by committing homosexual rape.

When it comes to "committed" homosexuals, a very possible AIDS infection is thrown into the mix, meaning a "committed" homosexual relationship (or an uncommitted one, for that matter) is like playing Russian roulette. There is a very strong possibility that some miscellaneous male partner will be infected with the AIDS virus. The reason that the AIDS virus seemed to happen so suddenly and so dramatically, is because you have the average homosexual male hooking up with 10, 20, 50 or 100 or more partners every single year—many of whom were strangers—and those men are also doing the same thing. Promiscuity is less restrained when there are two men involved.

Gen 19:5 And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."

Homosexuality has not reached this sort of a fever pitch here in the United States; but it is addictive behavior, and let me explain why. Every time two men have sex—especially

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[4] This is from Jeffrey Satinover, M.D.'s *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth;* ©1996 Baker Books, p. 55. He is citing A. P. Bell, et al., *Sexual Preference* (Bloomington, Ind.; Indiana University Press, 1981).

[5] Jeffrey Satinover, M.D.'s *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth;* ©1996 Baker Books, p. 55.

if this is a sexual union between relative strangers—they are risking their lives. An AIDS test on Wednesday does not mean that you are free of AIDS on Friday. Condoms are not a 100% guard against the spread of AIDS (or other venereal diseases); and yet, it is common for homosexuals to have had 500, 1000 or 2000 sexual partners (even if they are in a *committed* relationship). Having hundreds of partners for a homosexual is much different than for a heterosexual—for heterosexuals, it might be 1 man in 5000 who has 500 partners or more. According to one survey, the median number of lifetime female sexual partners for men was seven; the median number of male partners for women was four (and we live in a highly sexualized society). Still, 25% of women and 17% of men report having no more than one partner of the other sex in their lifetime. However, when it comes to homosexuals, a Dutch study found that men who had a steady partner still engaged in sexual activity with an average of 8 partners a year.[6] Bell and Weinberg, in their classic study of male and female homosexuality, found that 43% of white male homosexuals had sex with 500 or more partners, with 28 percent having one thousand or more sex partners.[7] To most heterosexual males (and females), this is amazing and almost incomprehensible. So, in that committed homosexual relationship, both partners are out there about 8 times a year with another man, a man who might introduce a debilitating disease to both of them in this "committed relationship," and yet they still do it. That is what makes this additive behavior. When you regularly do something that risks your life and the life of your loved ones, that is classic addictive behavior. When your desire to do something exceeds reason and potentially could change everyone's life for the worst, and yet, you still do it, that is addictive behavior.

You may wonder why gays are so militant. It may seem weird to you that they march with banners and push their agenda on everyone. They are both addicted to the frequency and to the variety and to the very act of homosexuality; so they are going to lay the groundwork for them to be able to pursue frequency and variety in any way possible.

My point is, these men in Sodom are addicted. Now, you would think that, a homosexual group of 8 or 20 men might choose to keep their behavior within this group? They don't. They are constantly going outside, to meet new men—virtual strangers—to have sex with. Again, remember that hundreds of sexual partners for a homosexual is the norm. So, when new males come into Sodom, all of the males become charged up with the desire to have them—even if they rape them to the point that they die.

Now, you may think that this is unrealistic, that men would never behave in this fashion. Then you do not know the power of lust, the desire to dominate and just how far man is able to fall. In prison, in a study done in 2007, it is reported that 4.5% of the prisoners had been subjected to sexual victimization, either by other prisoners or by their guards. From an article on Human Rights Watch: *Human Rights Watch documented vicious and brutally*

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[6] Maria Xiridou, et al, "The Contribution of Steady and Casual Partnerships to the Incidence of HIV Infection among Homosexual Men in Amsterdam," AIDS 17 (2003): 1031.

[7] A. P. Bell and M. S. Weinberg, Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), pp. 308, 309; See also A. P. Bell, M. S. Weinberg, and S. K. Hammersmith, Sexual Preference (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

violent male rapes in prison as well as other more common, less overtly violent forms of coerced sex.[8] This sort of activity tends to be more common in our culture in prisons, where the inmates are not properly supervised and protected, and among a prison population which is going to still identify itself as heterosexual. When the supervision of prisoners is more lax, then this sort of thing occurs more often—12.2% in a prison in Nebraska.[9] My point is, in an environment where such a thing is not policed at all—like Sodom—this sort of behavior is not an exaggeration. What happened here is Sodom is no different than would happen in that prison in Nebraska, if all supervision stopped. As far as we can tell, there are no restraints in Sodom, apart from Lot.

Gen 19:6 Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him,

Lot has lived among these people for over two decades. Therefore, he feels reasonably safe with stepping outside of his door and attempting to reason with them. He has probably had to deal with many of these men in court and they undoubtedly showed some respect for his position.

However, you will note two things: he insisted that the two angels lodge with him, which would have been protection for them; and he shuts the door behind him in this verse, again taking steps to protect them and his family.

Gen 19:7 and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.

At first, we look at Lot and think, this is a marvelous guy. He takes strangers in off the streets to protect them. He attempts to reason with the radical members of his community. But then, he does this:

Gen 19:8 Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof."

Lot despicably offers up his own daughters instead. Quite obviously, I was not there. I don't know how many homosexual rapists were threatening Lot. Obviously, he was in a panic, and he apparently had not faced a situation quite like this before.

Why he offers up his own daughters, is a complete mystery to me. However, under difficult circumstances where snap decisions have to be made, some people do and say the wrong thing. Everyone in his household is being threatened.

Gen 19:9 But they [the men of Sodom] said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with

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[8] From http://www.hrw.org/news/2007/12/15/us-federal-statistics-show-widespread-prison-rape accessed March 2, 2012.

[9] Ibid.

them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down.

This crowd of homosexuals are speaking of Lot here: “He came to our city to live temporarily and now he is our judge?” This suggests that Lot had a high political position in Sodom. Then they threaten to deal with Lot more viciously than they intend to deal with the two angels inside.

Now, you would think with this crowd (and we have no idea how many there were—I would think well over a hundred and maybe in the thousands) that they would be willing to simply have sexual relations with one another. However, that is not how this addiction works. This is why a homosexual male can have hundreds and even thousands of partners in his lifetime.

It is reasonable to ask, how can this family choose to stay among such people? Let me suggest this: strangers had come into town and they had disappeared; and it was rumored about the town how this occurred—that they were raped until they died. This happened enough times, to where Lot was well-aware of it. However, this is where he put down his roots; his family all lived here; he had a house and a profession, and he apparently no longer had anything which he could parlay into wealth and comfort in another city.

In this town was probably access to many things that could not be found outside of the town. I don’t know if we are talking foods, jewelry, clothing, pottery, furniture or what—but in any city, there is more offered within that city than can be found out in the country. I live in the suburbs, but I can drive less than 3 miles to find most of the things I need or desire. Just 10 miles away, in a nearby town, I would be 13 miles away from these same things. So, the things which Lot’s wife had come to appreciate, enjoy and/or depend upon, could be found in the confines of this city—which things were not as readily available to her for the 10 or so years that she and Lot spent with Abraham, living in their tents and watching over their herds. One chief difference was, quite obviously, the house that they lived in. Many of us love the house that we grew up in, the dream home that we eventually buy—and some of us love every home in between.

Lot also had a position of authority; he had become a judge in this city. So, despite the crime factor—which crimes were committed against strangers, for the most part—Sodom had a lot to like about it.

At this point, Lot had not faced this crowd of men at night. He had not been threatened by them before and their sexual passions. This is probably the first time, Lot felt that his life and the lives of his family were in danger.

Having a general idea of what was occurring, Lot decided to take a stand and to take in these men to protect them. This he had probably not done before. However, there had been enough homosexual rapes in this city for Lot to realize that he needed to act. Likely, there have been 10 or 20 strangers who had been raped or murdered by this time. In fact, given that all of the males were there to watch, it is possible that there had been many

more men who had been sodomized. It was their entertainment in this city, and all of the men of the city came to see it. And this was the first time that Lot was seeing this play out, where the lives of everyone under his roof were in danger.

It was enough for Lot to be concerned for the safety of these strangers. However, the idea of terrorizing strangers to a city with homosexual rape had become well-known to Lot, enough that he insisted that these strangers comes to his home, apparently to provide them with some measure of safety. So, up to this point, Lot knew this sort of thing was happening; and he took steps to protect these men. However, this is apparently the first time Lot had seen these men close up, ready to do what they had done scores of times before.

What Lot does not realize is, under circumstances like these, when there is not enough of a pivot to protect the geographical area, then God will act. God will take steps to bring this population under control; or He will destroy that population. Gen. 14 was a prelude to all of this; Gen. 19 is where God will destroy the populations of this area.

A principle that we have not studied yet is, *grace before judgment*. Gen. 14 was God's grace given to the people of Sodom; Gen. 19 is God's judgment, because the people of Sodom rejected the God of Abraham.

Gen. 19 is all about God coming to the city of Sodom and destroying it because of the behavior of the people there. It is clear that the men of Sodom are interested in homosexual rape and that a huge portion of the population will rape and kill strangers who come to their area. We males tend to like pretty violent sports, e.g., football and boxing. What was happening in Sodom was a sport of sorts, and all of the men came out to participate in it or to watch it take place.

This has brought us to the very controversial topic of homosexuality. Interestingly enough, the things we will examine were not at all controversial in, say, the 1950's. But, in the year that I write this, 2012, this has become a very controversial topic. Therefore, let's examine the Abbreviated Doctrine of Homosexuality.

This is not the complete doctrine of homosexuality. What follows will be a distillation from that doctrine. See the Complete **Doctrine of Homosexuality** (HTML) (PDF).

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Homosexuality

Homosexuality in the Old Testament

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Homosexuality

1. In the Old Testament, homosexual acts were not only sinful, but they were illegal.
   a. You are not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable (Lev. 18:22; HCSB; see also Lev. 20:13). The word which describes such an act is tôwʿêvâh (תּוֹעֵבָה) [pronounced *to-ģay-VAWH*], meaning *a disgusting act, an abomination, abhorrent, an abhorrent act*. Originally, this word was used to describe how the Egyptians felt about the Jews (Gen. 43:32 46:34 Ex. 8:26). This same word was often used for the abominations committed by the heathen of the land which God told the Jews to destroy (Deut. 18:9, 12 20:18 2Kings 21:2 2Chron. 28:3 2Kings 21:11 2Chron. 28:3). Strong's #8441 BDB #1072.
   b. Homosexual activity in the Old Testament was punishable by death. Lev. 20:13
   c. The point being made is, this was not considered a minor sin in the Old Testament. This was not eating a "pull-pork sandwich," a comparison that same-sex marriage advocates are often wont to make. This clear denunciation of homosexual acts is often downplayed on websites which argue that we are not under the Mosaic Law[10] (which is true) and which say things like, "Well, the Old Testament also forbade the Jews to eat shellfish; how silly is that?" They often point to the Sabbath and Sabbath laws, and note that Christians do not obey those laws.[11] What they gloss over is, a person committing a homosexual act would be executed; those who ate shellfish were not.
   d. Populations which practiced homosexuality extensively were destroyed by God. In our study, the Sodomite population became involved in forcible rapes by many men, and God will destroy them. Gen. 19
   e. The degeneracy of Sodom and God's judgment of Sodom will be spoken of perhaps a dozen times in the Old and New Testaments.
   f. Interestingly enough, the antichrist will not desire women. Daniel 11:37

Homosexuality in the New Testament

2. The condemnation of homosexuality is carried over into the New Testament.
   a. The clearest passage is Rom. 1:24–32: **Therefore God also gives them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,** who change the truth of God into the lie, and fear and serve the created things more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. **For this reason God gives them up to vile passions. For even their women change the natural use for what is contrary to nature. Likewise also the men, abandoning the natural use of the**

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[10] Taken from: http://www.gaychurch.org/gay_and_christian_yes/calling_the_rainbow_nation_home/7b_gac_clobber%20passages_the_levitical_law.htm accessed July 10, 2012.

[11] Ibid.

woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men with men performing what is shameful, and receiving the retribution within themselves, the penalty which is fitting for their error. And even as they do not like to have God in their full true knowledge, God gives them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with every unrighteousness, sexual perversion, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, depravity; whisperers, defamers, haters of God, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do them, but also approve of those who practice them (VW). This can describe many groups of people, but it could certainly describe participants of gay pride parades or the patrons of a gay bar.

b. Rom. 1:24–32 in the NKJV: Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

c. Rom. 1:24–32 Kukis revising the NKJV: Consequently [because some men have rejected God and therefore their minds have been covered in scar tissue] God further delivered them over to a lifestyle of desire and corruption, in the lusts of their thinking, treating with contempt their own bodies [having sexual relations] among themselves, who exchanged the [doctrinal] truth of God for perverted and deceitful precepts, and they have [therefore] worshiped and served that which God created rather than the Creator [Himself], who is praised forever. Amen. For this cause, God delivered them over to disgraceful passions; for even their women exchanged nature's design of sexual relations [between a man and a

woman] into that which is not natural. And not only this, but men also, disregarding and abandoning normal sexual relations with women, burned in their desire [and craving] for one another; males in males, accomplishing [or *performing*] the unseemliness of a woman's genitals, and receiving [by way of retribution] in themselves that payment for their straying [from morality and God], which [retribution] was necessary [as established by the justice and righteousness of God]. And just as they did not recognize [and approve of] the [true] God, to keep [Him] in their thinking, God [therefore] gave them over to an unfit [and reprobate] mind, to do those things which are not normal. [As a result, they] are filled with all unrighteousness, with illicit sexual practices [e.g., homosexuality and lesbianism], depravity, a continued desire for more and more, maliciousness; filled with envy, murder, contention, deceit, malicious craftiness; [they are] quiet slanderers, speaking evil, haters of God, insolent and filled with pride, [they are] arrogant, inflating their own character, designers [and creators] of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, violators of contracts, lacking in natural affection, implacable, [and] unmerciful; who, fully knowing the judicial condemnation of God, so that they who practice these things are worthy of death; [in fact] they not only do these things, but they are pleased when others perform [such things].

d. Paul writes to Timothy in 1Tim. 1:8–11 But we know that the [Mosaic] Law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the Law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers, for **[male] prostitutes**, for **sodomites**, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust (VW).

   i. The first bolded word is pornos (πόρνος,ου,ὁ) [pronounced *POHR-nos*] which means, *a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire; a male prostitute; a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator, the sexually immoral, one who practices sexual immorality, immoral men*. Thayer, Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, and Arndt and Gingrich. Strong's #4205.

   ii. The second word found is arsenokoitês (ἀρσενοκοίτης) [pronounced *ar-sen-ok-OY-tace*], which means, *one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, [male] homosexual; one who has sex with younger men (boys), a pederast*. Thayer, and Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, and Arndt and Gingrich definitions. Strong's #733. Of course, pro-homosexual Christian websites take issue with this word (and others); but the definitions above are based upon unbiased scholarship of 5 of the greatest Greek

scholars. So, it boils down to, whose authority seems the most reasonable: that of "homosexual scholars" who have *studied* a half a dozen words and who want to allow for homosexual practices; or Greek scholars who made this their life's work and are simply trying to determine what the meaning of a word is, despite their own personal shortcomings? These "homosexual scholars" have a vested interest in changing the meaning of these words.

e. Paul wrote this to the Corinthians: Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray. Neither **[male] prostitutes**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor **effeminate**, nor **sodomites**, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1Cor. 6:9–11; VW).

i. The term *male prostitutes* is pornos (πόρνος,ου,ὁ) [pronounced *POHR-nos*] which we already covered above. Strong's #4205.

ii. *Adulterer* can refer to a person who has committed actual acts of adultery against their spouse or spiritual acts of adultery against God. Strong's #3432.

iii. The word *effeminate* is malakos (μαλακός) [pronounced *mal-ak-OSS*], which means, *1) soft, soft to the touch; clothes that are soft to the touch; 2) metaphorically in a bad sense; 2a) effeminate; weakling 2a1) of a catamite; 2a2) of a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man; 2a3) of a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness; passive homosexuals; a man or a boy who allows himself to be used by a more dominant male homosexual; 2a4) of a male prostitute*. Thayer, Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, and Arndt and Gingrich definitions. Strong's #3120.

iv. We have already studied *Sodomite*.

v. Paul is describing categories of people who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. However, some of these people in the Corinthian church used to be this was and they are not any longer because they were justified by Jesus Christ and cleansed by the Spirit of God. There is an implication here that they have left that lifestyle; or that they have rejected those sins.

f. Paul wrote, in Gal. 5:19–21: Now those things done by the sinful, physical nature [of a person] are evident; they are these: **sexual immorality**, **moral impurity**, **indecent conduct**, idol worship, occultic practices, hatefulness, dissension, jealousy, angry outbursts, factious spirits, divisiveness, party spirits, envy, drunkenness, orgies [or, *feasts, drinking parties*], and things like these. I warn you again, as I have done before, that those people who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of

God (AUV—NT).

i. *Sexual immorality* is moicheia (μοιχεία, ας, ἡ) [pronounced moy-KHEE-ah], which means, *adultery, adulterous acts*. Thayer, Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, and Arndt and Gingrich definitions only. Strong's #3430.

ii. *Moral impurity* is porneia (πορνεία, ας, ἡ) [pronounced *por–NĪ–ah*],which means, *1) illicit sexual intercourse; 1a) adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc.; 1b) sexual intercourse with close relatives; Lev. 18; 1c) sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; (Mark 10:11–12) metaphorically the worship of idols; 2a) of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols*. Arndt and Gingrich add *prostitution, unchastity, fornication, unfaithfulness of a married woman*. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider add, *every unlawful kind of sexual intercourse, disgraceful sexual immorality*. First definitions from Thayer. Strong's #4202.

iii. *Indecent conduct* is akatharsia (ἀκαθαρσία, ας, ἡ) [pronounced *ak-ath-ar-SEE-ah*], which means, *1) uncleanness; 1a) physical; 1b) in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living; 1b1) of impure motives*. Arndt and Gingrich add *refuse; immorality, immoral intent; sexual sins*. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider add *impurity*. Thayer definitions given first. Strong's #167.

Jesus and Homosexuality

3. Most churches which believe that homosexuality is permissible claim that Jesus did not speak directly to the sin of homosexuality.

a. This does not mean that Jesus somehow supported homosexual activity or supported homosexuality within a "committed" relationship. The era of the Hypostatic Union was a hinge between the Age of Israel and the Church Age. It is clear that homosexual acts are not only prohibited but punished with death in the Old Testament; it is also clear that homosexuality was forbidden in the New Testament epistles. So, it would make little sense to say that Jesus lived in a short time period when homosexuality was acceptable.

b. Even though Jesus never said, "Homosexuality is wrong, don't do it:" He did say, "I have not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it." (Matt. 5:17). The Mosaic Law, as already pointed out, was clearly against homosexual practices and even executed those convicted of committing homosexual acts. So, Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial aspects of the Law, becoming the Lamb who died for our sins (John 1:29 Rev. 13:8); but He did not negate any other aspects of the Law. If anything, Jesus expanded upon the Law of Moses (Matt. 5:20–30). In fact, Jesus did say, "Therefore, whoever

breaks one of the least of these commandments, and thus teaches the people, he will be called least in the kingdom of the heavens, but whoever does and teaches [them], he will be called great in the kingdom of the heavens." (Matt. 5:19; ALT)

c. Jesus clearly taught marriage between one man and one woman: And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female', and said, For this cause a man shall leave father and mother and shall cling to his wife, and the two of them shall be one flesh? Therefore they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate." (Matt. 19:4–6). As the oft-repeated saying goes, *God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve*. In view is the sexual act (the two of them shall become one flesh) which is illustrative of the natural connectedness of their souls.

General Biblical Notions on Homosexuality

4. No one is condemned to hell for committing a homosexual act or for practicing homosexuality. All of our sins have been paid for by Jesus on the cross, including the sins of homosexual acts. We are condemned to hell for not believing in Jesus Christ. John 3:16, 18. However, in one respect, committing a homosexual act after salvation is no different than committing any other sin. One person may be tempted to lose his temper, another may be tempted to chase after money or power, another may be tempted to be a skirt-chaser. These are the temptations which all Christians face. Your temptations are not any better or worse than mine. When we sin, we name this sin to God. In order to lessen the number of times we sin, we learn doctrine and begin to think with the mind of Christ. As Paul explains, Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus (Philip. 2:5).[12] And be not conformed to [the thinking and philosophy of] this world: but be you transformed by the renovation of your thinking, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:2).
5. However, even though a sin is a sin; different sins can affect us in different ways. There are sins like the abuse of alcohol or the use of drugs which tend to take over a person's life. So it is with sexual sins, which tend taint a person's entire existence. With heterosexual males, it is clear that pornography has an addictive affect upon them; so it should not seem odd that homosexual behavior among homosexuals is also addictive.
6. The homosexual who has believed in Jesus Christ needs to decide which is most important, his personal lusts or his new status of being in Christ.

7. For the homosexual: if you have believed in Jesus Christ—if He is the sole reason for your salvation—then you have eternal life. No one can take this eternal life

[12] I have taken this out of its context, which refers to a particular set of mental attitudes; however the principle is accurate; we are to think with the mind of Christ.

from you; nor can you overrule this aspect of the plan of God. The **Doctrine of Eternal Security** (external links): Bible Doctrine Resources or Verse by Verse.

a. All believers, after they are saved, face many choices, because we all come out of some lifestyle or another. We can return to that lifestyle, we can attempt to be moral, or we can do what is required in the plan of God, which is to live the Christian life, which is a supernatural life. A **General Introduction to the Christian life** (HTML) (PDF)

b. Briefly, the Christian way of life is (1) naming your sins to God as you commit them; the shorter accounts that you keep, the more time that you log in under the power of the Holy Spirit. (2) You are also to learn doctrine under the authority of a pastor who knows the Word of God, the original languages and orthodox theology. Here is a list of such resources (PDF). In my experience, I have found that it is better for the believer to be physically in a group setting rather than to study on their own (even under a good pastor-teacher).

c. Do not attempt to simply justify your lusts. All believers have lusts; and sexual lust is a normal thing. Acting on sexual desires outside of marriage is sinful. God only allows for sex within a heterosexual marriage. It does not matter if you really, really, really, really want to do something. An extremely strong desire does not make such an act unsinful.

d. After salvation, homosexuals have a number of options open to them: date the opposite gender and get to know the person; do not attempt to have sex with them. Most male homosexuals have had sex with women; so, the idea that there is no sexual attraction whatsoever is generally bogus (not in all cases, but in many—a friend of mine once told me that, to his way of thinking, there was no difference between men and women). And many homosexual men have been in love with women in their past as well.

e. Also, it ought to be clear that there are men with more slender bodies (which is actually a *thing* in the homosexual world); and there are women who seem to have more masculine characteristics. So, even in those worlds of homosexual lust, there is a premium on men who are effeminate and for women who are masculine. This is not in every case, but it often found in those worlds. This indicates the natural predilection of the soul and the natural physical desires.

f. God has designed the right man for every woman; and the right woman for every man. First, you get doctrine into your soul so that you are guided by doctrine and not by your lusts.

g. Or the homosexual can choose to live a celibate life.

h. Unlike some websites that teach, you must struggle against homosexuality in order to prove that you are saved, the Bible teaches that you are saved by faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:16, 18 Eph. 2:8–9 Titus 3:5). You may or may not choose to avoid sexual activity outside of marriage. However, what is different is, you have now become a child of God and you are subject to His discipline (Heb. 12:6). It is like any familial

relationship—you are always your parents' child, but now and again, they may whip you to the point that you wish you weren't.

8. The key to a lifetime marriage relationship is in the soul, not in the body; and this is where homosexuals and their propagandists completely miss the mark. When a man wears women's clothing, takes estrogen and even have breast implants, he is still a male in his soul. Such men can play-act like women, but when they are being normal, they are men (even if they look quite feminine). God designed the female soul to fit the male soul, just as He designed the female body to fit the male body. There is a fit of the souls as much so as there is of the bodies. This is why both husband and wife are faithful in most marriages but why fidelity is not a part of homosexual relationships. The "fit," which is both sexual and soulish, automatically restricts itself to two people.
   a. This is why our first marriage is Adam and Eve which is what Jesus Christ confirmed with the words: And He answered, "Have you not read that the Creator at the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man must leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two of them must be one!' So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together man must stop separating." (Matt. 19:4–5; Wms NT). Paul affirms the male female relationship as based upon Adam and the woman in 1Tim. 2:13–14
   b. This helps to explain Jer. 31:22b Y^{e}howah has created a new thing in the earth: a woman shall **encompass** a man. The important verb here is the Poel imperfect of çâbab (סָבַב) [pronounced *saw^{b}-VAH^{B}V*], which means (these are Poel meanings), *to go about [in a place]; to surround*. Strong's #5437 BDB #685. God created the woman to both encompass the man physically as well as soulishly.
   c. It is the woman's soul and the man's soul together that require mutual fidelity. It is the way that they fit together that results in a monogamous relationship. Often, it is the woman who inspires fidelity in the man; and quite often the woman inspires the man in many areas of endeavor. In fact, it is the woman who is the most inspirational creature on this earth (apart from our Lord). Remove the woman, and there is little reason for man to live.

General Comments About Homosexuality

9. There is an ongoing propaganda war about homosexual actions. It is nearly always presented as innate which can't be changed, and the natural result of genetics (which things are not true). Men who are homosexual are generally portrayed, in the mass media, as men who were just born liking men. Other than that, they are just like us. Furthermore, the percentages of those who engage in homosexual activity are exaggerated. The way that homosexuality is presented is not an accident. It is intentional and it is propaganda. It is well-known among the politically active in the homosexual community that if you, a straight person,

understand homosexuality as simply a result of genetics, then you are likely to believe that it is a valid lifestyle which should not be judged or looked down upon.

10. Although homosexuality probably has a complex genetic component to it, it is not genetically predetermined. Just as some people have a predilection toward alcoholism, some have a predilection toward homosexuality. This predilection does not determine that a person will become an alcoholic nor does it determine that a person will engage in homosexual acts.
11. Those who are self-identified homosexuals make up a very small portion of society: between 1–3%.
12. In 1973, when homosexuality was removed from APA's list of mental illnesses, it was not as a result of research or new studies, but based upon concerted pressure from the homosexual community. This pressure indicates the political savvy of the homosexual community.
13. There seem to be factors as a person grows up which also have an effect upon a person's sexuality and sexual attraction.
14. There are both men and women who have engaged in same-sex encounters and then later have been in committed heterosexual relationships.
15. A disproportionate number of child predators (particularly pre-adolescent) are male homosexuals.
16. Politically active homosexuals make strong attempts to introduce homosexuality as a neutral predilection in public schools to as early an age as is possible. Continual attempts are made to introduce children's books which prominently feature two fathers or two mothers.
17. A number of strategies are used, including ones to get around resistant parents who do not want their children taught about homosexuality when they are 5 or 6 or 7. One approach is to not allow parents to opt-out their children when pro-homosexual (or neutral homosexual) programs, philosophies and books are presented.
18. Similarly, anti-bullying programs are brought into the schools, often as thinly veiled pro-homosexual programs to be introduced again at very early ages. Again, the political savvy of the homosexual community should be noted. There are very few people who are in favor of bullying, so an anti-bullying program seems like a good idea to the average parent.
19. Politically active homosexuals will sue schools, institutions, businesses, churches, pastors, and individuals in order to harass them and to insure their complicit silence. The idea is, you may believe that homosexual activity is sinful, but they will make your life miserable if you publically express that opinion.
20. Although two virgins marrying is much more rare than it used to be, it still occurs. However, at no time has there been any two male or two female homosexual virgins who have "married." Homosexuality is a lifestyle that demands activity.
21. In other words, a person must engage in homosexual activity in order to identify himself (or herself) as a committed homosexual.
22. Faithfulness among male homosexuals, even in committed relationships, is virtually nonexistent. On the other hand, faithlessness destroys many

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Homosexuality

heterosexual (normal) marriages.

23. It ought to be noted that, any movement which is against the laws of divine establishment as found in the Bible (as the homosexual movement is) will have elements of Satanism. This does not mean that homosexuals will specifically worship Satan or anything like that, but they will support cosmic system policies. As a result, homosexual groups will be highly antagonistic toward Christianity or toward Bible doctrine, and they will be against the laws of divine establishment. Having their actions designated as sins will cause many of them to be angry and antagonistic toward Christians. It is not unusual for a significant number of homosexuals to be one-issue voters (that is, they will vote for whatever person appears to support their lifestyle). This is a minor illustration of how homosexuality can infect a person's entire being.

24. On the other hand, there will be smaller groups who recognize the need for their own salvation, but are unwilling to give up their homosexual activities. Therefore, they will, after believing in Jesus Christ, attempt to downplay and distort what the Bible says about homosexuality and they will try to develop homosexual relationships similar to marriage relationships in the Bible. However, it is far easier for a "homosexual" person to turn to heterosexuality as an alternative, than it is to actually become involved in a faithful homosexual relationship.

In the more expansive doctrine of homosexuality, all of these statements under *general comments* are confirmed by named studies. There is a great deal more detail given in the full doctrine: (HTML) (PDF).

You may find this to be helpful to sort out your thinking concerning this issue.

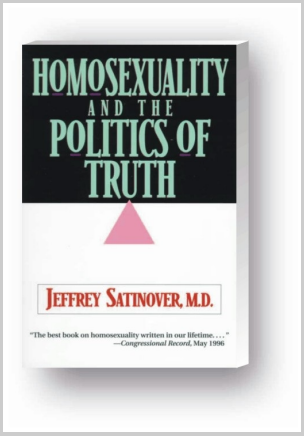
Symptoms

Dr. Jeffrey Satinover asks the question, what if you have a friend, relative or colleague who had a condition that was routinely associated with the following problems:

- A significantly decreased likelihood of establishing or preserving a successful marriage
- A 5 to 10 year decrease in life expectancy.

Symptoms

- Chronic, potentially fatal, liver disease—hepatitis
- Inevitably fatal esophageal cancer
- Pneumonia
- Internal bleeding
- Serious mental disabilities, many of which are irreversible
- A much higher than ususal incidence of suicide
- A very low likelihood that its adverse effects can be eliminated unless the condition itself is eliminated.
- An only 30% likelihood of being eliminated through lengthy, often costly, and very time-consuming treatment in an otherwise unselected population of sufferers (although with a very high success rate among highly motivated, carefully selected sufferers).



Let's throw in some other information: this condition very likely has a genetic component, although the problem itself is a behavioral one. Secondly, a person who is involved in this behavior is likely to continue in it, even if he recognizes the destructive consequences noted above. Thirdly, some people with this problematic behavior recognize it as a problem; while others do not believe it to be so. Finally, in resisting outside influence, such a person may involve himself heavily in a subgroup of people who have the exact same behavioral problem.

The problem we are speaking of is alcoholism; and most of us when dealing with close friends or relatives, recognize the destructiveness of this behavioral disease of continued and repeated acts of drunkenness. Furthermore, we hold those people who do these things responsible for their behavior, regardless of whatever genetic predisposition there might be.

Symptoms Part II

Now let's consider a friend or relative with a very similar set of problems, all related to this person's behavior:

1. A significantly decreased likelihood of establishing or preserving a successful marriage
2. A 25 to 30 year decrease in life expectancy.
3. Chronic, potentially fatal, liver disease—infectious hepatitis which increases the risk of liver cancer
4. Inevitably fatal immune disease including associated cancers
5. Frequently fatal rectal cancer
6. Multiple bowel and other infectious diseases
7. A much higher than ususal incidence of suicide
8. A very low likelihood that it adverse effects can be eliminated unless the condition itself is eliminated.

Symptoms Part II

9. However, there is a 50% likelihood this behavior being eliminated through lengthy, often costly, and very time-consuming treatment in an otherwise unselected population of sufferers (although with a very high success rate among highly motivated, carefully selected sufferers—sometimes as high as 100%).

The same things are also true as listed above: there may be a genetic predisposition, but the actual problem is behavioral. Individuals continue in this behavior despite recognizing its destructive effects. Some people with this condition see it as a real problem; others do not. Some will resist all attempts to help them. Finally, there is often an association with a subgroup or a subculture of those with the same problem.

This second condition is homosexual activity. Although the immune disease mentioned above is not as often fatal, as noted, it changes a person's life forever.

The parallels between alcoholism and homosexual behavior are quite obvious.

From Dr. Jeffrey Satinover's *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth;* ©1996, A Hamewith Book; pp. 49–51.

Needless to say, *Will and Grace* was just a television show; any relationship between it and the actual behavior of homosexuals is coincidental (the same is true of *Modern Family*). These are entertaining shows, but the last place one should go when evaluating the behavior disease of homosexuality.

While on this topic, one more thing ought to be noted: the relationship between a father and son is unique, just as the relationship between a mother and son is unique. Both parents bring something unique to this relationship which is as much tied to their gender as is tied to their personalities and values. The same can be said of the Father-daughter relationship and the mother-daughter relationship. Every child raised with a mother and a father take some unique from that relationship. Conversely, a child raised by two fathers or by two mothers is going to be lacking something in their gender development.

Lesson 205 Genesis 19:1–11 The Local Church/Paganism/Homosexuality

The local church has failed us in many ways. (1) They do not meet often enough, so that, even if the pastor knows what he is talking about, two Sunday sermons is not enough time to counteract all of the human viewpoint that we face each and every day. (2) Local churches often ignore the basics of our spiritual lives; and our civic responsibilities (e.g., providing for our own family, hard work, and paying all of our creditors). (3) Many do not teach how one is restored to fellowship and thereby filled with the Holy Spirit (naming your sins to God). (4) Local churches almost never teach about our corporate existence and how this relates to God—that is, what are we as a city, a state, a nation, or as an organization, business or school?

Don't misunderstand these criticisms: God has designated the local church as being the place where we grow spiritually. Their failure does not mean that it should be abandoned or replaced with another set of institutions. God clearly presents the local church as the place that should be the foundation of our spiritual growth in time. However, many of local churches have failed us in these ways. I recall as a recently saved Christian, having listened to a number of R. B. Thieme, Jr. tapes (if you were born after 1980, you probably have no idea what a "tape" is), I thought I'd just go out and find a church where the Bible was taught often, carefully and from the original languages. At the time, I figured I would end up having several to choose from. I lived in Sacramento at the time, which was a reasonably large city. I visited church after church after church. The best I could do was find local churches that were not too crappy. However, God, being a God of provision, provided just at that time, a local taper's group that listened to R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s sermons. Even though that seemed like an odd sort of gathering to me, it was exactly what God's plan was. I later found that there were many of these groups that met around a tape recorder where there was no visible pastor, and that they were genuine local churches (they were all over the United States at that time). My point is, if you are interested in the Word of God, then God will provide a local church for you. Now, He may expect you to move, but the circumstances will be such that, such a move will be a normal part of life.

Gen. 19 (along with many other passages of Scripture) deals with the corporate relationship of Sodom to God (or, more accurately, lack of a corporate relationship). This chapter deals with the judgment of God against a geographical entity. Therefore, the believer needs to pay attention to such things. Furthermore, as we will later find out, Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned in multiple passages throughout the Bible.

Personally, I love studying and teaching the book of Genesis, because it is overflowing with truth and application; and is the foundation upon which the entire Bible stands.

The key to this and several other chapters in Genesis is the righteousness and justice of God. Righteousness is the principle of God's perfect integrity and justice is the function or execution of His perfect integrity. The people of Sodom have been warned—Gen. 14 was God warning them. Their contact with Abraham and Melchizedek could have changed everything, if they chose to go that route. Instead, these people continued to fall deeper and deeper into degeneracy, resulting in God's eventual judgment upon them.

In the United States, we have not gotten to the 4th of 5th stages of nation discipline yet, but it is clear that God is leaning on us. We, as a nation, face danger on a half-dozen different fronts at least, any one of which could damage our nation dramatically. Nearly half of the people of the United States live in households receiving some kind of governmental assistance. Half of the people in the United States pay no federal income tax, so they have no personal interest in low tax rates (they ought to be concerned about tax rates, but many are not). I know many, many college educated people—some of whom are Christians—who see nothing wrong with borrowing over $1 trillion each year, as long as there is "free healthcare." We are coming dangerously near to the point where half of the population of the United States is ready to redefine the concept of marriage. Our currency, which was once the strongest in the world, is coming dangerously close to collapsing. We

have seen a number of weather-related disasters in this country over the past few years (I write this in 2012) which suggest that God is warning our nation. Add to this, the huge number of Muslims who hate the United States, and would destroy us if they could. And there is one Muslim nation with nuclear weapons that hates us; and another crazier nation close to attaining nuclear weapons. Drug use in the United States is alarming, which has resulted, in part, of chaos on our border with Mexico, with nearly 50,000 people killed in drug wars as of 2012. And these are the things which come immediately to mind; there are far more problems in the United States than those alone.

God warns us by means of Bible doctrine, by means of the laws of divine establishment (when we stray from them, our life gets worse), and by contemporary events. We do not have Old Testament prophets coming to us with messages from God; but, we do have local churches with pastor-teachers who ought to be able to recognize these things and warn us.

And the key is not political involvement; the key is spiritual growth. The key is for more people in the United States to believe in Jesus Christ, and then for Christians to advance spiritually. Had there been only 10 believers in Sodom, God would not have destroyed this city. Our protection from destruction as a nation is based upon the pivot of this nation, which refers to the number of believers and the number of believers who are spiritually mature. Our survival and prosperity as a nation does not depend upon how many people have the correct political opinion (although, believers with doctrine will be able to correctly interpret history and understand their own personal role in relation to government). Our survival and prosperity depends upon the number of believers and the spiritual life of the believers in this corporate entity U.S.A. We could accidentally elect the greatest president in the world and yet still go down as a nation, because every one of us is personally responsible to God. We have a corporate relationship to God, and the president is just one man out of many.

There were, no doubt, many things available in that society of Sodom that were attractive to Lot, or possibly even more so to his wife. It may have been quite simple to us: a few shops, a greater variety of foods and spices provided by traders, but enough was there to blind Lot's family to all the perversion that was occurring. They were willing to turn a blind eye to it in order to enjoy what else Sodom offered. Lot did apparently look out for strangers, when he could, but the perversity of Sodom was just overwhelming.

So far, this is what we have studied in Gen. 19:

Gen 19:1–9 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the ground and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And the men

of Sodom called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may [sexually] know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But the men of Sodom said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and now he has become the judge! Therefore, we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down.

So, two angels have come to Sodom and Gomorrah, sent by God, and they encounter Lot at the city gate who attempts to protect them from the general population of men who either engage in homosexual rape or enjoy watching same. While enjoying a meal with Lot and his family, the house is surrounded by the men of Sodom, who want to rape these two angels (believing them to be men). When Lot stands between them, the homosexual rapists become quite persistent, to the point of being ready to do bodily harm to Lot and cause property damage to his home.

Lot was living in a very pagan society, which had come to the point at which , God had to remove it.

Robby Dean's Characteristics of Paganism

1) Sexual degradation and perversion becomes commonplace and socially acceptable in a pagan culture. The more a culture is divorced from the absolutes of the Scripture the more sexual deviancy becomes "normal" and accepted. The more it becomes normal and accepted, the more accustomed, even believers become. They may not be comfortable with it but they no longer experience the same level of shame and embarrassment when certain things are talked about than when they first came up. We hear about certain things on TV and in the news and we become desensitized to the shame of these acts and actions that are taking place in our culture. As a result of this there is an increase in violence.
2) Women are no longer protected and valued. Or women with traditional values are ridiculed and presented by many as not the sort of woman your daughter ought to be.
3) There is a total breakdown as a result of that over all distinctions. It is no coincidence that at the same time that we have the rise of radical feminism, which was at its core the idea there is total and complete interchangeability between men and women and the workplace and the rise of homosexuality among men and women, which says the same thing sexually, that men and women are completely interchangeable as sexual partners. The idea is, it doesn't matter whether my sexual partner is a man or a woman just as long as I have my gratification. So there is a breakdown of role distinctions and there is evidence in women assuming male authority positions and a failure of male leadership in the culture. So women want to assume male authority positions such as a pastor, or they take male positions in terms of bi-sexuality. All of this reflects a breakdown

Robby Dean's Characteristics of Paganism

in the culture because we no longer understand the role of men and women as image bearers as God created them. So women become sex objects and men become tyrannical and abusers, and it leads to a complete breakdown of marriage and of the family, and eventually society.

4) Essentially, we are talking about the breakdown of the laws of divine establishment.

From http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen102.htm accessed September 26, 2012.

Gen 19:10 But the men [the two angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door.

There is some struggling which apparently is occurring, and the angels reach out to Lot with their hands and bring him back into the house. Then the door is quickly shut and, more than likely, barred (or held closed).

Gen 19:11 And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

Then these angels are allowed to strike these men outside blind. We do not know how this occurred, but suddenly, this group of dozens or hundreds of men can no longer see, and they are groping about on the outside.

What occurred did not have to be supernatural. This could have been a number of lightning flashes right at this time. With their eyes accustomed to the night darkness, this temporarily blinded the men. However, there had to be an incredible intensity of light in order for this to occur and for this blindness to be sustained. Whatever happened could have been related to the explosion of petroleum which will take place in the next 6 or so hours.

I have heard that angels have bodies of light (which appears to be backed up by Psalm 104:4 Ezek. 1:13–14 Daniel 10:6 Matt. 28:2–3 Rev. 10:1); so their relationship to light—whatever that happens to be—may have been involved at this point.

All of this is done for the benefit of Lot and his family. Their lives have just been threatened by their neighbors. These neighbors wanted to sexually molest the angels who just came into the city and they were willing to do harm to Lot and his family in order to do this. It ought to be clear that this place is filled with great degeneracy and that nothing was being done about it. That is, there were no external laws being applied which curbed this behavior. There were absolutely no external controls from society over these men, because all of the men of the city were there to participate or to watch. These unwarranted attacks upon strangers had become sport to the people of Sodom.

Gen 19:11 And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

This is what is amazing, and it gives you an idea as to how completely driven these men were by their sexual lusts. They have been struck blind—which takes them back for a moment—and then they resume trying to get to this front door, to rape these men and perhaps to take revenge upon Lot. They are inflamed with sexual lust and they are angry, and all of this overrides the fact that they have all been suddenly struck blind, something which ought to have stopped them cold in their tracks.

Now, I have mentioned homosexuality today and the disease of AIDS. At one time, in the 1980's and 1990's, this disease was a death sentence. Although many of us outside of the homosexual world did not know much about this disease, those in the homosexual world did, and they knew a great deal about the disease—as quickly as discoveries were made, the homosexual community knew about it.

AIDS could be wiped out in one generation easily—all a homosexual has to do is exercise self-control, hook up with one life partner, and stay in a monogamous relationship with that life partner; and the disease would pretty much disappear (as would happen with any venereal disease). Homosexuals knew, long before the outside world knew, that AIDS was primarily spread through homosexual contact (and by dirty needles; where someone uses the needle of a person with AIDS). However, instead, homosexuals, realizing that this could mean death, continued to hook up with other male homosexuals (and whomever they could get to stray from the straight world[13]). No doubt, many of them were sobered by the disease of AIDS; and, no doubt, some of them curbed their activity somewhat—but faced with a deadly disease, homosexuals pushed forward on many fronts. They pushed psychiatrists to stop classifying homosexuality as a behavior that could be cured; they have brought homosexuality into the popular culture to the point where many people think that homosexual activity is the result of how a person is born, that they have absolutely no choice in the matter; and that male homosexuals are just like male heterosexuals, except that they like males. They also sought to isolate and treat the disease of AIDS like no other disease. There are legal protections associated with the disease of AIDS which are not associated with any other disease.

Part of the homosexual barrage of propaganda is found in television and movies. If the characters on television were to portray homosexuals as they really are, they would be seen with a new sexual partner every single week. This new sexual partner, for the most part, would be a stranger and someone with whom they would have a single encounter. For those who have partnered up, they would still be on the hunt for other homosexual encounters. They would be shown to be manipulative and a significant percentage would be shown to have a penchant for young males (this is virtually ignored in the popular culture and written off by most as a stereotype). Many who have taken on female personas would be revealed as that persona as being simply an imitation of what they think

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[13] This would be by doing such things as taking female hormones and getting breast implants in order to tempt heterosexual men.

a woman is; they are still all male beneath this imitation; and that the physical and social changes that they go through are designed with one purpose in mind—to seduce straight males. Their social lives, for the most part, revolve around sexual activity. Whereas a male heterosexual may think about sex a lot, he also recognizes that he is in society and he cannot act on his lusts as often as he would like; there is no such limitations on the gay male, who can certainly find another gay male who desires exactly the same thing—a quick hookup with no accompanying social involvement, often occurring in the restrooms of public places.

The Word of God here presents them in a realistic light. The men in Sodom are so overcome with lust that even physical blindness cannot stop them from attempting to satiate their lusts. Just like homosexuals today may think about AIDS, but this is not going to keep them from having casual hookups with other homosexuals. Even homosexuals in "committed relationships" continue to have sexual encounters outside of this relationship, which not only increases the chances that they will contact AIDS, but that they will bring this home to their partner.

One more thing: many homosexuals are politically active and they will lie to you about nearly everything. Now and again they will let the truth slip out; but when faced with their desires and the straight world, they will lie about what they know. If you tell them that homosexual activity is not 100% genetic and that they have a choice, they will say that is nonsense and that you do not have a clue as to what you are talking about. They will challenge you to cite any study of any importance that suggests that. Now, when you do cite such a study, you will find out that they already knew about that study and they knew all about its findings (I have had several such discussions). Most of the time, they are both educated and conversant in that study. But, until you mention it, it is as if that particular study did not exist.

Things will slip out from time to time. I discussed some of these topics with 3 homosexuals on the internet, who added comments to an article I had written. When I spoke of homosexual desires for children and homosexuals wanting to get into the schools and "turn" some of the male children, they acted as if that was the silliest notion a person could ever have. The idea that a straight person could be turned is ridiculous; the idea that this is an interest of any significant part of the homosexual population was also dismissed as ridiculous. However, one of them accidently let it slip out that he wanted to be a school counselor specifically for homosexual boys to guide them to be good homosexuals (whatever that is).

We know through studies that male homosexuality is numerically very small—it is not 10% of the population; it is 2 to 3% of the population. Furthermore, same-sex attraction is a continuum; it is not simply you are or you are not. If a male is asked whether he has ever had an attraction to the same sex in any situation, many would answer *yes*. If asked if one has some attraction now and again to males, but mostly is attracted to females, some would answer *yes*. If asked about being sexually attracted to females, but mostly to males, some would answer *yes*. And, finally, if asked if one was attracted only to males, *yes* would be the answer of some. Such questions have been asked, and the response is a

continuum. Those who are in the middle—males who have had some attraction to both sexes—are going to be certainly as numerous as those who claim to be attracted to males only. This is not an either/or; and it is not a 100% matter of birth. Sexual experiences along the way have an affect; and sexual experiences near puberty and before puberty can have a dramatic affect on how a person views himself and his own sexuality.

Propaganda from the homosexual political movement downplays experience and society in the entire equation while simultaneously attempting to influence children at younger ages to accept homosexuality as simply normal. They have been very aggressive to get pro-homosexual books into the classrooms of young children—as young as possible—and to make homosexual behavior an accepted part of sexual education. Many times, this is done under the guise of bullying programs, although there is no great outbreak of anti-homosexual bullying.

However, to help to understand that society plays a big part when it comes to the influence of the sexualization of children, one need only look to the accepted fact that puberty, in the United States, as we have become more sexualized, occurs at earlier and earlier ages. There are even racial differences in this. Setting that aside, we know from research that the development of breasts in women is coming at an earlier and earlier age.[14] Much is this is because we surround our children with so many sexual images. It is in our advertising, it is on our television shows, it is in our movies.[15]

My point is this—if children can be *physically* changed by external stimuli—that is, if the onset of puberty can occur at earlier ages, simply because of our over-sexualized society—then it would stand to reason that there are external stimuli as well as actual experiences which could affect a person's sexual identity. The homosexual political movement seeks to downplay this sort of thing when it comes to people being homosexual by asserting "they were just born that way"; but they certainly desire to exert as much influence as they possible can to get pro-homosexual material into our schools. Also on that agenda will be to get counselors on school grounds that specialize in "gay kids."

Why would they want such a thing? It appears that the homosexual lust for more and different sexual partners is a driving factor. So there is more than social acceptance here; if a young boy can be influenced to experiment, on the basis of being attracted to this or that male, there is another possible hookup. And one thing which cannot be denied is, homosexuals exhibit promiscuous behavior that would shock us heterosexuals dramatically. Just as these men outside of Lot's door did not choose to have a homosexual orgy amongst one another when they were rebuffed by Lot, so male homosexuals will seek more and more new partners, as this is an addictive behavior pattern (not unlike drug addiction or alcoholism).

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[14] See http://www.breastcancerfund.org/assets/pdfs/publications/falling-age-of-puberty.pdf for instance. Accessed February 11, 2012.

[15] For instances, many people are surprised that the film *Midnight Cowboy* was X-rated. Today, it could run uncut on any cable station and there would be no protest or alarm.

Lesson 206 Genesis 19:1–13 The Angels Protect Lot and his Family

So far, this is what we have studied in Gen. 19:

Gen 19:1–11 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the ground and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And the men of Sodom called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may [sexually] know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But the men of Sodom said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men [the two angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

Lot and his family knew that the degeneracy of the city was quite serious—even worse than they realized—and the angels' power was obvious in the way that they stopped these men of Sodom.

Gen 19:12 Then the men [the angels] said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place.

Lot and his family are in their house with the two angels, and there are scores, possibly hundreds or even thousands of men outside, wandering about, being unable to see. The angels are going to remove Lot and his family from this place and then rain down judgment upon Sodom.

Lot and his family may not understand completely what is going on, but the actions of the community and the miracle of saving the family gives these angels the authority to call the shots.

Here is where we get an idea as to the size of Lot's family. There is Lot and his wife and they have two unmarried daughters there with them (Gen. 9:6). These angels, who would probably have more information about Lot's family, ask about sons-in-law, sons and daughters.

As an aside, *son-in-law* is in the singular here, but there are sons-in-law in v. 14 (it is not unusual for English translations to use the plural in v. 12 and the singular in v. 14, but it is actually the opposite in the Hebrew).

Back at the end of Gen. 18, we did a headcount: at home, there was Lot, his wife and two unmarried daughters (4). He has at least two sons-in-law (v. 14); and the angels suggest that he has at least two sons and at least two daughters. Altogether, that is 10 people, which is why Abraham stopped talking with God when he was able to insure deliverance for Sodom if there with 10 righteous in the city (Gen. 18:32–33). Abraham did a headcount of Lot's family and based his intercessory prayer to God on that number.

As discussed at that time, Abraham did not just come to a point and stop counting, when he should have taken it down to 4 or 5 people. God would not have preserved Sodom based upon 4 or 5 people. However, God will deliver Lot and his small family from judgment. So God answers Abraham's prayer by saying "no" to exactly what Abraham prays for (the non-destruction of Sodom), but "yes" to the intent of Abraham's prayer (the preservation of Lot and his family).

Both Abraham and Lot have been called righteous (Gen. 15:6 18:24), although we have observed that there is a great difference between the quality of these men's lives and their testimony—which difference is going to become even more stark as we complete this chapter.

Gen 19:12 Then the men [the angels] said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place.

Here, the angels speak of *a son-in-law* and later in this narrative, Lot will go to his *sons-in-law*. God is all-knowing; but angels are not. I suspect that angels have a phenomenal memory and an incredible ability to keenly observe what is going on; however, this passage, along with several others, seems to indicate that angels are not omniscient. They do not know all that is going on with every single person—only with those they have personally observed. This simply suggests that there are angels who observe you who know almost everything there is to know about you; and they can read your body language and your face, and they probably know most of the things that you are thinking. However, not every angel knows all of these things about you. The angels that observe my life may know nothing about you. And most angels probably know little or nothing about you or me.

There are times when Satan or a demon will accuse various people before God, and God will speak on behalf of those whom they have slandered (Job 1:8–11 Rev. 12:10). Under those circumstances, angels learn about specific people.

These 2 angels may know some things about Lot. However, they may know nothing about Lot or his family. It is their assignment to destroy these cities. Perhaps God directed them to at least speak with Lot and perhaps God told them, "Just go into Sodom, spend the night, and destroy these cities the next day."

There are angels in observance, both fallen and elect, perhaps on opposite sides of the stadium, as it were. These two angels are out on the field. Because of this question, they are probably aware that Abraham argued for the preservation of Sodom if 10 righteous could be found. But these angels don't know Lot's life; they don't know his family. They are expecting to have fewer than 10 righteous people—those who have trusted in Jehovah Elohim—whom they will take to safety before destroying the city.

The reason that I am coming to this conclusion, that the angels have a specific mission, but that they do not know everything about everyone, is, they ask Lot if there are more people, and they use the masculine singular word for *son-in-law*. They expect for there to be fewer than 10 people; and so far, they see 4. They suggest a *son-in-law* (singular), but Lot will speak to *sons-in-law*.

They also ask about *sons* and *daughters;* which does not mean that Lot has an additional 2 or more sons out there and 2 or more daughters. The angels could be simply asking this as a general question without actually knowing whether Lot has more adult children or not. Abraham made a headcount of 10, which is why he stopped there when speaking with God (Gen. 18:32). The angels, who would have known at the very least, about this prayer, would have understood there to be fewer than 10 righteous (believers), as God was going to judge Sodom, and rescue those who came out with Lot.

So, even though we have done a headcount in a previous lesson, we really don't know exactly. If I was to make an educated guess, Lot has 2 adult sons or daughters who are married, which should be 4 believers right there; and the problem, as we will see, is with the sons-in-law, who are unbelievers. Because of them, where there ought to be 10 believers (or more), there are 4, along with whichever of Lot's sons and daughters who believe in Y^{e}howah, but would not join him in leaving Sodom (who are not spoken of, except hypothetically in v. 12).

Gen 19:13 For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

First thing that we note is, these angels have the responsibility of destroying Sodom and the other 4 cities. Therefore, there are not 10 believers in Sodom, so the angels are told to first whisk Lot and his family members to safety.

Here, the angels explain to Lot why he must gather up his people and leave this city, because they would be destroying this place. Lot had no idea who these men were. They were strangers to him a few hours ago. Remember, he only met these angels just this afternoon. However, somehow, in the evening, he has formed a strong bond with them. Furthermore, they just did something which was unprecedented in Lot's life. His house was under attack. Hundreds of men were outside his door beating on it, trying to get in, and suddenly they stopped. Lot can hear them from the inside, and he can hear what they are saying. No doubt, they are talking about being blinded. We do not know the mechanics of them being blinded. What has occurred to me—and this is conjecture based upon many translations—is that there was a sudden, blinding light, that left all of them

blinded. It was nighttime, and these men had been gathering for the past hour or so outside of Lot's home, and their eyes had become very adjusted to the darkness. If there was a flash of blinding light—even a supernatural light—this could blind them. Whether this is a permanent blindness or one that lasts for several hours, we do not know. However, it will be apparent, later in this chapter, that Lot can come and go from his own house unencumbered by the crowd of frustrated homosexual rapists and voyeurs who are milling about. My point is, Lot is beginning to realize who these men are, to some limited extent. Whether he knows that they are angels, whether he knows much doctrine at all, is questionable; but he will hear that they are from Y^{e}howah and he will believe that, and he will act on that.

Gen 19:13 For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

These angels use the Hiphil participle of *to destroy,* which often indicates causal, ongoing action. However, the beginning of the destruction of this city is right here, outside of Lot's home. First thing that they did is neutralize the homosexual criminals of Sodom. Whatever other steps they are taking place at this point in time is unclear. However, the participle suggests that this destruction is beginning, that these angels will be the agents through which this destruction will come, and that it is imminent. Their words indicate that, Lot cannot get a good night's sleep and then get up bright and early the next morning to do what he has to do; the time to act is right now.

The fact of these angels showing up and going to Lot personally is important, as are the events of that night. His daughters in the home and his wife realize—perhaps for the first time—the great degeneracy that is all around them. These homosexual criminals outside of their door have done this before. They certainly knew of these things intellectually speaking. Remember that Lot insisted that these men stay at his home for protection, so what these homosexual criminals did was not unknown to Lot or just a rumor. However, with this all occurring right here, right outside of their own front door, in a place that they believed that they were all safe, this horrific evil has gotten the attention of Lot and his family. The blinding of these homosexual criminals and their being neutralized also got their attention. There are a lot of things going down, and they are happening all at once; but these things are designed to suggest a great urgency that will have to seize Lot.

These angels are sent by God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The word *outcry* suggests that rapes and killing of strangers had become commonplace in Sodom; and this is supported by Lot insisting that these angels (when he believed them to be men) come stay at his house.

We are never given the specific mechanics as to what happened in Sodom or how it was caused to happen. We do not know exactly what these angels did (v. 13, 22); we do not know exactly what God did (vv. 14, 24–25) when it comes to the destruction of Sodom. We do not know exactly what sort of powers angels have when it comes to destruction as we have here. We know that sulfur and other things rained down upon Sodom from the sky, but we are not told any of the mechanics here. That is, what this a natural or a semi-

natural event? Was it completely miraculous? We simply do not know the answers to these questions.

Angels, an addendum:

How does God keep good angels from going bad? Through knowledge, through information, through observation. This is why we are being observed. Angels will observe the lives of believers all over the world over a period of 5000, 6000 or even more years. They will come to many of the conclusions that we come to: that God is righteous, that God is faithful, that God is fair, that God is merciful and that God is truthful. Similarly, they will make observations about Satan and the fallen angels—that they will use fear and intimidation; they will lie; and that all of their works result in chaos, pain, heartache and judgment. Furthermore, no matter what lies Satan tells, he is heartless and he will do anything on his own behalf, regardless of the damage that he causes to others.

In observing all of human history, billions of people and in billions of circumstances, elect angels are convinced that they have no reason to doubt that God is Who He says He is and that Satan is not at all the way he presents himself to be. They watch situations like this play out—and, in this instance, two angels actually participate in the action.

It is one thing to be given a one-sentence description of Rudy Ruettiger, a young man, who, against all odds, became a part of Notre Dame's football team; and it is quite another to view the movie or read the book. Similarly, it is one thing to be told that God is righteousness and justice and love, but an entirely different thing to see these characteristics play out in real life. Angels see human history as it unfolds and it reveals the perfect character of God in millions of different circumstances and under many different environments.

Given the first chapter of the book of Job, there are times when fallen and elect angels convene with God and people are discussed and Satan brings accusations against many of us. However, does Satan himself gather all of this information? Probably not. Satan is also a created being who can only be in one place at one time. So, when you are accused before God—and you probably are, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ—this is because there are demons who gather information about you and present it to God (or they present it to Satan who presents it to God).

In many ways, you are an object lesson to angels. God's character is demonstrated in all that He has done for us (giving us His Son for our salvation) and how He is faithful to us, despite the fact that we fail continuously. Angels have volition as well. Unlike fallen man, where we can make one decision which connects us eternally to God (to believe in Jesus Christ), elect angels probably face a situation where they can, at any given time, choose to sin against God (I do not believe that there is salvation for angels; I cannot find that taught in the Bible). Whether there are a multitude of things that they can do or think that would take them out of their relationship with God, we do not know. However, they are learning Who and What God is through their observance of us on this earth. An Understandable Version of the New Testament reads: Therefore, since we are surrounded

by such a large crowd of spectators [Note: Christians are pictured here as being in a crowded arena, performing in the games], we should lay aside every [excessive] weight and sin that so easily entangle us, and with perseverance, we should run the race [of life] that lies before us (Heb. 12:1). The bracketed material here is from the AUV–NT. Laying aside the weight of sin that entangles us is confession of sin to God for restoration of fellowship. So, before the angels, we are told to get into fellowship.

I've listed many of the amazing things found in Genesis (in the first 15 chapters); and this is another of those fascinating things. We have information about the Angelic Conflict which is consistent with everything in the Bible that follows. We tend to think of angels as being quite impressive with great talents and abilities, but they are limited, just as we are. Hidden in this tiny portion of v. 12 is, angels do not know everything there is to know. Angels are learning. At no time in the Bible will this bit of information ever be contradicted.

I realize, for some people who give this very little thought, this does not seem to be amazing. But, someone (or many people) wrote the book of Genesis, and they laid out the groundwork for hundreds of primary and secondary doctrines in this book, and none of these things contradict what we find later. I have gone through this book 3 times on my own. In this 3rd time through, I find myself contradicting a few things I wrote the first time I exegeted this book. I have on many occasions, had to go back in my earliest exegesis of this book and fix some of the mistakes I made. I have revised some ideas or changed my mind on some doctrines, and have had to fix this (at some time in the future, I will replace the short exegesis of Genesis entirely). So, here I am, working with material that has already been laid out, having had a good deal of teaching before ever beginning the first exegesis of Genesis, and yet, I have changed my mind on several occasions of how to interpret this or that passage. How is it possible for these authors from 4000 years ago or more to put together the very foundation for all true theology without making a single mistake even in the most important doctrines? How is it possible for them to lay out the basis for human history, along with all the related theology, without there being glaring differences between these words and what the Apostle Paul will write 2000 years later? Yet, at the same time, it takes me many hundreds of hours to fully apprehend all the truth that is here (or, as best as I am able). The most logical explanation, which is given by the Bible itself, is that God the Holy Spirit both inspired and guided the writers of Genesis as He did the Apostle Paul; which would result in perfect consistency throughout Scripture. For prophecy [the writing down of the Word of God] 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).

Lesson 207 Genesis 19:1–16 The Angels Rescue Lot and his Family

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 19:1–13 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the ground and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and

spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And the men of Sodom called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may [sexually] know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But the men of Sodom said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men [the two angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door. Then the men [the angels] said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

So, at this point, there are hundreds of homosexual rapists and voyeurs milling around outside of Lot's home, having been blinded by the angels.

Gen 19:14 So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

I want you to picture this scene: they are trapped inside Lot's home and there were all of these homosexual rapists outside who, moments ago were trying to break in. Now they are wandering about outside, blinded and confused, still trying to find the door to get into the house. So Lot slips out the door quietly and is able to move through their midst because they are unable to see him. They might hear him, but they are also hearing the others who are out there, who are probably making a lot more noise.

While this is all going on, Lot goes out and contacts the men who are about to marry his daughters, to try to convince them to come with him and to leave this city. This tells us that not every single male of Sodom was out in front of Lot's home (I am assuming these sons-in-law live in Sodom). However, nearly every male from Sodom was there.

We are told very little of this conversation, but it is likely that Lot recounted all that happened, and that these future sons-in-law just laughed at him. They did not believe in the God of Abraham and Lot and what Lot was telling them seemed like a joke to them.

Let me suggest two things here: Lot did not have a lot of credibility with these young men. They desired his daughters, but they did not look upon what he said as important or

serious. He was just the old man in the picture, someone they would have to tolerate after marriage. Secondly, they did not see Sodom as being that problematic nor did it strike them as reasonable that God would strike Sodom. They possibly did not even believe in his God; and they certainly did not fear God. All of this seemed like a big joke to them. Lot had no testimony before them as a believer in Y^{e}howah. Furthermore, they believed that Lot would use the Lord's name to pull a prank on them.

Having already gone through the headcount, this is where Abraham's estimations break down—with the sons-in-law. It did not occur to him that Lot's daughters would be promised to marry men who do not believe in Y^{e}howah.

Gen 19:14 So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

Lot is taking all of this quite seriously. These men to whom he speaks think he's joking. What the sons-in-law presume is, Lot is kidding them; that Lot is making a joke. Here is something which they do not understand: Lot, at least in my estimation, would not make a joke and use God's name as a part of the joke. Lot may be pretty far gone spiritually; but this is not the sort of thing that he could do (this is an assumption on my part). If they had any understanding whatsoever about Lot and his God, they would understand this.

We do not know how many homes that Lot had to travel to, and we do not even know if this was their reaction at each home. We know that this occurred with at least two of his (future) sons-in-law. They believed that Lot would use the name of his God in order to make a joke. They had to be aware of the perversion that was all around them, and yet, Lot and his God were still a joke to them.

No matter how many people Lot spoke to, it is clear that, Lot was met with negative volition. No one believed him. No matter what he said, no one could take seriously that God was destroying the city.

Abraham's relationship with the people around him was much different. If Abraham went to his neighbors and told them that God was going to judge the land where they lived, I believe that most of them would have listened to Abraham. But Lot's testimony was not strong enough.

Some of you are perhaps thinking, "What if someone said that to me today?" We live in a very different dispensation today. Throughout the Old Testament, there are angels and there are prophets and there are messages from God. This does *not* occur in the post-cannon period of the Church Age. If you know someone who has God telling him things, that would be a person to avoid. If you have a friend who regularly sees angels, find another friend. What we have today is the complete Word of God. We do not need additional information. God does not need to come and tell us to make a right turn straight up ahead. Everything we need to know for our lives is found in the Word of God. Abraham

did not have the complete Word of God; Lot did not have the complete Word of God. We do.

On the other hand, if a pastor-teacher takes contemporary history and matches this to our current situation, many similar conclusions can be drawn. He could not say, “We are about to be destroyed with fiery sulfur from above;” but he could say, “It looks as though we could face some serious divine discipline to our nation because of our corporate witness to God.”

In terms of understanding our lives and what we should be doing, this is found throughout the Bible, in both testaments. For instance, in the life of David and the rebellion of Absalom, we can find many applications: of the results of being an absentee father to the idea of offering up a meaningless slogan to run for president. It is all there. We can examine what God the Holy Spirit wants us to know, and then easily make application to all those things going on in our own lives. However, this is done by means of understanding the Word of God. We can do this because there is no new thing under the sun (Eccles. 1:9).

If you know 20 verses out of the Bible, and little else, you will spend your Christian life in confusion. If you know 20 chapters, you are a little better off. In you know 20 books from the Bible, you are developing the knowledge which leads to spiritual maturity. As we are mandated to do, Grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18). Or, as Paul exhorts us: And do not be conformed [in your mindset] to this world [cosmic system philosophies], but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, so that you may examine and recognize what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2). The key is, we need to think like God thinks (John 16:13–14 Rom. 11:34 1Cor. 2:16 Eph. 3:3–4).

Gen 19:15 As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city."

The verb often translated *to urge* is ʾûwts (אוּץ) [pronounced *oots*], which means, *to urge, to insist, to press [upon], to hasten, to hurry [along]*. Strong’s #213 BDB #21.

Lot returns without the future sons-in-law, and without anyone else. In the morning (it is doubtful that anyone slept during this time), Lot and his family were to simply get up and walk out of their home.

Most of the time, we live under normal circumstances. We go to work each day, we often see and talk to the same people, we drive the same route and we do many of the same things. We have a normal daily routine, a normal weekly routine and a normal yearly routine. However, things happen which change that. Tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and war. Or more personal things occur, such as moving, divorce, losing a job, serious illness. Now and again, people in a particular geographical area, face something which completely breaks into their routine. This had happened to the people of Sodom. For the people in Sodom, it was their destruction. For Lot and his family, if he listened to the angels, it would be their salvation.

Elsewhere in the Bible, this routine is described as "eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." The implication of this phrase is, there is little or no thought given to God. Everything is man relating to man. When this occurs, God sometimes has to shake things up, to get us to focus on the reality that we do not see, that we are in the midst of a great conflict.

Our life is all about that which we cannot see. We cannot see our own souls. You can express your intelligence and mentality by the things that you do or say; but you cannot take it out and show it to someone. When you marry, the key to your relationship is the way that your souls interact, but you cannot actually see the soul of your spouse. You get to know what your spouse is like by seeing his or her soul manifest itself under a variety of circumstances; but you cannot actually see your spouse's soul. You cannot even see your own soul, but you know you have a soul because you can think, you have emotions and you have norms and standards.

This appears to be the reason that we are alive. God can tell both man and angels Who He is, and explain His essence to us; but it becomes far more meaningful if we see the actual evidence of His essence (God's essence cannot be seen; much like our souls). Whereas, this could be quite dramatic, as we find in this chapter of Genesis; it is more subtle in the Church Age. We do not have angels or prophets coming to us and warning us of this or that catastrophe, and then, these catastrophes come to pass. We learn, instead, about such things in the Bible. We learn Who and What God is, and then we see Him in all the world around us, and in all of the events of our lives. We see, without having to walk between two walls of water, how the Word of God clearly explains our lives and everything that we experience.

God is invisible, and the Angelic Conflict is invisible, our souls are invisible; but these are the things which are key to our lives. What we cannot see is what is most important in our lives. *Eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage* is simply a way of describing lives which are devoid of God and Bible doctrine. These are external activities. There is nothing moral or immoral implied by this phrase.

Why is there such a great importance attached to the Word of God in this dispensation? Not only is His Word complete, but, man fell into sin because of a few words. Satan misled the woman with a few words which led to her eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So, now there are many words before us, in the complete Word of God, all of which reveal the plan and character of God. And we develop from the Bible a full knowledge of good and evil.

Back to the action:

Gen 19:15 As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city."

The angels use one word, "Up!" This suggests that Lot and his family were sort of dawdling about. Obviously they are going to be tired, but also, their adrenalin should be

pumping because a few hours ago, their lives were in danger; and now, their lives are in greater danger.

Lot was once very prosperous. My guess is, he chose to sell his company, and he bought a very nice house and had a healthy bank account to boot. He may have used his money to acquire his judgeship. However, all of a sudden, he is under disaster conditions, and these angels are telling him to leave behind all that he acquired. Lot did choose to do what he was told to do. He may not have been the greatest believer of all time, but, when faced with a crisis like this, and angels telling him exactly what to do, he agrees—more or less—to follow their orders.

We face a crises from time to time in our lives, and we need to be spiritually adept at going from routine to crisis mode. Lot and his family were not quite there yet, and they had angels telling them exactly what to do. In our lives, we do not have angels telling us what to do—we have the Word of God in our souls or we do not.

The angels speak directly to Lot. The 2nd person masculine singular verb is used here. Everyone in the house is in danger, but it is up to Lot, as the head of the household, to get them moving.

Gen 19:16 But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, on account of Y^{e}howah grace being upon him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

Lot and his family had a difficult time just picking up and going. He was warned, but these angels did even more—the overruling will of God is applied here. They grab Lot and his wife and their two daughters and start walking. This is why there are 2 angels sent to their home. One grabs Lot and the wife by their hands; the other grabs the hand of each daughter, and they start walking. There is no packing.

Underneath all of this is an illustration. When it is God's time for us to leave this world, we do not have a chance to pack. There is nothing that we take with us, apart from our own souls. Whatever is in our soul and spirit is all that goes with us. I suspect that Lot's house was one of the most beautiful homes in all of Sodom. He had been a very successful businessman, he apparently was retired, and, very possibly, he sunk all of his money into this house and into his career. Now, he walks away from it all—he has no choice—and Lot and his family only are able to take with them what is in their souls (which is apparently quite limited).

The fact that Lot is a spiritual failure, and, therefore, so is his family, is illustrated for us again and again. Lot had no credibility with his sons-in-law or with any members of his family living outside his home. When it comes time to leave, the angels have to physically drag Lot out of their house. This foot-dragging will continue until they are safe.

The phrase *the Lord being merciful to him* is just as more accurately translated on account of Y^{e}howah's grace upon him. There is no verb here; we have the feminine singular

construct of chem^{e}lâh (חֶלְמֵה) [pronounced *khehm-LAW*], which means *compassion, mercy, graciousness; pity*. Strong's #2551 BDB #328. This is affixed to Y^{e}howah, giving us *the compassion [mercy, graciousness] of Y^{e}howah*. This is followed not by the lâmed preposition (which means *to*) but by a preposition that means *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. The angels seize Lot and his family because *the graciousness of God [is] upon him*.

Gen. 19:12–16 (HCSB): Then the angels said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here: a son-in-law, your sons and daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of this place, for we are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people is great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were going to marry his daughters. "Get up," he said. "Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. At the crack of dawn the angels urged Lot on: "Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he hesitated, so, because of the LORD's compassion for him, the men grabbed his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters. And they brought him out and left him outside the city.

Lot had no luck with anyone outside of his own house. He could not convince anyone of the judgment that is to come upon them. We have such warnings today, but they are not warnings of sulfur pouring down from above. There are Biblical warnings concerning our corporate relationship to God. That is what Sodom is all about—Sodom's corporate relationship to God is an outcry that has come up to God.

A state cannot sponsor sin and expect that the end result will be good. The most obvious application is state-sponsored homosexual marriages. No good will ever come of any state or country legalizing gay marriage. Another example is, legalized gambling, where a state endorsing various sins in order to achieve some higher good (like increased revenue to the state). California has done this to help with their budgetary matters and how well has that worked out? When it comes to legalizing and drawing revenue from sin, Nevada ought to be the most prosperous state in the union, but it is not.

Next time, Lot will stop the angels, and suggest plan B instead.

Lesson 208 Genesis 19:1–21 — God's Plan A; Lot's Plan B

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 19:1–16 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the ground and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked

unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And the men of Sodom called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may [sexually] know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But the men of Sodom said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men [the two angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door. Then the men [the angels] said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, on account of Y^{e}howah grace being upon him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

The angels have managed to get 4 members of the Lot family to the outskirts of the city of Sodom.

Gen 19:17 And as they brought them out, one [angel] said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away."

It is at this point that the angels will leave it up to Lot to take his family to safety. Apart from the word *them,* every verb and every personal pronoun in this verse is a masculine singular. Lot is in command of his family, and one angel is giving him marching orders. This is not some family discussion which is taking place here.

To look back is the verb nâbaṭ (טָבַנ) [pronounced *naw^{b}-VAHT*], which means, *to look intently at, to examine carefully; to rest one's eyes upon [something]; to look, to behold;* metaphorically, *to regard, to consider; to bear patiently* (these are all Hiphil meanings). Strong's #5027 BDB #613. Therefore, Lot is being warned, not to turn around and look back with great intensity. Obviously, this warning applies to the rest of his family.

The destruction is going to come suddenly, and this appears to be either a volcanic explosion or an explosion of oil from beneath the ground. The reason I say this is, they are not to step, to look back fondly, or to stop anywhere in the valley. So the valley is going to be flooded. They have to get to the hills or they will be swept away. These are probably various kinds of oil products which are extremely hot and will explode out of the ground and

drown this valley, as well as fiery sulfur rain down from the sky (which probably is a part of the explosion, as it is not unusual for sulfur to be found with naturally occurring petroleum products).

This may seem horrendous, but apparently these people have been, for some time, raping and killing strangers who wandered into their city; and no mercy was afforded them. Rape and killing was just sport to these people—some participated and some were spectators. But this was a sport all the males of the town enjoyed. Therefore, God meets their ferocity and heartlessness with a greater ferocity.

As an application of this, when we deal with national enemies who are ferocious, then we meet them with a greater force (something which is taught throughout the Bible).[16]

Gen 19:17 And as they brought them out, one [angel] said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away."

The word found here and often translated *valley* is actually kikâr (כִּכָּר) [pronounced *kik-KAWR*], which means, *a circle, a globe; a circular tract of land, a round district*. This five cities made up somewhat of a circular tract of land. Strong's #3603 BDB #503

Recall from Gen. 14:10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell into them, but some survivors fled to the hills. (NET Bible). You will recall that the people of Sodom were not militarily prepared for their enemies from the east; they were not even trained on their own terrain (it appears that they attempted to use their land against the Kings of the East, except that the Kings from the East attacked them from the other side, so that their backs were to the Valley of Siddim—they were trying to set things up so it was the other way around). However, there was a great deal of petroleum and/or natural gas and/or sulfur there, some of which was gathered into pits in the valley near the Dead Sea. Their enemies used their own landscape against them, and now God would destroy them with their own landscape.

This may seem odd to you, for petroleum in various forms to be leaking out of the earth, but it is quite common, actually. From Wikipedia: *Petroleum seeps are quite common in such areas of the world...Natural products associated with these seeps include bitumen, pitch, asphalt and tar*.[17] Such seepage is found all over the world: *Oil residue in seafloor sediments that comes from natural petroleum seeps off Santa Barbara, Calif., is equivalent to between 8 to 80 Exxon Valdez oil spills, according to a new study by researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) and the University of California, Santa*

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[16] You may saying to yourself, "What about 'Turn the other cheek'?" In context, that was reference to a personal conflict, not a national one. The same is true with Love your enemies. This does not mean that there is not a national application of these principles (which we correctly applied in the aftermath of WWII), but that is because we involved ourselves in WWII with a greater (not proportional) force.

[17] From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petroleum_seep accessed September 12, 2012.

Barbara (UCSB).[18] So this entire area of Sodom will apparently become flooded with these things.

So, Lot has just observed all of his town turn against him and be willing to kill him; and he saw these men all struck blind. Next, these angels grab a hold of Lot and his family and begin to drag them to safety, and then Lot says...

Gen 19:18 And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords.

Now, in the midst of all this, Lot wants to argue with the angels. Time is of the essence, to the point where the angels are hauling these people to safety, and Lot stops the show, saying, "Oh, no, my lords." Do you see why his testimony to his sons-in-law may not have been very strong? Even he has a difficult time buying into all of this. And remember what Lot has just witnessed—all of his male friends and neighbors were gathered out in front of his house ready to kill him and rape his guests, and they had all been struck blind. So, it was not a matter of these angels needing to hand him some sort of credentials.

Yet, notice what Lot wants to do. He wants to stop right there in the middle of everything and say, "Okay, let's discuss our options, if you don't mind." He's saying *no,* politely, but the word is still *no*.

In first reading this, I thought, said, "Are you kidding me?" I wanted to reach right into the narrative, grab Lot and shake him." As if I have never resisted the will of God.

Contrast Lot's reaction with Abraham, who, when he was 100 and his wife was 99, and Isaac had not yet been born, and God tells him, "You need to circumcise all of the males in preparation for Isaac being born." Did Abraham say, "Oh, no, my Lord; I've done a lot of stuff that You asked me to do, but circumcise all of the males who are associated with me, who work for me or who are my slaves? Are you kidding me?" However, if you will recall, that was not how Abraham reacted. But Lot—that is pretty much what he has been doing all along. And, here he does it when the very ground below him is about to explode.

This helps us to get a good understanding as to the difference between Abraham and Lot. To Abraham, what God required him to do, even though it was painful—and I guarantee you, few males would seriously contemplate circumcision past the age of 1—Abraham was told to do this, and so he did. Everyone, including him, got circumcised.

So, Lot continues this discussion with the angel who has latched onto his wrist:

Gen 19:19 Behold, your servant has found grace in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die.

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[18] From: http://www.isa.org/InTechTemplate.cfm?template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=76955 accessed September 12, 2012.

Lot does not believe that he can make it to the hills. It is possible that the destruction of Sodom has already begun, and that Lot and his family can see it. However, Lot apparently does not believe that he is physically capable of escaping to the hills. So, here, God is going to allow Lot to go his own way, and yet still preserve him.

Throughout all of this, you ought to be struck by how willful and bullheaded Lot is, who is constantly offering up a plan B to God's plan A. If it were up to me, Lot would have been now under 10 feet of fiery sulfur and boiling oil from underground; but God is a great deal more gracious than I am. God's graciousness explains a lot, because most of us have spiritual lives more similar to Lot's than to Abraham's.

It is with this chapter that you really begin to get a feel for just how different Lot and Abraham are. When God came to Abraham, Abraham listened, he believed, and he acted on his faith. God sends angels to Lot, makes certain that Lot recognizes that this is a supernatural situation (by blinding the homosexual rapists), which at once identifies these angels as being far more than men; as well as indicating that they are there to deliver Lot and his family.

Lot has a lot more evidence to deal with, and yet, he's come up with his own plan. "And you seem to be like a great guy," he says to the angel, "and you have been so gracious to me by saving me; so, if you would be so kind as to allow me to tweak your plan just a little, because otherwise, I would probably die."

Do you grasp this? Lot thinks that these angels—who have just blinded a dangerous mob of sexually-charged men and who are about to destroy this area—are not smart enough to give Lot a safe place to go to. "You guys are okay with this quelling the homosexual rapists, and what not; and I am sure you're going to do a fine job destroying this area, but I don't think you have really thought it out. You want me to zig, and I think it is most apparent that I ought to zag."

There are a lot of clear mandates in the Word of God. God has defined specific relationships and has set specific boundaries on some of these relationships. God's view of things may not be our view of things, because we have been raised up in a world where some things that the Word of God says sound—how should I put this?—*intolerant*. Let me give you a few examples: the man's dominance over a woman in marriage; the idea that the marriage of a husband and wife is the ideal place where children can be raised up; and the idea that homosexual activity is sinful and wrong.

So there is no misunderstanding, in every generation, there are things which do not jive with the Word of God; however, you always go with the Word of God; you do not go along with your society's norms and standards (which are often generational and often a matter of propaganda). When you find your thinking lining up more with your contemporary society than with the Word of God, then you are not getting enough spiritual food. When you find yourself trying to bend the Bible to fit to what you believe, rather than bending what it is you believe to be in accordance with Scripture, then you are not growing spiritually. As God tells us: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not

My ways." This is the LORD's declaration. "For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8–9; HCSB).

Up until now, Lot has been just going along with his society; and when God indicates that he is in the wrong place at the wrong time, and here is what he needs to do, Lot wants to discuss it and to bargain for a place that he believes to be more suitable.

It ought to be clear to you why God has chosen Abraham and not Lot. Had God come to Lot and told him that he needed to be circumcised, do you think there might have been some resistence? Do you think that Lot may have wanted to discuss his other options with God? Abraham obeyed God in this because he trusted God. Here, in the context of this narrative, despite all that has happened this night, Lot is still resistant to the will of God.

Gen 19:20 [Lot continues to *reason* with the angel] Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there--is it not a little one?--and my life will be saved!"

Lot asks if the angels will allow him to escape to a small city which is nearby. It appears to be one of the 5 cities which God intended to overthrow. He is probably pointing out this particular city, explaining where it is.

We do not know what Lot's motivation was. Was he physically unable to escape into the hills? Did he simply want to have some sort of civilization, even if it is just a small town? Maybe a small city was in consideration for his wife? His stated reason was, the mountains were too far, so, just given him leave to go to this city, Zoar. However, bear in mind, the reason that Lot gives may or may not be the real reason *why* he wanted to go to Zoar. Whatever the motivation was, God said plan A and Lot decided to argue for plan B instead.

Gen 19:18–20 And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords. Behold, your servant has found grace in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there--is it not a little one?--and my life will be saved!"

You may not realize it, but in the Hebrew, this is a number of very short, staccato phrases, typical of a person who has been running and is now out of breath.

Gen 19:21 He [the angel] said to him, "Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.

The angel agrees not to destroy the city that Lot desires to flee to. Why is this recorded in the Word of God? Why do we need to know that Lot can flee to a small city and that area will be preserved? When it comes to believers being the preservative of a geographical area, proportion seems to be involved. That is, Lot and his family were not

large enough to preserve this entire area, or the city of Sodom. God, based upon Abraham's face to face prayer with Him, was willing to preserve all of the Sodom area if there were ten believers. But there were not. However, for a smaller city, the pivot of three (Lot and his two daughters) will be sufficient to preserve that small area.

I want you to notice that Lot's prayer here is very similar to Abraham's prayer. Abraham was, of course, praying directly to God; and Lot is speaking to angels who apparently have some leeway in how they deal with Lot and his family.

So, what is the difference between plan A and plan B? Under plan A, God may have the men who are really designed for Lot's daughters also living in those hills; that is, that might be where their right men are residing—at the time that Lot is told to go up to the mountains. Or, plan A could have been to eventually return to Abraham; and, again, there would have very likely been men for Lot's daughters. However, where the Lot family ends up, these daughters of Lot will give up on the idea of marriage and family. That is Lot's plan B, which is always inferior to God's plan B.

Lesson 209 Genesis 19:1–24 The Mechanics of God's Judgment of Sodom

We are nearing the end of this first part of in Gen. 19. Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 19:1–21 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the ground and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And the men of Sodom called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may [sexually] know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But the men of Sodom said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men [the two angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door. Then the men [the angels] said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-

law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, on account of Y^{e}howah grace being upon him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one [angel] said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away." And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords. Behold, your servant has found grace in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there--is it not a little one?--and my life will be saved!" He [the angel] said to him, "Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.

As we have studied, even in the midst of their running, Lot stops everything and tells the two angels that it is time to discuss where he wants to go.

Gen 19:22 [The angel continues speaking to Lot] Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Obviously, the specific directions were for the angels to allow Lot and his family to escape before bringing judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. God protects and preserves His Own. And we may not care much for some of the people that God preserves, but God has preserved Lot for three reasons (1) he believes in Jehovah Elohim; (2) he is related to Abraham; and (3) Abraham prayed on Lot's behalf. These things combined get Lot and his family a lot of slack. Grace by association is found again and again in Scripture.

We have been studying the judgment of Sodom and the deliverance of Lot and his family from that judgment.

It ought to be clear that Lot does not have the same level of spiritual growth as Abraham. However, when faced with the situation, with what God requires, as told to him by the angels, note that Lot and his immediate family do respond. Not perfectly; but they did what God told them to do, more or less.

By this time, Lot ought to be as spiritually advanced as Abraham, but he is nowhere near Abraham. However, Lot is willing to obey God's clear commands, but with some modifications, however.

If you have ever been in management or you have owned a company, you know that, for some jobs that have to be done, if you choose Charlie Brown, that job is going to get done and done well; but if you choose Lucy Van Pelt, well, then, that is a whole other story. She might to do the job and, in fact, she might do a wonderful job. However, she might not. You might give her an outline as to what you would like to see done, and you know that, much of the time, she is going to do something which falls outside of that outline. Or she will simply argue as to the end result.

That is like Lot and Abraham; and it is like you and ____. God has various things that are a part of His plan. You may wonder why you do not seem to have much of a place in his plan, but your friend ____ seems to have a lot going on. God knows who He can depend upon; God knows who is going to act within His will and who will not. Maybe I got you and your friend mixed up in this illustration?

Now, you may not think that you really want to participate. You may understand that you are saved and that God is not going to take that away from you (eternal security). And you're cool with that. However, what football fan would not rather be the one who actually catches that 50 yard pass, or sacks the quarterback before he gets one off; and do this before a crowd of millions? This is a choice that we all have in the spiritual life. You can be the most obsequious nobody in the world, and still play a pivotal part in the plan of God.

Look at Abraham, the most famous person from his time period. He had one son. He did not own any land, insofar as we know (apart from a small plot of land he will buy for a burial plot). He was not some great political figure. He was a great businessman and rancher, but that was about all. And yet, more people know who Abraham is than any other king or pharaoh from that same time period.

If you sat down and listed all of the celebrities that you know: the political figures, the movie stars, the philanthropists, the ultra-rich and well-known. Every single one of us has the ability to be more famous than any of these people. We can do things which, in essence, last forever, as we perform acts of divine good; and our impact on human history can be dramatic and permanent, even though there might be only 10 people out there right now who actually know us by name.

We all live in the Church Age at this point in time; and God has a plan for each one of us in this dispensation; and this plan is put into action by believing in Jesus Christ, by keeping short accounts with God with regards to your sins, by learning Bible doctrine, and by obedience to His Word. We all are given the Holy Spirit; therefore, every single one of us has great potential.

We know the great people of the past: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, and Paul. There is absolutely no reason why your name cannot be among these names. You have every bit as much power and potential as any of these men had. Today all believers have the Holy Spirit and the complete Word of God. There is no excuse. We will stand before Jesus at the Great White Throne, and our works will be evaluated, whether they are human good that will be burned up or whether they are divine good that will not be destroyed (1Cor. 3:9–15). Not only will there be millions who observe this, but there will be millions of witnesses to our acts of divine good when they occur (Heb. 12:1). These acts will also be the basis for our rewards in heaven.

Rush Limbaugh has said, "People like to matter." They want to feel like their life has some meaning, some importance; so often, their involvement in the green movement makes them feel as if they are really doing something; that they are really saving the earth for future generations. In the plan of God, we actually do matter. In the Church Age,

everyone has the same portfolio of divine operating assets to begin with along with one or more spiritual gifts. There is absolutely no reason why you cannot catch the 50 yard pass or sack the quarterback of the other team. And you have something that Abraham, David, Paul and Peter did not have: the completed Word of God. You also have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In fact, all of the divine operating assets that Jesus possessed in His humanity, you have; plus the completed Word of God.

So there is no misunderstanding, you do not necessarily have to be out there in front of the crowd; as that may not suit your personality. There are very few people like Billy Graham, who could present to gospel to millions. Also, there would not be that sort of response today; and that may not be your thing, and that is fine. What God intends for you is completely within your power and your ability and even your personality type. The keys are, you stay in fellowship for as long a period as possible, and you grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18). When it comes to divine production, that is grace from God. If you are prepared, it will happen.

Abraham's life mattered. His prayer to God had power. Without this prayer, it is unlikely that God would have saved Lot. You see, when it comes to Lot, most of his life will be inconsequential (although he will spend eternity in the presence of God). He is good for some illustrations of how not to do things.

Speaking of *how not to do things,* Lot has made a request to change his eventual direction. Going up to the mountains is too far; he can't make it; and there is this little city of Zoar which is closer—that's where he wants to go. This completely explains Lot's life: God has plan A for Lot; Lot always wants to go with plan B.

Gen 19:21–22 He [the angel] said to him, "Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Zoar means *to be small, to be insignificant*. We may surmise two things from this: (1) this was a very small village, which God would protect if Lot and his family are there; (2) this may be the word that we use to describe Lot's place in the plan of God. On the one hand, you have Abraham, who is fundamental to human history; he is the father of the Jewish race. On the other hand, you have Lot, who is somewhat small and insignificant by comparison. Both men would have children who would become great races, but those who came from Lot (the Moabites and Ammonites) will eventually die out. Those who came from Abraham, the Jews, are with us to this day, 4000 years later. It is just like human good versus divine good. The difference is quite simple: when you follow God's plan, results are permanent; when you follow your own plan, the results are temporary. As we will later find out, even Lot moving to Zoar (plan B) would be a temporary thing.

Gen 19:23 The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

Lot and family left at the crack of dawn, and it was probably somewhere between 10 and noon when they arrived in Zoar. Zoar means *insignificance,* so, this verse actually reads:

The sun had risen over the land when Lot entered into "Insignificance." This is pretty much a description of Lot's entire life, after separating from Abraham.

Gen 19:24 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven.

Apparently, as they drew near to the city, God began to rain down sulfur and fire, which suggests to me a volcanic eruption of some sort, which apparently involved petroleum deposits, which might include natural gas. Given the heat of the earth, whatever fire had been lit beneath the earth (or had become lit as it reached the surface), the boiling hot oil and/or natural gas formed a gusher which was on fire as well. The amount of hot petroleum which came to the surface was enough to destroy all living things in this geographical area. However, the exact nature of this is unknown to us; we do not know, apart from what we read here, that sulfur and fire came from God out of the sky. Was this a supernatural event? Possibly, but we really do not know.

There are quite a number of websites who make very persuasive arguments that the locations of Sodom and Gomorrah have been found; they are in the valley mostly south of the Dead Sea. And that burned sulfur has been found as well. Apparently there has been found balls of sulfur encased in a burned sulfur compound in these areas.

The map[19] on the right gives the possible locations of these 5 cities (I think that the locations on this map have them spread too far apart). On this same webpage is a 28 min. film on Sodom and Gomorrah, along with many pictures of the area and even pictures of these sulfur balls which have been found.

I have suggested that there were possible explosions of natural gas or various petroleum products which included sulfur as well. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, *Coal, petroleum, and natural gas contain sulfur compounds*.[20] Wikipedia tells us that *elemental sulfur was once extracted from salt domes where it sometimes*

[19] From http://www.arkdiscovery.com/dead_sea2.jpg accessed October 2, 2012.

[20] http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/572661/sulfur-S/279407/Natural-occurrence-and-distribution accessed October 2, 2012.

occurs in nearly pure form.[21] Notice where this is all taking place; around the Salt Sea, which, if memory serves has the highest concentration of salts of any salt sea in the world. What happened to Lot's wife? She was turned into a pillar of salt. So, even though we do not know exactly what occurred, it is not out of the question that there was an explosion of a huge natural gas deposit, which contained a great deal of sulfur, and that the sulfur rained down on the cities that God had judged. One more piece of corroborating evidence is that, under the Mediterranean Sea, less than 200 miles from these sites, there have been found huge deposits of natural gas.[22]

The angels also appear to take part in this judgment in some way, although the Bible does not explain exactly what the angels do. They specifically said to Lot: "For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and **the LORD has sent us to destroy it**." (Gen. 19:13). Then, when Lot asked if he could go to a small city instead of escaping into the hills, one angel said, "Behold, I grant you this favor also, that **I will not overthrow the city** of which you have spoken. Escape there quickly, for **I can do nothing** until you arrive there." (Gen. 19:21–22). So, the angels clearly take part in this destruction, but we do not really know how these duties are divided up.

God is said to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah as well. Then Abraham said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." The Lord answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." (Gen. 18:32). Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground (Gen. 19:24–25). What is likely the case is, God did this through intermediaries; through the angels. God gave the orders, and in that capacity, He was the One to rain down fire and sulfur. However, it is the angels who actually did whatever was necessary for this to actually happen.

In like manner, God uses us, believers in Jesus Christ, in His plan as well. There are few of us who will be called upon to destroy complete cities, but we all have a place in God's plan to do good works. However, in the Church Age, this means (1) we are believers in Jesus Christ; (2) we are in fellowship with God, and therefore filled with the Holy Spirit; and (3) we know the Word of God. Let me add to this, most believers, at some point in time, ought to have a clue as to what their spiritual gift (s) is (are). In many cases, this involves some preparation in that particular area. But, just as God uses the angels to destroy Sodom, God uses us as believers as well to forward His purpose in this world.

[21] From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulfur accessed October 2, 2012.

[22] From http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2012/07/120703-israel-new-natural-gas/ accessed October 2, 2012.

Gen 19:1–24 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the ground and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And the men of Sodom called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may [sexually] know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But the men of Sodom said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men [the two angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door. Then the men [the angels] said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, on account of Y^{e}howah grace being upon him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one [angel] said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away." And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords. Behold, your servant has found grace in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there--is it not a little one?--and my life will be saved!" He [the angel] said to him, "Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. [The angel continues speaking to Lot] Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven.

The Angels came to Lot's family to rescue them and anyone related to them who chose to go with them. In the midst of being led to safety, Lot decides that he cannot go as far as the angels have told him to go, so he asked to go to the city of Zoar instead, which is an insignificant city. About the time that Lot arrived in Zoar, God rained down fire and

sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah. As discussed in the previous lesson, this probably involved natural gas or petroleum products as well as sulphur.

Gen 19:25 And He [God] overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

Although the mechanics are not given here, that does not mean that God necessarily acted directly. That is, what we read could actually be what the angels do. Many times in Scripture, the person in charge is said to do something (like, for instance, David conquers Moab, but David does not personally even go to the battlefield). However, those under his command go to the battlefield and defeat the army of Moab. Those acting under her orders defeat Moab, and David, who issues the orders, is the person who ultimately is given credit for what he orders.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, and all of those in the cities. The sulfur and fire came to them out of heaven; however, it is possible that this was part of an eruption or that this fire ignited the springs of natural gas, oil and related liquids in this area. In any case, the valley and their fields of crops were destroyed. Throughout the Old Testament Bible and in ancient history as well, there are many examples of cities and geographical areas which have been absolutely destroyed and made inhabitable for centuries. This suggests that such a disaster is a judgment from God. Throughout the Bible, fire is associated with God's judgment.

Genesis sets up the foundation for almost every major doctrine in the Word of God. Here is another example.

There is a doctrine known as the Stages of Discipline for a Nation (which R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls *the Cycles of Discipline*), and I want you to notice that we actually find the final 2 stages, plus one more, for Sodom, both here and in Gen. 14.

What we have done here is taken the information given to us about Sodom and putting this into a series of consecutive stages, which God used against nations which had gotten out of hand. God is dealing with Sodom as a corporate entity.

Sodom and the Final 3 Stages of National Discipline

Stage of Discipline	Text/Commentary
Stage 4: Control of a country by an external power.	In Gen. 14, the people of this general area were paying tribute to Chedorlaomer. This means that this king from the far east had come to this area and had conquered this degenerate people, and so they had to pay taxes (tribute) to him as part of their subjugation to him. Gen. 14:1–4 Lev. 26:23–26.

Sodom and the Final 3 Stages of National Discipline	
Stage of Discipline	**Text/Commentary**
Stage 5: Removal of the inhabitants of a country by an external power.	When they stopped paying tribute, Chedorlaomer came to this region with some of his friends, and they took the people of Sodom captive and were about to remove them from this land. Abraham intervened, as their savior, and preserved their lives. In their association with Abraham, these people were given some slack. Now, they could have turned toward the God that Abraham worshiped, and that would have changed everything for them. Gen. 14:5–16 Lev. 26:27–38.
Stage 6: The destruction of a nation by an external power.	Finally here, in Gen. 19, these people have become so degenerate that God will absolutely destroy them. See also Jer. 10:25 Ezek. 25:6–8 35:5–10
When we get to Lev. 26, you may wonder, why don't we have this final stage of discipline named? Easy: God is not going to completely destroy Jerusalem or His holy mountain; God is not going to be destroying all of the Jews. Therefore, God did not have to warn the Jews of this final act of discipline.	

And just in case you would like to do some extra-credit study:

We should be aware that these stages of discipline, #1–5, were specifically designed by God for Israel. That means that, although our own nation may receive discipline, there is no requirement for it to follow these stages exactly.
Links to the 5 Cycles (Stages) of [National] Discipline
R. B. Thieme, Jr. chart (posted by Joe Griffin Ministries): http://admin.joegriffin.org/Visuals/Five%20Cycles%20of%20Discipline-Lev.26.pdf Denver Bible Church: http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/fivecycles.html Grace and Truth Bible Ministries: http://www.gtbm.org/prayer.php?date=2009-09-20 R. B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries (taken from notes): http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/1568429/posts
Although we do not necessarily follow these stages exactly, these are a good indicator of where a nation is at any given time.

Gen 19:25 And He [God] overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

God allows His judgments to stand for a very long time, so that we can see them with our own eyes and recognize what a judgment from God is like. As mentioned earlier, even Josephus said that there were signs of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah that he and his contemporaries could see 3000 years later.

I believe that God uses natural disasters, like the tsunami that came up against Thailand and southeastern Asia; the Katrina disaster in New Orleans; it can be man-made destruction, like the atomic weapons used against Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and it can be a medical disaster, such as the AIDS virus. People can observe these things and have different impressions and offer different explanations, but these are judgments from God. These are not random events.

I realize that this is an unpopular concept to maintain today, but let me suggest to you that all natural disasters are judgments by God against a specific population, and that God also spares specific people in these judgments (just as we are seeing in Gen. 19). Many times we have seen, particularly in the Midwest as of late, such disasters turn the people of that area toward God. Even in heathen New York City, after the 9/11 attacks, the infrequently attended churches had many more who began to attend church. God does not just bring destruction to a geographical area to get more people in church or to get more people to turn towards Him; but it indicates that the people of that area are turning further and further away from Him. These are warnings from God, just as Sodom had successive warnings throughout her history. God also is able to protect that which is His, illustrated by this one lone house left out of an entire neighborhood turned to rubble on the Bolivar peninsula near Galveston. For those who do not know, this is a photograph of a neighborhood filled with houses which hurricane Ike devastated.

Back to Lot and company:

Gen 19:26 But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

By this time, Lot, his wife, and their two daughters were moving along on their own. What seems to be the case is, they hear the great explosions, and the wife, disobeying what the angels said ("Don't stop or look back"), looked back to her city.

It says here that she became a pillar of salt. She was apparently struck dead. Usually, this verse is portrayed with her just standing there, and her body is suddenly transformed somehow into salt. However, it is possible that she was struck down with sulfur and was somehow preserved there whole. This is right in the general area of the Salt Sea, so, what may explain this is, she was struck dead, but in the process was infused with salt, which preserved her body for a long period of time. Therefore, this process does not need to be instantaneous. That is, there is no reason to think that, in one instant, she is alive, and in the next, she is a pillar of salt.

> We have a similar approach suggested by the Amplified Bible: Lot's wife not only "looked back" to where her heart's interests were, but she lingered behind; and probably overtaken by the fire and brimstone, her dead body became incrusted with salt, which, in that salt-packed area now the Dead Sea, grew larger with more incrustations--a veritable "pillar of salt." In fact, at the southern end of the Dead Sea there is a mountain of table salt called Jebel Usdum, "Mount of Sodom." It is about six miles long, three miles wide, and 1,000 feet high. It is covered with a crust of earth several feet thick, but the rest of the mountain is said to be solid salt (George T. B. Davis, Rebuilding Palestine According to Prophecy). Somewhere in this area Lot's wife looked back to where her treasures and her heart were, and "she became a pillar of salt." Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).[23]

The word for pillar suggests that she is a garrison or an outpost (that is what the word actually means); she remained outside of Zoar for a time, looking. Lot entered into Zoar, probably with his family behind him, but, at some point, Lot's wife stopped. It may be a mile or two back. And she is staring at the city as God is destroying the cities, the people and even the vegetation. They had been warned to run all the way to Zoar, but Lot's wife did not. So, with all of the raining down of fire and sulphur, she is caught in this. She does not freeze like some statue, but she is killed by the hot fiery gas combined with sulphur that gushes out of the sky upon her, because she did not run all of the way to Zoar. Being that they are near the Dead Sea, her body is preserved to some extent by the salt that is there. Perhaps there are eruptions right there where she is, and these eruptions include the salt water from the Dead Sea. Perhaps she was knocked over into a salt marsh. Whatever the case, she is killed, but, to some extent, her body is preserved by salt.

Gen 19:26 But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

This suggests to me, along with many other passages in Genesis, that this book existed long before Moses came on the scene. It may not have been committed to writing, but

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[23] From http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis%2019;&version=AMP accessed September 4, 2012.

many people knew it from memory; and there were things like Lot's wife as a pillar of salt that existed for a few decades which confirmed the historicity of Genesis.

It is impossible to examine these verbs to determine whether Lot's wife was transformed over a period of time or whether it was instantaneous. Although the imperfect tense is used here, which often refers to continuous or extended action, when found in a series of imperfect verbs with wâw consecutives, we are simply referring to a series of consecutive or logical actions, whose duration of action may be lengthy or not.

V. 27 is our, *meanwhile, back at the ranch* verse:

Gen 19:27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD.

So far, we have seen God's will overruling Lot and his family, despite their persistence to stay out of God's will. The angels grabbed their hands and pulled them out of their home. Then we had the permissive will of God, where God said, "I want you to go up into the hills" and they requested to go to Zoar, a small city, instead. So, even faced with a great disaster, with proofs that they saw with their own eyes, and they still argue with God's will. Then Lot's wife turned around, disobeying the Lord, and was killed and eventually turned into a pillar of salt.

However, in contrast, notice what Abraham does. He goes to the place where he stood before the Lord before. Abraham, of his own volition, desires to speak to God again and he goes to the place where he last spoke to God. This is God's will.

The modern-day equivalent to this is Bible class. We do not have a place where we literally speak with God, but there is a place where He speaks to us, and that is Bible class, whether this is around a computer, where an MP3 file is played, ideally gathered with others, or in a brick and mortar building, where someone is teaching the Word of God live (whenever possible, we ought to all physically attend a doctrinal church).

When Abraham does this—walking over to the place where he previously stood before the Lord—he is exercising his desire to know God's will; he is desiring to speak to God; he is desiring to hear from God. For us, this ought to be daily.

Gen 19:28 And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

The destruction in Sodom and Gomorrah was so great that, Abraham was able to see the smoke from it from where he lived. He could see the smoke rising up, as if these cities were great furnaces. No doubt, these cities were consumed with fire in all of this. It is great enough to be observed from a distance of several miles.

Gen 19:29 So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and He therefore sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

Since God is omniscient, He does not *remember* anything; He knows everything. The word *remember* is an anthropopathism, ascribing to God human characteristics which He does not possess in such a way that we might better understand His actions.

With v. 29, we look back in time, a few days. That God remembered Abraham means, Abraham reasoned with God about the preservation of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham had a prayer and a desire behind that prayer. He figured that Lot would be protected because he assumed that there were enough believers in Sodom and Gomorrah to preserve those cities. God knew that the desire behind Abraham's prayer was to protect his nephew and family, and that is why God did. God took Lot and family out of Sodom and Gomorrah and then destroyed these cities. So God did not answer Abraham's prayer exactly, but He did answer Abraham's desire.

During the first century, the Jewish historian Josephus recorded the visible evidence of the existence of Sodom and Gomorrah in his day: "Now this country is then so sadly burnt up, that nobody cares to come at it...It was of old a most happy land, both for the fruits it bore and the riches of its cities, although it be now all burnt up. It is related how for the impiety of its inhabitants, it was burned by lightning; in consequence of which there are still the remainders of the divine fire; and the traces of the five cities are still to be seen." (Josephus in his "Wars Of The Jews", Book IV, Chapter VIII, written nearly 2000 years after this judgment).

With this, we have completed the first part of Gen. 19. However, Sodom and Gomorrah loom large over the rest of Scripture, so, before we return to Gen. 19, we need to take a look at further references to both Lot and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Lesson 211 Gen. 19 via Luke 17:22–33 NT References to Sodom and Gomorrah

Sodom and Gomorrah Postscript

This will continue for a half-dozen or so lessons:
We have just completed the first part of Gen. 19, where God has destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by means of two angels; and after these angels first saved the remnants of Lot's family.

It should have struck you as odd that, for several chapters, we have focused on Abraham and the expected birth of his son by Sarah; and suddenly, we have gone off on this Sodom and Gomorrah tangent. We are only months away, in the Abrahamic narrative, of his son of promise being born, and suddenly, we find ourselves with Lot in Sodom. Part of the reason for this is, there must appear to be the insertion of time between the promises of Isaac's birth and His actual birth, as this parallels the birth of our Lord (a long period of time

passes between the final prophecies of our Lord and His incarnation). Isaac's birth is parallel to our Lord's incarnation, something that we will study off in the future.

In other words, the Author of this portion of Genesis inserts the illusion of time in a literary way between the promises and birth of Isaac; whereas this time insertion will be real between the Old Testament prophecies and the birth of our Lord.[24]

What we find with Abraham's soon-to-be-born son and with Lot living at ground zero before the judgment, is that these are disparate clusters of human events taking place in history along side one another. In one place, there is Abraham, waiting on God, expecting to somehow being able to impregnate his wife, even though neither of them is physically able to produce a child. And at the very same time, just down the road from them, where Lot (Abraham's nephew) and his family live, Sodom and 4 other cities have descended deeply into lawlessness, to a point where divine judgment is called for.

God is at work in both places. God is with Abraham on his ranch and God is going to Sodom to judge them for their sinfulness. This sort of thing occurs today in adjacent areas, all over the world. God is involved, whether man is faithful or degenerate. Jesus Christ controls history for the glory of God. And the key is not God's love but God's justice. But that is a topic also for the future.

Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned many times in the Old and New Testaments. They are used over and over again as warnings to believers in the Age of Israel and to us believers in the Church Age. For this reason, we have spent a great deal of time on this portion of Gen. 19. If Jesus talks about Sodom and Gomorrah, if Paul mentions it, and if both Peter and John find it worth talking about, then Sodom and Gomorrah ought to be something that you ought to know a lot about (this is why we will spend nearly 20 lessons on this topic).

Lot is mentioned twice in the New Testament. Jesus uses him in an illustration in Luke 17:28–32; however, to understand what is being said, we need to back up and understand the entire context. And, in order to understand the context, we need to understand some terminology and some eschatology (which is, *the doctrine of future things*).

All disciplines require a vocabulary. No matter what profession you are in, you have learned a vocabulary specific to that profession. In most professions, you could string together a number of words into a sentence that those in your profession would understand, but that those outside your profession would not fully grasp. In this study of Genesis, you will note that an important part of this study is the development of a theological vocabulary, because with this theological vocabulary comes spiritual understanding. A concept is developed and explained, and then it is given a name. Or,

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[24] That the completion of the Old Testament took place hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ is not disputed by any historian that I am aware of.

there are things about which you are already aware, but you need to know the proper names for them, so that the concept itself is then easy to refer to.

In order to understand what Jesus is teaching, we need to understand a number of things first:

Eschatological Vocabulary	
Vocabulary	**Explanation**
First Advent	The 1st Advent is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It is when our Lord walked on this earth as a man. This is roughly between 5 B.C. and A.D. 30.
Dispensation	This word literally refers to the *administration of a household*. However, it has come to mean in modern theology an epoch during which God has a particular plan for that era, e.g., the Age of Israel or the Church Age. Eph. 1:7–10 3:1–10 Col. 1:23–29. For this reason, when we see the word *dispensation* in the Bible, we need to not think of it as an epoch but as the way that God administers His household. However, outside of the Bible, the word also includes the idea of a period of time. See the **Doctrine of Dispensations** (HTML) (PDF) for more information.
The Dispensation of the Hypostatic Union	The time period is at least 3–4 years of our Lord's public ministry, and it may take in His entire physical life. This time period might be seen as a hinge between the Age of Israel and the Church Age. During this period of time, Jesus Christ fulfills all of the Mosaic Law and all of the prophecies of the Old Testament, while simultaneously living the spiritual life that would be utilized by believers today in the Church Age. As R. B. Thieme, Jr. used to say, our Lord *test drove* the spiritual life for us. We draw upon the exact same spiritual assets as our Lord did during His earthly ministry.
Church Age	This is the era in which we live right now, where God works through the church universal, which is through those who believe in Him. God also works primarily through the local church through the power of His Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. These are the means by which believers grow spiritually. Most divine good is produced in this age as a result of the correct function of the local church in guiding believers to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eschatological Vocabulary	
Vocabulary	**Explanation**
Mystery doctrines	Doctrines which are specific to the Church Age, e.g., the filling of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit, the universal priesthood. Like many technical words found in the Pauline epistles, Paul appropriated this word from another discipline and applied it to Christian doctrine. Originally, this word refers to *doctrines and principles known within a particular cult or organization, but not known to outsiders*. Paul used this word to apply the Church Age doctrines, which would not have been known to those in the Age of Israel. The word *mystery* simply refers to some aspect of Church Age doctrine. Rev. 16:25–26 1Cor. 2:7–8
Rapture	The rapture is when Jesus returns for believers in the Church Age. We will meet our Lord in the air. 1Cor. 15:51–54 1Thess. 4:15–17 2Thess. 2:1–3[25]
Tribulation	The Tribulation will occur after the termination of the Church Age, which is the removal of all believers from planet earth via the rapture. The Tribulation will be a shortened 7 years prior to the 2nd Advent, which is then followed by the Millennium. The Tribulation is actually the final 7 years of the Age of Israel, which was interrupted by the Church Age (which concept will be more thoroughly explained below). Matt. 24:15–31
Second Advent	Different from the rapture (which occurs at the beginning of the Tribulation), the 2nd Advent is when Jesus returns and cleanses the earth of unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation and begins the next dispensation with His Millennial reign (which is presented in the gospels as *the Kingdom of God*). Matt. 24:27, 30–31, 36–39 Mark 14:61–62 Luke 9:26–27 17:30 Acts 1:11 Col. 3:4 1Thess. 5:2–4 Rev. 1:7 3:11. The 2nd Advent in connection with the Tribulation is often called, *the Day of the Lord*.
The Day of the Lord	This can refer to a portion of the Tribulation or to the return of Jesus Christ when He will destroy all of the armies who are converging upon nation Israel. Jer. 46:10 Acts 2:20 1Thess. 5:2 (This phrase is also used for the end of the Millennium in 2Peter 3:10)

[25] The key Greek word in 2Thess. 2, is apostasia (ἀποστασία) [pronounced *ahp-os-tahs-EE-ah*], is often translated *a falling away, defection, forsaking, abandonment;* and transliterated *apostasy;* but it means *departure*. Strong's #646.

Eschatological Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Explanation
Intercalation	In many Old Testament passages as well as in at least one New, the two advents of our Lord (His incarnation and then His return to this earth for judgment and reward) are presented as one event. That is, we go directly frm the 1st Advent to the 2nd. However, *intercalated* between these two events is the Church Age. Examples of this: Psalm 2:6–9 22:22–23 96:11–13 110:2–3 146:7–10 Isa. 40:3–5 42:1 Jer. 33:14–16 Luke 17:22–30. Intercalation is the key to understanding Luke 4:16–21, where Jesus is reading Scripture in a synagogue and He stops mid-verse, and rolls the scroll back up. He stopped reading mid-verse in Isa. 61:2, and then said, "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." The rest of the verse, which Jesus did not read, continued on into the 2nd Advent of Christ. There are many more examples found in the **Doctrine of Intercalation** (HTML) (PDF) (where I have color-coded the 1st and 2nd advents). If you are unaware of this concept, when you see these verses laid out—two dozen of them—where the 1st and 2nd advents are placed together but clearly distinguished by color-coding, it will be as if your eyes have just been opened. Let's just say you will have a new-found respect for eschatology and the Word of God.
Baptism of Fire	The baptism of fire is when the earth is cleansed at the 2nd advent of all unbelievers. This is when all unbelievers are removed from the earth prior to the beginning of the Millennium. Malachi 3:2–3 Matt. 3:11 24:40–51 Luke 3:16–17 2Thess. 1:7–10 1Peter 1:12 4:7. Some people confuse rapture passages with baptism of fire passages. With the rapture, believers are removed from the earth, and they meet the Lord in the air. Then the Tribulation begins with unbelievers only on the earth. In the baptism of fire, which occurs a shortened 7 years later, unbelievers are removed from this earth and believers are left behind. The Millennium then begins with believers only.
Millennium	The Millennium is the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. This is the Kingdom of God which Jesus offered to the Jews and which they rejected during His 1st Advent. This is a time of perfect environment. However, at the very end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed from his bonds and he will lead a rebellion against God and against perfect environment. Psalm 72 Isa. 11:1–9 John 8:44 Rev. 20:1–3.

Explaining each of these words completely and going over the passages where they are found would expand this one lesson by 10-fold. However, notice which two predilections of man are dealt with. Have you known unbelievers who think that their lives would be so much better if God was removed from it? They will go to all sorts of trouble to keep even crosses from being seen (in Skinner Butte, at the site of 9/11). In the Tribulation, unbelievers will have the chance to show how they can, with Satan's help, run the world. Although this time period will begin with unbelievers only; believers will emerge (something that unbelievers will try to stamp out). Another concern of mankind is the idea of perfect environment. We tend to think that, if we could just make our environment better, then our lives would be good. In the Millennium, mankind will live in perfect environment some will still rebel against Jesus Christ in the end (Rev. 20:7–11).

There are some believers who do not believe in dispensationalism. However, it is very difficult to explain the use of the words *mystery* or *dispensation* or *epoch (age)* in the Bible without using dispensational theology. However, the very fact that your pastor does not haul a baby lamb in front of the congregation and slice his throat open every Saturday should offer the simple observable proof that things are done differently in the Old and New Testaments, in the Age of Israel as over against the Church Age.

You will notice that some of these words and phrases are used in the Bible (*day of the Lord*) and some are not (like *intercalation*). It is not unusual for theology to develop theological terms not found in the Bible (such as, the word *Trinity*).

One of the more thorough listings of Scripture for the 2nd Advent:
http://www.jesusiscoming.com/Scripture.htm accessed July 4, 2012.
The **Doctrine of Intercalation**, which includes not only a listing of all the Scripture, but how it is broken down between the 1st and 2nd Advents: (HTML) (PDF).
The **Doctrine of the Baptism of Fire** is found here and here.

Eschatology, in a nutshell: Jesus was born of a virgin, had a 3 year public ministry and died on the cross for our sins—this was His *1st Advent*. His life is sometimes called the *Dispensation of the Hypostatic Union*. After Jesus died physically, was resurrected and finally ascended, the *Church Age* began (Acts 1:7–9). The *church age* continues until believers in the Church Age are *raptured* from this earth, where we meet the Lord in the air (1Thess. 4:17). The *Age of Israel* is then continued[26] and concluded, and the final 7 years of the *Age of Israel* occurs, which is known as the *Tribulation* (Matt. 24:21). Then Jesus will return to the earth, to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4), which is His *2nd Advent* (the *Tribulation* and *2nd Advent* together are known as the *Day of the Lord*). At this time, He will cleanse the earth with fire (the *baptism of fire*) after killing millions who have come to destroy Israel (Rev. 14:20).[27] In the Old Testament, there was no clear separation

[26] I have glossed over this part, but there is a reasonable explanation here, here and here. These all give roughly the same explanation, based upon Daniel's 70 weeks (or, Daniel's 70 sevens).

[27] When I first heard this as a young Christian, it seemed odd that so many powers on this earth would combine to attack Israel. Then, after seeing the racial changes occurring in Europe (search Muslim Demographics in YouTube if this has been removed) and the incredible hatred expressed by the various Muslim nations, this is not so difficult to believe any more.

between the *1st and 2nd Advents* of our Lord; however, *intercalated* between these advents is the *Church Age*. After the *baptism of fire,* the *Millennial* reign of Christ will commence. Now, understanding this terminology and the outline of the end times, we can proceed.

Sodom is found 10 times in the New Testament in 9 different passages. The New Testament passages with Lot and/or Sodom are found below. When covering these passages, we will begin early enough to understand that context and then follow them out to a logical conclusion. So we will study more than just the references, but the passages themselves, and how Lot and/or Sodom is related to the message that is being taught.

Luke 17:22–24 And Jesus said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man [i.e., the 2nd advent], and you will not see it. And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

Jesus, speaking to His disciples, tells them that false Christ's will arise, and that they are not to follow such persons. When Jesus returns, it will be like lighting flashes that light up the sky. The 2nd Advent will be known throughout the world; it will not be the result of rumors flying about.

Luke 17:25–30 But He [Jesus is referring to the Messiah, speaking of Himself in the 3rd person] must first suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot--they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

However, before this all occurs (the Tribulation), Jesus would be rejected by this generation, who would crucify Him (He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation). Then Jesus, in the tradition of the Old Testament, seamlessly moves from the 1st Advent to His 2nd. Let's repeat our Lord's quote, but color-code it: And Jesus said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot--they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. The brighter red is the 1st advent. Therefore, Jesus, in the grand tradition of the Old Testament, teaches the 1st and 2nd Advents together, without indicating

that there will be a passage of time intercalated between them (the Church Age). There are a couple dozen passages from the Old Testament which are just like this, where the 1st and 2nd Advents of our Lord are run together, as if one event. Had Jesus been accepted by Israel as their Messiah, then He would have suffered for their sins and then the Tribulation followed by the Millennium would have begun. However, because the Jews rejected Him and the Kingdom of God, which He offered them, these things did not come to pass. Since they rejected the Kingdom of God, they could not receive the Kingdom of God. This is paralleled by our faith in Jesus Christ: if we exercise faith in Jesus, we will be saved; if we reject Him, we will not be saved. God respects our free will.

Note that the people are *eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage* is simply normal human behavior in the end times; their lives are filled with various activities that do not include God. The same thing is true in the days of Lot (our actual topic here), where people are engaged in normal activities prior to the destruction of Sodom. Sinful activity in particular is not in view here; just day to day activity apart from God. All the people of Sodom were destroyed (except for Lot and his two daughters).

Jesus here is setting up an analogy between the end of the Tribulation and the judgment of Sodom. Apart from the great evil of Sodom, people simply went about their day-to-day business, completely apart from God. At the end of the Tribulation, despite all of the catastrophes which are taking place, people will be *eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage;* that is, they will be involved in day-to-day human activity without a thought to God.

Luke 17:31–33 On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it.

When it becomes clear that the day of the Lord is near (*day* does not always refer to a literal 24-hour period of time), then there are steps which must be taken immediately. Just as Lot's wife looks wistfully back at the life she had for 23 years and dies, so it will be in the end times. If you try to preserve your life (the things in your possession), then you will lose your life (your physical life). The destruction in the end time is going to come upon them suddenly, just as it did in Sodom. Lot's wife looked back wistfully and was caught up in the destruction of her city.

Luke 17:34–35 I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left."

The final scene of the baptism of fire is that unbelievers will be removed from the earth; two people are in bed, one is taken and one remains. Two people are working side-by-side; one is taken and one remains. The one who remains goes into the Millennium (2Thess. 1:5–10). The one who is taken will eventually be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:6–15).

Now, it may seem odd that we are examining the end times, but Jesus uses Sodom and Gomorrah as a parallel to the end times. When their judgment came, they were not expecting it.

As an aside, and making this personal, we have no idea how quickly such an economic judgment could come upon the United States. We have the same debt ratio as European nations which are in chaos now (Greece). We are close to a point where politicians cannot simply pull excess monies out of Social Security anymore because there are no excess monies in Social Security; and we have no idea how far we are from a time when nations refusing to lend to our government. However, that day could come upon us as a thief in the night, just as it happened in Sodom: people are buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, and suddenly, the dollar is no longer the strong currency of the world, which would bring economic chaos to our country (it is the strength of the dollar which has kept our country afloat, despite our great debt).

There are many times I have thought that Americans would not riot or do crazy things like the Greeks have; but then, there were teachers marching the streets of Chicago, unhappy in part with their $76,000 average salaries during a time that our president calls the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression (which it is not). So, at a time when people ought to feel lucky that they have a job, they are, instead, marching in the street for more taxpayer-funded benefits (obviously confident that they cannot lose their jobs). So, it is not difficult to imagine rioting in the streets by people demanding that their lives be subsidized more by the government when the government spigot of money and benefits is finally turned off (and that time has to occur). That scenario is no longer that far-fetched any more. We have baby boomers retiring by the thousands each day in America, expecting to be paid from social security and other retirements, and the money for those programs is not there (social security is not like a savings account; the money is **not** there in some kind of lockbox or bank account and we draw from it). Nearly since the day that social security was instituted, politicians have been raiding that fund, in order to pay off promises, constituencies and donors. So, if people who are making $76,000 march the streets in protest in the middle of a time of great unemployment, what will millions of seniors do when they go to draw their meager social security benefits, and they aren't there? Or the benefits that they receive are not enough to buy food with, because of the decreased value of the dollar?

The key to what will happen in America will be the spiritual state of the citizens. Do we know and understand the Word of God or are we dependent upon the government as our god?

Lesson 212 Genesis 19:1–38 Sodom and Gomorrah in the New Testament Part 2

We are studying Sodom and Gomorrah, and how these cities are spoken of elsewhere in the Bible. What we have picked up so far is, Sodom has been under divine review for quite a long time, enduring for nearly a decade the 4th stage of national discipline and almost falling into the 5th stage of national discipline. In the end, because of the absolute

lawlessness of the people of Sodom and their homosexual degeneracy, it was destroyed in the 6th stage of national discipline, which is the complete destruction of a nation and its people. In fact, this was so complete that 2000 years later, the historian Josephus is an actual witness to its devastation.

Although many different geographical areas came under God's judgment from time to time, this is the one first noted in the Bible, so that we understand that, before God, we have an individual and a corporate responsibility (the latter responsibility is nearly ignored in the teaching of our local churches today[28]).

We have also, from time to time, taken note of the difference between the spiritual impact of Abraham versus that of Lot. Lot had virtually no spiritual impact on the people around him, despite holding a high political office; Abraham had a dramatic effect upon the people around him, even though he was fairly independent and not wedded to any particular nation or group.

The previous lesson included a list of eschatological terms; and if you feel weak in this area, then please refer back at this terminology in this and the next lesson.

As in the previous lesson, we will start back far enough in these passages to get the context and move to a logical conclusion, so that you are not left hanging.

Great spiritual works done in a city can turn that city around:

Sodom (or, *Sodom and Gomorrah*) is also mentioned in the book of Matthew, where Jesus used these cities to illustrate certain truths to His disciples. Jesus, while giving His disciples direction as to what they will do when they carry out the great commission (to evangelize and teach the world), will look back to the time of Sodom's destruction in order to teach His disciples.

Matt. 10:12 [Jesus is speaking to His disciples here]: "As you enter the house, greet it. (This narrative is repeated in Luke 10:10–16).

The disciples were not in the business of speaking to houses. They were not being ordered to greet an inanimate object here. *Greeting the house* means, they greet those who live in the house. Greeting the *house* meant to greet the inhabitants of the house (*house* is called a *metonym;* it is a metonym for the *inhabitants of the house*). This is a figure of speech, and the Bible is filled with common as well as sophisticated figures of speech. Most of the time, these figures of speech are so ingrained in our thinking, that we read a verse like this and we do not even think about it unless it is pointed out.

Matt. 10:13 And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

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[28] Unless they teach some form of socialism (which some churches do), confusing government largess with compassion and responsibility toward the poor).

Again, the disciples were not determining the structural worthiness of the house, but of the response to the gospel from those within the house.

The word *peace* refers to peace between man and God, which is salvation.[29] When a house is worthy, that means the occupants are interested in salvation or they want to know the Word of God. Essentially, the disciples, based upon the reputation of Jesus, would go about as His disciples, and they would go to houses, where people would be gathered, and they would speak the same messages to these people as Jesus spoke. A house is worthy if they responded with positive volition; a house is unworthy if they had no interest in what was being taught. When people of a community had no interest in the teaching of the disciples, they simply moved on. No peace between God and man was established there.

Matt. 10:14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

The people would say, "We've heard about your Jesus and we just are not interested." So, the disciples were to just move on.

Matt. 10:15 Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."

A city where there is no interest in the gospel of Jesus Christ, would be a city which would be under corporate judgment from God. In this time period, the Jews would eventually revolt against the Romans, and they would be slaughtered. The Roman slaughtering of the Jews was so vicious that it is remembered to this day. After being slaughtered, they would be held under punishment until the day of judgment (2Peter 2:9b).

A city is a group of people gathered to a particular geographical area, and these people make up a corporate body. Obviously they do not all think alike; however, if none of them are interested in either the gospel or the teaching of the Word of God, the disciples were to move on. These people form a corporate witness, and in the example given, if no one wants to hear the words of the disciples, the disciples were supposed to get out of town, as God would deal with them corporately. There are some cities that would be under great judgment as a result; and a judgment against them in eternity. Such a judgment would result in sometimes temporal judgment and always an eternal judgment.

Remember how it was for Sodom—God destroyed them with hailstones of burning sulfur, but delivered the righteous (which was a total of 3 people).

Matt. 11:20–22 Then He [Jesus] began to denounce the cities where most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent [i.e., change their minds about Jesus].

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[29] That is it's primary New Testament use. The teaching of the New Testament takes some words used in the Old Testament (*peace, deliverance*) and gives them a distinctly spiritual meaning beyond what they had in the Old Testament. *Peace* in the Old Testament usually refers to *peace, prosperity;* but in the New, it is more likely to be a reference to *peace between God and man*. When the latter understanding is then taken back to Old Testament and applied, the meaning of the Old Testament passage is often dramatically changed.

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

Chorazin and Bethsaida were cities in which Jesus proclaimed the coming kingdom and offered Himself as their Messiah and Savior. Yet, He was rejected by these cities (apart from a few disciples who lived in Bethsaida—John 1:44).

This does not mean that those in Sodom would have observed the great miracles of Jesus and be saved by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is simply saying that, He could have imposed a presence which would have curbed their behavior. For instance, the men of Sodom may have had a strong desire to rape males who came into their city, but, after a few of them are executed, they no longer will commit such crimes. We have many instances of history where rioting crowds have been quelled and law and order subsequently enforced (the end of the French Revolution is an example of this).

Jesus says the same thing to the inhabitants of Capernaum:

Mat 11:23–24 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

Capernaum is a metonym for the people who live there. The city itself will not be brought down to Hades; the people of the city would be.

Our Lord paints a pretty tough picture for the people of Capernaum; there are not many things worse than fire and brimstone being rained down upon you from the sky. What He is speaking of is, eternal judgment. They have seen the Lord; they have heard the truth; and yet they rejected Him. John 3:36 He who believes on the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the **wrath of God abides upon him**. (MKJV).

This certainly will cause us to ask, *could Sodom have been saved? Could Sodom have remained a city even to the day of our Lord?* Jesus appears to be saying that it could. Therefore, let me give you a modern-day illustration: New Orleans. For many years, this city had become filled with crime and gangs and people who lived on the government dole.[30] Both the city and the state were known for government corruption. However, when Hurricane Katrina came, it washed much of that away. It had somewhat of a cleansing effect on this city. Much of the population of New Orleans, particularly those who lived on the government dime, left that city, and lived on the government dime elsewhere (such as,

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[30] Government supports and pays for single mothers; single mothers tend to raise more criminals than does a family with a mother and a father, so these things are closely related: gangs, crime and women living off the government dole.

here in Houston). At the same time, New Orleans is emerging as a vibrant city again. When people take part in the rebuilding of their own city and their own homes, this is revitalizing. The same sort of transformation could have taken place in Sodom, where the population was constrained by law and order and/or partially removed, and replaced by those drawn to Sodom. After all, if the Lord did His marvelous works in Sodom, there would be people with positive volition who would come from other cities to Sodom to see them.

An analogous situation was experienced in Houston, which was a boom town for many years, where people came from all over the world to make their fortune in Houston (when I moved here, people were moving to Houston at the rate of 1000/week). Part of the reason for some people moving to Houston was Berachah Church, where Bible doctrine was being taught faithfully, in some decades, as much as 10x a week. At this time, we have at least 3 doctrinal churches in the Houston area. Positive volition toward the Word of God brought people to this city from all over.

To be clear, we credit the boom in Houston to doctrinal teaching in this way: Houston, as a geographical area, was blessed greatly by God. This then acted as a magnet to pull in people from all over the United States to participate in this great blessing. Associated with this would be people who were drawn in part or in full to Berachah Church, for the doctrinal teaching that occurred there. I personally moved here simply for a job; but explored the possibility of moving to the Houston area only because Berachah Church was here. I did not have this overwhelming desire to move here and move in next door to Berachah Church (I think that they called that Berachah barracks at the time?). However, the blessing which God gave to this geographical area made moving here and finding work quite easy to do. I recall talking to one school secretary on the phone, calling her from California, and she told me, "Just come on down here, put in your application to a few schools, and you will have a job." After trying to get a teaching job in California for 4 years, that sounded like quite a deal to me. In retrospect, I know that this was clearly God's geographical will for me.

So, what Jesus is saying is, had these same works been done in Sodom and had law and order been enforced, as well as some judgment upon this city, what remained would have been controlled by law and order; and people would be drawn to this city by the promises of seeing or speaking to God-Incarnate. Just as New Orleans was transformed, so would Sodom have been transformed. It does not mean that the people who were destroy by fire and sulphur would have changed their minds and believed in the Revealed Member of the Trinity; it just means that this city would have been restored by law and order and an influx of new blood, pulled in due to the great works of God done in the city.

Quite obviously, in our much larger cities, there is bound to be a number of believers (particularly in the United States); in various stages of growth (many in flat-out infancy). A serious judgment often results in a change of attitude, albeit often very temporary, in these people.

Sodom and Gomorrah are evidence of a future, eternal judgment:

Let's go to the book of Jude for the next passage:

Jude 5 Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, Who delivered a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Jude reminds the believer that, even though the Revealed Member of the Trinity (= God the Son = the Angel of the Lord) led 2 million people out of Egypt in the exodus, He later destroyed those who were faithless—that is, those who had originally trusted in God but had turned from Him, and therefore, they died the sin unto death; their bodies dropping like flies in the desert. This was, in fact, a generational thing. There was *Gen X,* those who were 20 and above who marched out of Egypt with Moses; and there was the *generation of promise,* who were the children 20 and younger who were with them at the exodus. All of them had believed in the Second Person of the Trinity—all of those who left Egypt with Moses. However, Gen X did not exercise faith as God brought them toward the Land of Promise. God told them what to do, and they refused to do it, crying about the giants in the land (Num. 13–14). So God killed off that first generation, which series of judgments are represented by the rebellion that takes place in Num. 16 and additional deaths recorded in Num. 20 21). However, the GOP (the generation of promise; the children who left Egypt with Moses) believed God—not only for salvation but in their subsequent lives—and therefore, they went into the Land of Promise and took the land of Palestine away from the many groups of heathen who lived there.

Gen X was like Lot—they were saved by faith, but they did not advance spiritually. The GOP was like Abraham; they not only believed in Y^{e}howah Elohim, but they trusted His guidance through the leadership of Moses.

Those *who did not believe* does not refer to unbelievers, as all of the Jews who followed Moses had believed in Jehovah Elohim (because they all followed God's instructions for the Passover—Ex. 12); however, they did not engage their faith in the spiritual life. They were saved—the Gen X'ers believed in Y^{e}howah Elohim—but they did not parlay their salvation into a vigorous spiritual life. When tested, they simply fell apart, despite all of the signs and wonders that they observed.[31]

You may want to also notice that Jude tells us it is *Jesus* Who delivered the Jews from Egypt (another one of the many passages which confirms that Jesus is the Revealed Member of the Trinity and known as the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament).

Jude 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, He has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day--...

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[31] It should be noted that the signs and wonders which God performed in Egypt were designed so that a wide audience could observe these signs and wonders. These were big things which God did. These things were known throughout the ancient world. That God was with Israel was well-known.

Jude then speaks of the angels who had sexual relations with mankind in Gen. 6, how God has placed them in restraints until the final judgment.

Jude 6 And angels, who did not remain within [the bounds of] their proper authority, but left their own realm, God has kept in perpetual bondage, under [thick] darkness, awaiting judgment on the Great Day [when they will be punished]. (AUV–NT)

There are universal laws for angels, just as there are for human society; and one of them is to remain within and among themselves. In Gen. 6, we studied how angels had the ability to have sexual relations with human women, and thereby corrupted almost the entire human race. God has placed these angels in a perpetual bondage as a result, and they will be judged in the end times with the rest of the fallen angels.

Jude continues with the topic of God's judgment, and speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah. What ties the two events together is, both involve sexual behavior which is unrestrained, rampant and out of bounds; and the eventual judgment of God.

Jude 7 ...just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, where God rained down fire upon them, serves as an illustration of the final judgment of God.

As an aside, there are some groups who believe that God simply burns up unbelievers and they are gone. If this were the case, there would be no need for an eternal [never-ending] fire. The fire would burn up the unbelievers and then it would no longer be needed. However, the Bible teaches both eternal reward and eternal judgment, and all that a person must do to avoid eternal fire is, take a few seconds out of their life and believe in Jesus. Salvation is free; it is instantaneous and it is permanent.

Lesson 213 Genesis 19:1–38 Sodom and Gomorrah in the New Testament Part 3

We continue in the 3rd lesson of the New Testament references to Sodom. Again, you may have to go back to lesson #211 if there are confusing vocabulary words. Also, in each passage, we will go back far enough in the passage to both pick up the context and to take the passage to a reasonable conclusion.

God knows how to preserve the righteous and to level judgment on the wicked.

Peter mentions Lot as an aside. He goes back to the book of Genesis and covers several historical events. He will demonstrate historically how God is able to preserve the righteous and yet judge the wicked, using Sodom and Gomorrah as an example.

He first points out that God did not spare the angels who sinned.

2Peter 2:4 (most of this is the ESV translation) For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;...

God did not preserve the pre-flood world when true humanity was nearly destroyed. The angels responsible for the mixing of angels with man were placed into chains of gloomy darkness. We studied this back in Gen. 6.

2Peter 2:5 ...[and] if He did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;...

There is a point at which God will destroy a huge population, or a geographical sector; and yet preserve the remnant from that area. Noah was preserved in the flood and Lot and his daughters were preserved from the destruction of Sodom.

What God does is often illustrative of spiritual truths. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and their legacy is an example to the ungodly (those who have not believed in Jesus Christ).

2Peter 2:6 ...[and] if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes He condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;...

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah to us are like unbelievers to God (the ungodly). *Extinction* here is the feminine noun katastrophê (καταστροφή) [pronounced *kat-as-trof-AY*], which means, *1) overthrow, destruction; 1a) of cities; 2) metaphorically of the extinction of a spirit of consecration*. Quite obviously, this is the word transliterated *catastrophe*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2692. God condemned these cities to be overthrown, which meant, the people in these cities would be made extinct (the 6th stage of national discipline). For those people who are ungodly, this is their final end on earth as well.

Lot, as we know, was not someone who was of a high moral quality. The people who surrounded his home and who desired to rape the two angels, had little respect for Lot. Lot was so in fear for his own life, that he offered up his own daughters to try to placate the mob outside his door. In every way possible, Lot was spiritually inferior to Abraham. As we found out, even his sons-in-law-to-be were unsaved. When Lot came to his future sons-in-law to warn them, they did not take what he had to say seriously.

2Peter 2:7 ...and if He rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked...

Although we are not told this in Genesis, Peter tells us that Lot was greatly distressed by the immoral behavior of the townsfolk. We know in Genesis that Lot was aware of it, and we know that he tried to protect the two angels (who Lot saw as men) from such a vicious sexual attack.

So there is no confusion concerning the righteousness of Lot, he is righteous by faith in Y^{e}howah Elohim. There were certainly times when his relative righteousness was greater than those around him, but that is not why God preserved him. God preserved Lot for three reasons: (1) he had believed in the Lord (his obedience in Gen. 19 reveals his faith in Jehovah God); (2) he was associated with Abraham, and much of the blessing that Lot received was an overflowing of blessing from Abraham; (3) Abraham prayed on Lot's behalf and God answered this prayer. The only thing that is in view here is #1, Lot's righteous based upon his faith in Jehovah God.

The word that describes how Lot felt is the verb kataponeô (καταπονέω) [pronounced *kat-ap-on-EH-o*], which means, *1) to tire down with toil, exhaust with labour; 1a) to afflict or oppress with evils; 1b) to make trouble for; 1c) to treat roughly*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2669. As Lot stood at the door, with his homosexual rapist neighbors, he was treated roughly. When the people there committed acts of rape and killed strangers, Lot was oppressed with such evil. By the way that these men treated Lot at his own front door, you can tell that even his life is in danger.

2Peter 2:8 ...(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);...

Peter confirms that Lot is a believer by calling him righteous. Righteousness comes to all of us when we exercise faith in Jesus Christ. This is a positional righteousness; it is not necessarily an experiential righteousness.

Lot knew what was right and wrong. If the male townsfolk gang-raped strangers, you can imagine the kind of morally reprehensible behavior that they engaged in regularly. These acts of violence distressed the soul of Lot. He was not a spiritual giant, by any means, but what these people did shocked him. Recall that he spent a couple of decades with his uncle Abraham, and he would have seen a lot of personal integrity in action by observing his uncle (Abraham was positionally righteous and he exhibited experiential righteousness).

2Peter 2:9 ...then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,...

Mixed together in Sodom was Lot and his family—declared righteous by Peter—in the midst of a city of sexual degenerates. God is able to preserve the righteous while judging the unrighteous. God is more than able to distinguish and separate people in a time of geographical catastrophe.

Therefore, since God delivered Lot in this circumstance, we know that God will deliver those in the midst of trials (whether they be personal or historic) and that God will keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgement, which would be when the devil and his fallen angels are thrown into the Lake of Fire and those who have followed Satan (Rev. 20).

2Peter 2:10 ...and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the Glorious Ones [that is, the Members of the Trinity].

Peter characterizes those who are the unrighteous: they continually walk after or pursue lusts. If they desire something (sex, power, money, drugs, alcohol), they pursue these lusts without any deference to morality. For them, they have the lust for something, and right and wrong in their minds is defined by what satiates that lust. If something moves them toward their lusts, that something is good; whatever impedes this progress toward their lusts is defined as bad. Politically, some of these people are often called *one-issue voters*. They will vote for the candidate which moves them toward satiating their personal lusts.

The same degeneracy that we read about in Gen. 19, many of us have personally observed, but with a different object of lust. As an example, people addicted to certain drugs will do anything in order to have those drugs. Furthermore, the same ones despise authority. They do not want anyone *judging* them or telling them not to do that which leads to them having what it is that they lust after.

Such men are daring and presumptuous, arrogant and self-willed as they blaspheme that which should be glorified or that which is majestic. They scoff at the idea that there should be any limits placed upon their behavior.

We had a wonderful example of power lust in the 2012 election (nearly every election is an example in power lust). Mitt Romney is a very moral person and has been so for most of his life. However, he desired the presidency so much that, in the primary, he destroyed his opponents with negative political ads—most of which were distorted or untrue about his opponents. Whereas, he could have put a stop to such ads (even though they were put out mostly by Super PACS), he chose not to, allowing vicious attack ads to be the key to his primary victory in Florida. On the one hand, I can guarantee you that such an approach was an affront to Romney's character; but his lust for power was so great that he allowed such ads to be run. Interestingly enough, Romney himself was later defeated in the general election, in part, by a huge number of dishonest, negative political ads, which defined him as a very unsavory person (which he is not) of questionable character (he was accused of indirectly killing a man's wife, of being out of touch, of having no heart). Whereas none of these things are true, how do you accuse your opponent of an unsavory campaign after you have done the exact same thing against your primary opponents?

Back to our passage:

2Peter 2:10 ...and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the Glorious Ones [that is, the Members of the Trinity].

We will continue with this category of people, as these are the sorts of people who were in Sodom and Gomorrah when God destroyed those cities. They follow their lusts, which

lead them to degrading acts, as well as exhibiting animosity toward authority (Lot was a judge in Sodom).

2Peter 2:11 Whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord,...

It is not the elect angels which condemn unrepentant mankind. In God's dealings mankind, He calls all of the shots; angels do not. Fallen angels may act under God's permissive will (see Job 1–2). However, they will be eventually judged.

2Peter 2:12 ...these, however, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction,...

These people have become like animals, which have no self-control, which act only on instinct and desire. These types had given themselves over to lascivious behavior; therefore, for this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done (Rom. 1:26–28).

There are some animals which are out of control and dangerous to mankind—obviously, much more of a problem during Peter's day than during ours. There is nothing that can be done to convince, say, a deadly lion (which did inhabit that part of the Middle East during Peter's time) who was a danger to mankind in a certain geographical area. The only option was to hunt this animal and kill it. Men who behave in a similar fashion, who do whatever they want to do without exercising much self-control, will also be destroyed. These types will be destroyed in the destruction; whether their nation or city is destroyed or whether they are, at the end, cast into the Lake of Fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels (Rev. 20:10–15).

2Peter 2:13 ...suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.

They receive the appropriate wages for their wrongdoing (that is, they will receive a just payment for what they do). They are so comfortable with the evil they do, they will revel in the daytime (meaning in public). They do not try to hide their evil behavior. They will celebrate it; they will flaunt it. This describes perfectly the militant homosexuals in some parts of the United States and elsewhere in the world. This describes a gay pride parade.

Meanwhile, they will deceive you—lie to your face—as they feast with you. *Feast* simply refers to any sort of public celebration, and can be reasonably extended to simply public

interaction. As you will find, those who celebrate evil have no problems lying to you when necessary in order to "sell" their evil or to make it palatable to you.

As an example, I have had lengthy online discussions with those who celebrate the homosexual lifestyle, and they will intentionally misrepresent their personal free will in relationship to their behavior; the number and frequency of their partners while they argue for *marriage equality*. They will similarly deny the relationship of homosexuality to AIDS; and the close relationship between homosexuality and their desire to infiltrate public schools by any means possible. They are pushing today are bullying programs in the schools, which programs try to instill pro-homosexual bias in children before they even understand what sexuality is. In the future, there will be a push for men to have paid positions as counselors for "homosexual" children in our schools. This will be pushed as if these are "special needs" children.

For those who have viewed our last election of 2012 with some concern; there were many areas to be concerned about. If memory serves, two states voted for same-sex marriage by a popular vote (I believe this is the first time this has occurred; as even California in 2008 voted against this). Along the same lines, marijuana use was decriminalized in two states, which will undoubtedly increase marijuana use among adults and young people alike in those two states. These are votes to allow people to satiate their lusts (although the same-sex marriage is more about gaining a political foothold to go after churches and to infiltrate schools).

Let's return to the key verse, 2Peter 2:6 By turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, the Lord condemns them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.

The overall point that Peter is making is, God has, in the past, made cataclysmic judgments of various parts of the world, where the righteous have been preserved. Therefore, we should logically expect Him to do this at some point in time to the world itself. There will come a time when the world will suffer cataclysmic judgment, which is the Tribulation. Those who will be preserved in the world will be believers, and God will remove the unbelievers from the earth through the baptism of fire. As this sort of cataclysmic judgment occurred in Sodom and Gomorrah, so it will happen to the entire world.[32] God can and will judge the world.

This is a principle that cannot be overemphasized: what we find in the history of the Bible is not just history, but it is also illustrative of great spiritual truths. Over and over again, Jesus went back to the Old Testament and explained a passage or interpreted that passage or applied it to current circumstances. This same thing is found in the writings of the Apostles and early disciples of our Lord.

Sodom is used to denote sexual deviance of the Beast in the end times:

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[32] Robbie Dean makes these general points in his notes, Genesis lesson 102b 19 08/30/05.

The final mention of Sodom occurs in the Revelation, written by John the Apostle:

Rev 11:3–6 And I will grant authority to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

It has been supposed by some that God will resuscitate Moses and Elijah, and that they would be the two witnesses. This is believed, in part, because, when God was glorified, Moses and Elijah were with Him (Luke 9:28–35). However, it is possible that these are just two great evangelists in the Tribulation who have enormous power over the elements.

In Revelation, they are called lampstands because they reveal truth (light is often used to illustrate truth). They are called olive trees because they would bear fruit (that is, they would speak the truth about Jesus Christ and that particular time in Biblical eschatology and people will believe).

These men will also have miraculous powers, with perhaps even greater control over nature than Al Gore or Barack Obama.

Except for the first century, when the Apostles were establishing their authority, we do not have miracle workers or healers. An evangelist does not walk through the doors of a hospital and begin to heal one man after another, and then proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. This was done in the first century so that those men who were picked by Jesus were able to prove that the power of God is with them. These sign gifts established their authority, because there was no New Testament yet to be the source of their authority (however, as the New Testament began to be written, these sign gifts began to diminish). Furthermore, there was a great change taking place, from God working within the nation Israel to working within the body of believers (the church universal; as well as the local church). The great sign gifts gave credence to those Apostles proclaiming the risen Lord, the gospel and the mystery dispensation. However, once the canon of Scripture was completed, and its authority well understood, then there was no longer a need for sign gifts (which actually began to fade from view before John wrote the final epistles and Revelation).

In our era, the post-canon portion of the Church Age, our authority and power rests in the Word of God. It has been established and has stood as the most powerful thing on this earth for 20 centuries. The evangelist Billy Graham did not have to heal a few people or perform a miracle in order to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. He only needed to open his mouth and proclaim what was in the Bible, and millions were saved. God, through Billy Graham, changed 2 or 3 generations of the United States. I have a personal friend who is an unbeliever, insofar as I know, and yet was drawn to Billy Graham and watched him

speak on many occasions on television. The power of the Holy Spirit can be very powerful indeed.

However, on the other hand, in the Tribulation, these two evangelists will be endowed with miraculous powers and perform miracles even greater than what Jesus did. The Tribulation is a shortened period of time, so what occurs then is intensified. "Do you not understand the judgment of God?" these witnesses might say. "I will show you the judgment of God." And a river nearby will be turned to blood or a city may be struck with a debilitating disease.

Why does this happen in the Tribulation, but not now? In the Tribulation, the time remaining for man to change his mind is a scant 7 years. Everything is incredibly intensified during those 7 years. Human history is drawing to a close.

Furthermore, every time there is some major change in God's program on earth, there are signs and miracles to accompany the change (e.g., when God brought the Jews out of Egypt).

Rev 11:7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,...

In any case, the beast rises up from the pit to kill them. So, despite their great powers, they will still be killed in the Tribulation.

Rev 11:8 ...and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is symbolically [or, *spiritually*] called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

There are disagreements as to whether this will be the modern Rome or the modern Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem, but under the authority of the Romans.

In any case, Sodom brings great sexual deviance into the picture whereas Egypt represents a non-Christian religious world empire, one which is generally hostile toward Jews and Christians. The king of the end times will reject God and he will reject the desire of women (Daniel 11:37)—and therefore, he will be a perfect representative of Sodom and of Egypt. He himself will expect to be worshiped.

There are times in our history that it would have seemed unfathomable for these two witnesses to be killed, whose sole crime appears to have been, speaking the truth. However, with what we have observed in Muslim countries as of late (I write this in 2012), the idea of seeing them display the dead bodies of Christian evangelists does not seem too weird for them. We do not know if those in the end times who follow this king are Muslim; however, if the Tribulation came to pass over the next 10 or 20 years, then that would likely be the case.

Rev 11:9–10 For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

By simply being evangelists, these prophets so upset the heathen that they had to destroy them, and after destroying them, they celebrate and even exchange presents (for which we have recent contemporary precedent).

For most of us, the idea of celebrating the deaths of innocents is abhorrent; however, there are cultures living today who, if they kill a family of Jews, they will celebrate it as a great victory of Allah.

The cartoon gives a contemporary example of people who are very offended by such things as a nativity scene (particularly in front of a school, state building, or whatever) but have no problem when far more vile things are made public.

Simply telling the truth—simply speaking the gospel of Jesus Christ—is so offensive so that, people in the Tribulation will celebrate the deaths of the two prophet-evangelists.

This completes our study of Sodom in the New Testament. It was named in at least 5 different contexts, but with a clear reference back to the Sodom (and Gomorrah) that we have studied for many lessons. Next time we will look at how the Old Testament uses the example of Sodom.

Lesson 214 Gen. 19 Deut. 29, 32 Sodom in the Old Testament Part I (Moses)

Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament

We have just completed a brief study of the mentions of Sodom in the New Testament; and now we will see how it is spoken of in the Old Testament. These lessons will be slightly longer than usual, in order to complete this section in a relatively short time.

In this first increment, we will have a look at what Moses says about Sodom (and Gomorrah), which would have been about 400 years after the fact. As we did previously,

we will back up far enough to get the context of a passage, and follow it out to a satisfactory end.

Sodom and Gomorrah lay in ruins for the entire history of ancient Israel, as a warning to them of God's judgment.

Moses, in his final sermon to the people of Israel, warned them against idolatry and warned them that the destroyed city of Sodom is a witness to God's wrath:

Deut. 29:16 "You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed.

Israel had traveled along the eastern border of the land that God was going to give to them, and they were going to enter the land from the east, after they had gotten just north of the Dead Sea. In order to do this, they had to travel through several different countries which bordered the Land of Promise.

Deut. 29:17 And you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, which were among them.

What the Israelites were supposed to notice is how these nations, many of which they had to defeat militarily as they traveled north around the Dead Sea, worshiped idols which they had made with their own hands. In God's sight, such things are detestable.

Deut. 29:18–19 Be sure there is no man, woman, family, or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations. Be certain that there is no root among you bearing poisonous and bitter fruit. When someone hears the words of this oath, he may bless himself in his mind, thinking, 'I will have peace even though I follow my own stubborn heart.' This will lead to the destruction of the well-watered *land* as well as the dry *land*. (HCSB)

This root that bore poisonous fruit was their idolatry. It is this poison of worshiping another God that would destroy the people of Israel from within. Some Israelites refused to give up this idolatry and it plagued them throughout their history.

A good modern example of this is Mary-worship or pope-worship among some in the Catholic church. Mary statues hanging in a car in order to be protected—this is idolatry. Jesus should be worshiped; men should not.

Peace in this passage, refers to peace with God; and some believe that they can have peace with God, even though they give into the arrogance of their own thinking. If the nation as a whole turns against God in this way, God will destroy all sectors of their economy—those sectors which are doing well (the *well-watered land*) and those which are not (the *dry ground*).

This certainly has a contemporary application: when we as a nation turn away from God, all of these things which we have placed our faith in will be destroyed.

The number of believers in the United States is waning; and the number of believers who understand much about the Word of God is a small fraction of believers. There are churches in the United States that base their church doctrine on liberation theology, which is communist revolutionary propaganda (which was quite successful in South America); we have churches where the sin of homosexuality is excused and even celebrated.[33]

Deut. 29:20 The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and His jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.

Those Jews which fall into idolatry are in danger of having their names blotted out of history. The lives and families of the Jews are closely tied to the earth and to the Land of Promise. Many of these family lines will be continued into the Millennium. Moses here warns that some will not. In fact, some families will come to a complete end.

Deut. 29:21 And the LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law.

There is a section in Deuteronomy of the curses and the blessings, which is what Moses has just taught the people (Deut. 28). This was presented in a somewhat different format in Lev. 26 where Moses lays out the stages of national discipline for Israel.

Deut. 29:22–23 And the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the LORD has made it sick-- the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and wrath—...

If one generation fails, the next generation is suppose to rise up, recognize this failure, and return to God.

In the southern portion of Israel is Sodom and Gomorrah (and Admah and Zeboiim), the cities which God destroyed with fire and brimstone. These cities, now destroyed and the land desolate, were to stand as a warning to the people of Israel. It appears that this destroyed piece of land stood as a warning for many centuries after Abraham and Lot. Even Josephus mentions it, and he wrote history in the first century A.D. Therefore, for the entire history of Israel, they were able to view the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah and know that judgment that God brought upon those cities.

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[33] No church should go out of its way to exclude any sort of sinner; however, when sins are celebrated, that is a bad place for a local church to be.

> Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote in the first century: "God then cast a thunderbolt upon the city, and set it on fire, with its inhabitants; and laid waste the country with the like burning, as I formerly said when I wrote the Jewish War. But Lot's wife continually turning back to view the city as she went from it, and being too nicely inquisitive what would become of it, although God had forbidden her so to do, was changed into a pillar of salt; for I have seen it, and it remains at this day." (Flavius Josephus. Antiquities of the Jews. Book 1, chapter 11, section 4; http://www.ccel.org/).[34] It is difficult to argue against an ancient historian who actually saw the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah with their own eyes.

Salt in the land made it impossible to grow anything in that land. So the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah stood for a very long time—at least for 2000 years. And it was always there. When the Jews doubted the power and justice of God, they could take a trip down to Sodom and Gomorrah and view the destruction with their own eyes. Furthermore, we know this to be true throughout the history of Israel because author after author; speaker after speaker referred to it. These books of the Bible and the testimonies therein would not have been accepted as true if a trip to that area yielded no signs of divine devastation.

Deut. 29:24 ...all the nations will say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?'

Israel is supposed to be forewarned, so that other nations do not look at Israel as a nation which has been destroyed by the Lord's anger. Sodom and Gomorrah stood for many years as a testimony to God's wrath (Moses writes this about 400 years after the time of Abraham and Josephus would later be an actual witness to the devastated remains of Sodom and Gomorrah 1500 years later after Moses). Moses here looks down the corridors of time and says that nations for centuries would look at Sodom and ask, "What caused God to be so angry with these cities?" However, Moses is applying this to Israel in general; not to Sodom and Gomorrah. If Israel turns away from God, then God would destroy them in His anger, and nations for years would ask, "Why has Y^{e}howah done this to the land of Israel?"

Deut. 29:25–26 Then people will say, 'It is because they [the people of Israel] abandoned the covenant of the LORD [their contract or agreement with God], the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt, but they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom He had not allotted to them.

People will recognize that Israel abandoned the covenant which God made with them, and understand that, this is why they have been destroyed as a nation. Their covenant was with the Revealed Member of the Trinity (Jesus Christ in His pre-incarnate form).

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[34] Taken from http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/ant-1.htm accessed December 3, 2012.

Although God gave bits and pieces of this covenant at different times to different people (to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David), it was a covenant between God and the people of Israel).

Bear in mind that, while Moses delivers this warning to the Jews, these Jews have not yet actually entered the land. Moses is warning them about the destruction of their nation that did not yet exist if they turned away from God and His covenants with them. There is no nation Israel when Moses delivers this message.

However, Israel would fall into idolatry on many occasions. To update this concept, idolatry is not just worshiping a god other than Jesus; idolatry can simply be putting other things before God and the Word of God—your career, your desires, your family, material things, and, of course, any false system of spirituality or any lying philosophy (like humanism).

Deut. 29:27–28 Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, and the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.'

Therefore, the curses which Moses delivered to them, the curses which would be recorded in a book, would befall the nation Israel. The curses on Israel, recorded in at least 2 different places, are the stages of national discipline that God uses to warn Israel that they are drifting away from truth.

You may have noticed the word *book*. This is the word çêpher (רֵפֵס) [pronounced *SAY-fur*], which means *missive, book, document, writing, scroll, tablet*. It occurs once in Genesis (Gen. 5:1) and then almost 200 times after that (e.g., Ex. 17:14 24:7 32:32 Num. 5:23 1Kings 11:41). This word does not really emphasize the material from which a scroll, tablet, or book was made, but emphasizes more that it was a *writing receptor,* just as an *engraving tool* emphasizes its function rather than the material from which it is made. Strong's #5612 BDB #706. Moses was to write down that which God told him, and this was to be preserved (see Ex. 24:7 Deut. 17:18 Joshua 1:8).

The greatest stage of discipline for Israel was being defeated militarily and then being removed from their land. Nothing is a great discipline than for Israel to be taken off of the land which God will give to them. We know this as the 5th stage of national discipline (which R. B. Thieme, Jr. called the 5th cycle of discipline).

God judged Sodom; and He will judge His people if they engage in similar behavior.

Moses also wrote a song for Israel (Deut. 31:30), in which he again speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah:

Deut. 32:20–21 And He said, 'I will hide My face from them; I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. They have made Me jealous with what is no-god; they have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So

I will make them jealous with those who are no-people [that is, those who are not My people]; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

Again, God is provoked to anger by idolatry, where the Jews worship that which is not God instead of worshiping God. One may reasonably assume that anything that you place before God is an idol of sorts. So, our idols today may not be what we bow down before and do obeisance to, but they can certainly be the things in our lives which we value more than God.

Let me caveat that with, the Bible is not anti-possession; the Bible is not telling you to give all of your possessions to the poor and then to wander about homeless looking for God. It is a matter of priority, and whatever you put before God (or before the teaching of Bible doctrine) is your idol. As Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and money." (Matt. 6:24b). See also James 4:4 1John 2:15. Too many people take Jesus' mandate to the rich young ruler, to sell all his goods, give the proceeds to the poor, and then to follow Him (Matt. 19:21); as something all rich people should do (liberals try to use this to convince conservatives that the rich ought to be taxed more—if they really thought this, then they would be demanding that the rich be taxed at 100%). That is a complete misunderstanding of that meeting, as well as wilfully ignoring the context (Matt. 19:16–22). We know that the Bible is not against having possessions, as Abraham, David and Solomon were all quite rich. At no time, did God come to them and say, "Well, if you want to be perfect, you need to sell all this stuff and give the money to the poor."

Back to Moses, speaking as if for God:

Deut. 32:22 For a fire is kindled by My anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.

V. 22 speaks of the spreading judgment of God over Israel (and, by application, over us).

Although Moses is writing these words, he is doing it in the power of the Holy Spirit, and speaking from the standpoint of God. In fact, that is one of the keys to the book of Deuteronomy: that Moses, while empowered by the Spirit, was speaking the Word of God. In Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, Moses was very careful to quote the words that God was speaking. By the book of Deuteronomy, what Moses said which was recorded was inspired Scripture.

God through Moses is addressing Israel in His anger.

Deut. 32:23–24 "'And I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend My arrows on them; they shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured by plague and poisonous pestilence; I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with the venom of things that crawl in the dust.

This is the discipline that God lays upon Israel: natural disasters and war. The Jews would suffer hunger and disease. In the modern era, for client nations under discipline, this

would be recessions and depressions. Attacks by beasts and snakes today are relatively rare, but this today may be carried over to natural or personal disasters.

Deut. 32:25 Outdoors the sword shall bereave, and indoors terror, for young man and woman alike, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs.

God's judgment would reach all, young and old, men and women. When facing great national discipline by God, there is no peace. People are afraid of outside armies and people are afraid of the danger of crime within their own country. In fact, the discipline is so great that, many people will live in a state of fear or paranoia concerning their own lives and the world around them.

Deut. 32:26–27 I would have said, 'I will cut them to pieces; I will wipe them from human memory,' had I not feared provocation by the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, 'Our hand is triumphant, it was not the LORD who did all this.' "

Obviously, God is now speaking of intense discipline, where He destroys large segments of a population.

However, God must also take into consideration that, those who would overrun Israel would do so, believing their gods to be more powerful than the God of the Universe. He cannot allow that, of course.

Deut. 32:28 "For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them.

The key is understanding. The key is knowledge of doctrine. When a nation lacks the love of the truth, these things herein described befall them.

Deut. 32:29 If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end!

What does it mean to be wise here? It means to understand Bible doctrine. It means to be able to look around and to discern what is happening to your nation as a whole.

We can see this generation by generation. In the 1950's, both Democrats and Republicans were anti-communist; and the family was exalted as a part of the popular culture (which represents divine establishment). As a result, this was a relatively peaceful and prosperous time in our history. The Billy Graham revivals attracted hundreds of thousands of people, and millions by means of television.

The 1960's was filled with people who had become anti-establishment, anti-authority and anti-marriage. A significant number of people began to pursue eastern religions and many indulged in drugs. As a result, the United States began to have trouble within and without. There was lawlessness, riots in many major cities, and failure abroad in foreign policies and war.

Deut. 32:30 How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up?

God points out (through Moses) that one man could chase 1000 because the Lord is with him. If that is no longer the case, then the Lord is no longer with you. This indicates success on the battlefield.

Deut. 32:31 For their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves.

The Rock, of course, is Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18 Eph. 2:20 1Peter 2:5–6). Their *rock* is what the heathen nations trust in, that which is not-God.

Deut. 32:32–33 For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps.

The power of Israel's enemies comes from the vine of Sodom and the fields of Gomorrah. At this time, these fields were lain waste; nothing could be planted there. The few things that grew produced awful tasting fruit. The idea is, the rejection of God by the heathen comes from the vine of Sodom; it is produced in the fields of Gomorrah. That which the heathen produces is akin to bad fruit coming from the fields of the destroyed Sodom.

Drinking the wine made from the grapes of Sodom and Gomorrah is like drinking the poison of serpents.

Deut. 32:34–35 "'Is not this laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasuries? Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.'

God will bring vengeance against those who have done harm to Israel. All Israel needs to do is to turn toward the Lord.

Deut. 32:36 For the LORD will vindicate His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.

God will vindicate Israel on many occasions, and eventually in eternity.

Deut. 32:37–38 Then He will say, 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection!

These are the false gods; the gods that Israel depended upon when in reversionism (a state of reverting back to their lives as unbelievers); the gods which their enemies depend upon in their own state of evil.

God is saying, if Israel depends upon another god than Y^{e}howah, then let that false god rise up and protect them.

To make this statement more relevant to today: let those things which you put before God rise up and save you from historical disaster or from divine judgment. “Let your disastrous economic policies and humanism rise up and save you, O United States.” (If Moses were speaking to us today).

In the United States, we are teetering on the brink of great disaster. We have the greatest military in the world spread throughout the world; but then, a century or two ago, Great Britain ruled over about a fourth or fifth of the entire world, and now they are a tiny nation teetering on the edge themselves.

One tiny event would destroy us: the United States dollar is accepted all over the world. Our current debt level and our out-of-control spending, along with quantitative easing (printing money out of thin air) could cause the dollar to lose strength and to even be rejected as payment; and the United States would fall into an economic crash as we have never seen before. However, at the root of this is spiritual decline. What has protected us over the past few decades has been the spiritual growth of our very small pivot (believers who are maturing spiritually or have reached spiritual maturity).

Deut. 32:39 "'See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god beside Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand.

There is no other God besides Y^{e}howah (Jesus Christ). There are no pluralities of ways to go to God (Buddhism, Islam, etc.); there is only one way, and that is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). This is a principle repeated many times in the Bible. If you understand how you are saved, then this makes perfect sense. If Jesus is just some religious teacher to you, then you are not saved, and the idea of exclusivity confuses you. Jesus did not come to simply teach us a better way to behave. He came to die for our sins.

Deut. 32:40 For I [God] lift up My hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever,

Now God the Son is speaking, and He is making a vow that all of this is true, based upon His eternal existence.

Deut. 32:41–42 if I sharpen my flashing sword and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh-- with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy.'

God would destroy His enemies, including the long-haired reversionists.

Deut. 32:43 "Rejoice with Him, O heavens; bow down to Him, all gods, for He avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on His adversaries. He repays those who hate Him and cleanses his people's land."

All are to bow down before God the Son, who avenges the blood of His Own and cleanses the land of promise (from reversionism).

Again, *reversionism,* is a believer reverting to his unbeliever ways; or a person who understands the laws of divine establishment and reverts back to anti-establishment thinking. He is a dog returning to his vomit (2Peter 2:22).

Lesson 215 Genesis 19 — Sodom in the Old Testament Part 2 (Isaiah)

We will cover a brief history of Israel as well as the time and place for the prophets in this lesson along with the sermons of Isaiah, when he speaks of Sodom (and Gomorrah). He spoke about Sodom and Gomorrah enough times to warrant an entire lesson.

In order to understand the rest of the prophecies found in the Old Testament which relate to Sodom and Gomorrah, it will be helpful to know some basic history of Israel.

The 4th stage of national discipline is being ruled over by another country.

The 5th stage of national discipline is being removed from the land of promise by a foreign power.

Sodom went through these stages of discipline before God removed the city and her population from history as a city-nation (the 6th stage of national discipline, which is not applicable to Israel).

A Brief History of Israel

Dates	Events	Books of the Bible
2100–1885 B.C.	Abraham moved to the land of Canaan, as God had told him to do. At age 100, he fathers Isaac, who is heir to the promises God made to Abraham. Isaac has twins, one of whom—Jacbob—is heir to the promises. Jacob has 12 sons. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jacobs sons and daughters-in-law are Jews, heirs to the promises of God.	Gen. 12–40
1885–1859 B.C.	Joseph, a son of Jacob, is made prime minister of Egypt. Because of a drought, his father and 11 brothers move to Egypt.	Gen. 41–50
1859–1480 B.C.	At some point, the Jews become enslaved to the people of Egypt and remained their slaves for about 400 years. .	No Scripture written. References to this in several places in the Bible.

A Brief History of Israel		
Dates	Events	Books of the Bible
1480–1440 B.C.	After the Jews have been enslaved to the Egyptians for the larger portion of 400 years, Moses leads the children of Israel out of Egypt and they spend 40 years in the desert. God uses that time in the desert to administer the sin unto death to the adults who left Egypt.	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
1440–1050 B.C.	After 40 years in the desert, the Jews moved into the Land of Promise (also called the Land of Canaan) and that land became Israel. They took the land by military force. There was no king in Israel during this time period.	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first portion of 1Samuel
1050–930 B.C.	Israel was a united kingdom under kings Saul, David and Solomon. The Ark of God was separated from the Tabernacle before Saul; and David later brought the Ark to Jerusalem. The Temple is built by Solomon, and the Ark and the Tabernacle were kept there at Solomon's Temple.	1Samuel 2 Samuel 1Kings 1–11 1Chron. 10–2Chron. 9 Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
930–721 B.C.	The northern kingdom (Ephraim, sometimes called Israel, and later known as Samaria) separates from the southern kingdom (Judah). Both nations continue as two separate countries; but both are client nations to God.	2Kings 12–16 Jonah, Amos and Hosea minister mostly to the northern kingdom; Obadiah (?) and Joel to the southern kingdom.
721 B.C.	Assyria administers the 5th stage of national discipline to the northern kingdom (i.e., the people are removed from their land and killed or made slaves).	2Kings 17
721–586 B.C.	Judah continues as an autonomous kingdom and client nation to God. However, during this time, Assyria threatened Judah in the same way as it threaten the northern kingdom, and it was the people who responded to Isaiah's ministry which led to the neutralizing of the threat of Assyria (2Sam. 19:35 Isa. 37:36).	2Kings 18–24 2Chron. 10–36 Prophets: Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk.

A Brief History of Israel		
Dates	Events	Books of the Bible
612 B.C.	Nineveh, the capitol of Assyria, was destroyed by the Babylonians. The city of *Nineveh* may sound familiar because Jonah was sent there by God earlier to sound the warning of national discipline, and the people responded positively. However, about two centuries later, the people rejected God and were destroyed.	See the book of Jonah
586 B.C.	The 5th stage of national discipline is administered to Judah: Jerusalem is destroyed by the Babylonians after two previous deportations of Jews out of Judah. The Temple and city walls of Jerusalem are destroyed.	2Kings 25
586–516 B.C.	The Jews are held in captivity by Babylon, and then by the Medo-Persian empire, which defeated the Babylonians in 539 B.C.[35] In 536 B.C., Cyrus decrees that Jews can begin to return to Jerusalem.	Esther, Daniel, Ezekiel (?) Nehemiah, Ezra
516–167 B.C.	The Temple was rebuilt, and the Jews resided in the land of promise, but under a variety of rulers (the Persians, the Greek or Macedonian empire, the Egyptian empire, the Syrian empire). They never came out from under the 4th stage of national discipline during this time period.	Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi Old Testament canon closed around 400 B.C.
167–63 B.C.	The Jews appear to have briefly emerged from the 4th stage of national discipline and were under the Maccabean empire for about a century.	The Old Testament was both codified and translated into Greek, which would have been the dominant language in Israel.

[35] Cyrus the Great on the Cyrus Cylinder recorded these words: "...I am Cyrus. King of the world. When I entered Babylon...I did not allow anyone to terrorize the land...I kept in view the needs of the people and all its sanctuaries to promote their well-being...I put an end to their misfortune. The Great God has delivered all the lands into my hand; the lands that I have made to dwell in a peaceful habitation..." From cyrusthegreat.net accessed October 10, 2012.

A Brief History of Israel

Dates	Events	Books of the Bible
63 B.C.–70 A.D.	The Jews were ruled over by the Roman empire. Herod rebuilds the Temple. The Romans finally administer the 5th stage of national discipline to the Jews in A.D. 70, and they destroy Herod's Temple.	The New Testament

The dates above are sometimes approximate and many came from *The Narrated Bible*.

You may find it helpful to look back at this table when reading through the words of the various prophets.

Also, here is a **chart of the prophets**, so that you can keep them straight in your mind.

	Pre-Exilic Prophets			**Exilic Prophets**	**Post-Exilic Prophets**	
	9th century B.C.	8th century B.C.	7th century B.C.	6th century B.C.	6th century B.C.	5th century B.C.
To Gentile Nations	Obadiah (853–841 B.C.) (605–586 B.C.)	Jonah (~725 B.C.)	Nahum (663–612 B.C.)			
To the Northen Kingdom (Israel)		Hosea (760–710 B.C.) Amos (760–750 B.C.)				
	5th stage of national discipline applied to northern kingdom in 721 B.C.					
To the Southern Kingdom (Judah)	Joel (9th cent. B.C.) (6th cent. B.C.)	Micah (750–686 B.C.) Isaiah (701–681 B.C.)	Habakkuk (640–609 B.C.) Zephaniah (640–609 B.C.) Jeremiah (626–586 B.C.)	Daniel (530 B.C.) Ezekiel (593–571 B.C.)	Haggai (520 B.C.) Zechariah (520–519 B.C.)	Malachi (433 B.C.)
	The Exile (in the heading) refers to Judah, the southern kingdom. Exiled (removed from the land) in 586 B.C.; Returned to the land 516 B.C.					

Dates were taken from the NIV Study Bible notes. Some of the dates require more nuance than is found in this chart. The NIV Study Bible lists Hosea simply as the middle of the 8th century B.C.

The notes for the NASB place Obadiah as an exilic prophet. His time period is disputed. The time period of Joel's prophetic ministry is also disputed.

You may notice that there a lot more prophets coming to the southern kingdom than the northern kingdom. The northern kingdom was plagued with apostasy, which is why they were removed under the 5th stage of national discipline. There was more positive volition toward the Word of God down south, so the prophets spoke primarily to those in the south.
It is worth noting that there are missionaries (prophets) who went out to gentile nations and cities. The gospel message of the God of Israel would have gone out probably throughout the world.
General layout from: http://noisydove.com/wp-content/uploads/chart-of-ot-writing-prophets2.jpg

These two charts can be accessed from here and downloaded and printed: http://kukis.org/page5.html

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Isaiah warns of the 5th stage of national discipline.

This section will include a passage in Romans which looks back to this sermon of Isaiah's.

Isaiah began his ministry while the northern kingdom was still in existence, but it was about to go out under the 5th stage of national discipline. Isaiah's ministry was to the southern kingdom. Isaiah speaks about Sodom and Gomorrah as well:

Isa 1:1–7 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: 'Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against Me [these are the children of Israel]. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand.' Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.

Isaiah is speaking, but God is speaking through him. The people of Israel have continued to rebel against God. They act with less intelligence than an ox or a donkey, both of which at least know their owner. But Israel does not know God, the Founder of nation Israel.

Isa 1:8–10 And the daughter of Zion is left like a temporary shelter in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like **Sodom**, and become like **Gomorrah**. Hear the word

of the LORD, you rulers of **Sodom**! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of **Gomorrah**!

This is the very first chapter of Isaiah, and already, he is speaking of Sodom and Gomorrah. God preserved a remnant of Israel (called the *daughter of Zion*), or else they would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah—completely wiped out.

Paul will quote this passage in Rom. 9, where he explains, in part, the place of Israel in the Church Age, and the transfer of Godly responsibilities from Israel to the church.

Rom 9:6–13 It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, but not all of them are children of Abraham because they are his natural offspring, but, "In Isaac shall your Seed be called." This means that it is not the children according to the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are considered to be his [spiritual] offspring. For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." And not only this, but when Rebekah also had conceived by one, by our father Isaac (for the children had not yet been born, neither had done any good or evil; but that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who called,) it was said to her, "The elder shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (OT references: Gen. 21:12 18:10 25:23 Mal. 1:2)

In the change of dispensations, God will be working through the church and not through the nation Israel. Paul explains that, the key even to the Jewish race was regeneration and not being genetically related to Abraham. You had to have a relationship with God as Abraham did, not a genetic relationship with Abraham, in order to be a true Jew.

We will study this later in the book of Genesis, but Abraham already had a son (Ishmael) by Little Egypt (Hagar), but he is not the spiritual heir of Abraham. It is Abraham and then his son Isaac, who is about to be born (in our study) who are the heirs to God's promises. And then Isaac will have twins—one will be a Jew (Jacob) and one will not (Esau). And, looking at Jacob and Esau objectively, Esau was probably a much nicer person than Jacob was—but the line of promise goes through Jacob. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all regenerated through faith in Y^{e}howah Elohim, as were Jacob's sons, who head the 12 tribes of Israel.

People do not have a relationship with God because they are of the physical seed of Abraham. They are called because of their faith in the God of Israel (which is why, for instance, Rahab the Prostitute, Ruth the Moabitess, and the Queen of Sheba—all gentile women—were made righteous.

Rom 9:14–15 What shall we say then? Is there not unrighteousness with God? Let it not be! For He said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Ex. 33:19)

Paul asks the question, *Is God unrighteous?* When God chose Jacob over Esau, does this make God unrighteous? God's grace is a matter of His righteousness. God gives us grace because we have trusted in His Son. Jacob, despite his many shortcomings, wanted to be heir to the promises of God; Esau did not. These promises stretched out far after Jacob's lifetime (these are the promises which we have studied that God made to Abraham). They had value to Jacob; these promises did not have value to Esau.

Now, there will come times when it will appear that God has cast Israel aside:

Rom 9:27–29 Isaiah also proclaimed with great emotion [this] concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel is as the sands of the sea, a remnant shall be preserved. For He is bringing the matter to an end, and cutting short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work on the earth." And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah." (Isa. 10:22–23)

What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah? They have no posterity; there is no one who lives after them. They were completely destroyed. However, if God had not been gracious to the Jews, they would have been like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, God maintains a remnant of Jews even now, even those who have rejected Jesus Christ as their Savior. This is why today you know a number of Jews but you do not know any Edomites (descendants of Esau). And, quite obviously, you do not know anyone who was descended from the people of Sodom or Gomorrah, because all of their inhabitants were destroyed.

Then Paul lays out exactly what differentiates the gentiles through whom God will work as over against the Jews, through whom God will not work:

Rom 9:30–31 What shall we say then? [Simply this]: That the Gentiles, who did not attempt to become right with God [by how they lived] were made right with God, and this was the result of their faith [in Christ]. But the Israelites, who were attempting to become right with God by [conformity to] the law of Moses, never achieved [this righteousness] by that law. (AUV–NT)

The key is faith; the gentile believer has a righteousness bestowed upon him because he has exercised faith in Jesus Christ. The Jew who is not saved has tried to obey the Mosaic Law, which he is unable to fully keep. The Gentile, who did not try to keep the Mosaic Law, but believed in Him who justifies the ungodly—that gentile is saved (Rom. 4:4–5).

Rom. 9:32 Why? Because they did not [attempt to do it] by faith [in Him], but by trying to fulfill all the requirements [of the law]. So, they stumbled over "the stumbling stone," [i.e., the Jews refused to become obedient to Christ. See I Pet. 2:6-8]. (AUV–NT)

Jesus Christ is the *stumbling stone*. The key to regeneration is having faith in Him. However, the Jews instead have stumbled over Him while attempting to keep the Law of

Moses. Jesus fully kept the Law of Moses; legalistic Jews stumble over Him, as they try and fail to keep the Law.

God has graciously allowed a remnant of Israel to remain. If not for that, because of their sinfulness, Israel would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed as a people forever.

Israel will reap the evil of their own sin, as did Sodom.

Both the nation Israel and the nation Judah (the northern and southern kingdoms) were often acting against God. Most often, that was illustrated by their pursuing other gods of other nations.

Isa 3:8 For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence.

Isaiah ministered to the southern kingdom, Judah, warning them of the 5th stage of national discipline. Israel sins openly against God; they proclaim their sin as Sodom did, indicating that they did not even try to hide it.

Isa 3:9–10 For the look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves. Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds.

All the calamity that was brought upon Israel was because they brought this evil upon themselves.

It is one thing to sin; it is completely another to sin out in the open as though it is a good thing to do (picture a gay pride parade at this juncture). We all sin; but it is far worse to sin and for that to be something that you take pride in.

God will judge unbelieving Jews, both in time and eternity. God will judge Babylon.

Isaiah warns Judah in Isa. 13:

Isa 13:9, 11 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

Isaiah warns of the coming 5th stage of national discipline. The 4th stage is when a foreign entity comes into the Land of Promise and reigns over Israel; and the 5th stage is when a foreign power removes the Jews from the land that God gave them.

Isaiah is speaking for God here. It is not unusual for a prophet to suddenly begin speaking in the 1st person, as if they are God. Since God the Holy Spirit is speaking through the prophet, what is said is direct communication from God to the people of Israel.

Isa 13:13 "Therefore I will make the heavens tremble [Isaiah is speaking in the place of God], and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of His fierce anger. And like a hunted gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather them, each will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land. Whoever is found will be thrust through, and whoever is caught will fall by the sword. Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives raped. Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them, who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold. Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children."

The discipline which Judah, the southern kingdom was facing, is described above, the most graphic aspect being, having their very children dashed into pieces. This is all because the Jews of Judah had turned away from God.

However, God will deal with those who have brought this harm against Israel:

Isa 13:19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like **Sodom and Gomorrah** when God overthrew them.

Babylon is the geographical location and for a time, it was known as the Chaldean Empire or the neo-Babylonian empire (626–539 B.C.). Prior to this, Babylon was ruled over by the Assyrians.

Although Babylon had been under the control of several groups of people, this was because it was a great geographical area at one time (this is the modern-day Iraq). Babylon, ruled over by the Chaldeans, will, according to Isaiah, become like Sodom and Gomorrah. Do you know any Chaldeans or Babylonians (or, Assyrians)? And yet, Babylon was, at one time, the greatest city of the world, and the Chaldeans and the Assyrians were two of the greatest kingdoms in the history of mankind.

What Isaiah is saying is, God is going to overthrow the splendor and pomp of the great Chaldean Empire, and that great empire and its great city and its inhabitants will completely disappear from history. Today, most people could not go to a map of Iraq and say, "Here is where the city of Babylon used to be."[36] At the peak of the Chaldean empire, Isaiah says they will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah (meaning that they will be removed from history as a people).

This would be very much like saying that New York City will become vacant and desolate, with wild wolves inhabiting the buildings. Babylon was long-established as the capitol of the world, as per human viewpoint.

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[36] Admittedly, most people today could not go to a map and even find Iraq.

But this is, In fact, what God said about the city of Babylon:

Isa 13:20–22 It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

In the next lesson, we will see Jeremiah's warnings to Babylon, and then see how these prophesies were fulfilled historically.

Lesson 216 Genesis 19 Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament Part 3

The previous lesson has the basic history of Judah (the southern kingdom) and Israel)the northern kingdom) along with a list of the prophets and the time of their ministries. This is provided for historical context.

Unlike other faiths, Christianity (and true Y^{e}howah worship before it) is based first and foremost upon actual historical events. You take away the historical background, and there is nothing upon which Christianity stands. Our God is real. He created the universe; He takes an active part in the lives of individuals and in the lives of nations. These nations are real and all of the events described throughout the Old and New Testaments are actual historical incidents.

You may have wondered in the past, why are there four gospels? This is because, these gospels provides us 4 separate witnesses to the historicity of Jesus Christ, Whose life, public ministry and death on the cross should have gone unnoticed (if He were merely a man). Even as a religious figure, Jesus taught for a very short period of time, over a very limited geographical area, and He wrote nothing down Himself. That there is any history of such a man is both remarkable and unique; that there are 4 separate histories of Him written by His contemporaries is quite amazing. Two of the gospels were written by eyewitnesses and two were composed by men who had close associations with eyewitnesses. Is there anyone before the printing press who had 4 biographers who either knew the subject of their biography or knew people who personally knew him? My guess is, no.

You may not realize it, but before Jesus, there were at least two "messiah" figures and in the 1st century, there were as many as five. After Jesus, there were one or two dozen more claimants. We know little or nothing about these men because they were not God come in the flesh (John 1:1–3, 14). Given the smattering amount of information that we have of these various men, Jesus should have been similarly remembered (from human viewpoint). His public ministry was quite brief and over a very limited geographical area. But there are 4 biographers and 12 Apostles who fearlessly proclaimed the name of Jesus, even though, when He had been grabbed up by the Romans in the Garden of Gethsemane, most of

these same disciples gutlessly ran for their lives. As a result, we know about the true historical Jesus and precious little about the false messiahs of Israel.

Similarly, the Age of Israel is based upon 3 real historical figures—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—whose lives and history should have passed over unnoticed, as these men were not kings or famous men in any way. No one memorialized them on a wall or a stele. They were 3 ranchers who lived in Palestine at the beginning of the second millennium B.C. We only know about them because of the Word of God, which God preserved. Built upon this foundation of these 3 real men was the nation Israel—a real nation with a real history recorded in the Bible.

No doubt, you have heard many times that, the history of the Bible is contradicted by the ancient history that we know and by archeological finds that we have made. This is not actually true. Whereas there are a few places where the history of the Bible does not match exactly with ancient history, that does not make the Bible wrong. The documents upon which we base ancient history are much less trustworthy than the Bible. We also have the testimony of noted historian Will Durant,[37] who wrote: *The discoveries here summarized [in his first volume of "The Story of Civilization"] 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 adds corroboration from documents, monuments, or excavations...We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved*.[38] This is a man who did not believe in supernatural events, who was, insofar as we know, not a Christian or a devout Jew, but who knew far more about ancient history than you and I and our closest 100 friends and associates put together. He stands by the historicity of the Old Testament—including Genesis, except for the supernatural events. I will tend to take the testimony of a dispassionate historian who has written 11,000 pages on ancient history before I take the word of some skeptic who has a web page of 20 2-page documents, most of which he cut and paste from another webpage.

Jeremiah speak of the destruction of Babylon.

Jeremiah, who prophesied about 100 years after Isaiah, also spoke against Babylon and tied their end to Sodom and Gomorrah:

Jer 50:35–43 "A sword against the Chaldeans, declares the LORD, and against the inhabitants of Babylon, and against her officials and her wise men! A sword against the diviners, that they may become fools! A sword against her warriors, that they may be destroyed! A sword against her horses and against her chariots, and against all the foreign

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[37] Durant is known for his multi-volume set *The Story of Civilization*. Although he also wrote philosophical works, he is not associated with any church that I am aware of.

[38] *The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage,* by Will Durant; MJF Books, c1963; p. 300 (footnote). Note that Durant clearly rejects the supernatural elements of Genesis.

troops in her midst, that they may become women! A sword against all her treasures, that they may be plundered! A drought against her waters, that they may be dried up! For it is a land of images, and they are mad over idols. Therefore wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and ostriches shall dwell in her. She shall never again have people, nor be inhabited for all generations. **As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah** and their neighboring cities, declares the LORD, so no man shall dwell there, and no son of man shall sojourn in her. Behold, a people comes from the north; a mighty nation and many kings are stirring from the farthest parts of the earth. They lay hold of bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy. The sound of them is like the roaring of the sea; they ride on horses, arrayed as a man for battle against you, O daughter of Babylon! The king of Babylon heard the report of them, and his hands fell helpless; anguish seized him, pain as of a woman in labor."

From Wikipedia on Babylon: *Under Alexander [the Great], Babylon again flourished as a centre of learning and commerce. But following Alexander's death in 323 BC in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, his empire was divided amongst his generals, and decades of fighting soon began, with Babylon once again caught in the middle.*

The constant turmoil virtually emptied the city of Babylon. A tablet dated 275 BC[39] *states that the inhabitants of Babylon were transported to Seleucia, where a palace was built, as well as a temple given the ancient name of Esagila. With this deportation, the history of Babylon comes practically to an end, though more than a century later, it was found that sacrifices were still performed in its old sanctuary.*[40] *By 141 BC, when the Parthian Empire took over the region, Babylon was in complete desolation and obscurity*.[41] Or, as Isaiah prophesied: Babylon will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged. Isaiah spoke around 700 B.C. when Babylon was probably the greatest city (in human terms) on earth. Most historians agree that the Old Testament canon was closed out around 400 B.C. (a translation from the Hebrew into the Greek was made around 200 B.C.); and we find this prophecy fulfilled even after that.

Because of the shifting Euphrates River, now much of the city of Babylon is today under water.[42]

As an aside, there are a few prophecies here and there which some historians and skeptics nitpick, and some claim that the prophecy came after the event. However, a prophecy like this cannot be explained in this way. We know the history of the Old Testament, when it

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[39] I am sure that was not the actual date on the tablet itself. :)

[40] Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Babylon". Encyclopædia Britannica (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. Citation taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon accessed September 18, 2012.

[41] From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon accessed September 18, 2012.

[42] From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon#Archaeology accessed September 18, 2012.

was closed out, when it was translated into other languages, and that the Jews believed it to be divinely inspired. Either these prophets made a tremendous number of lucky guesses, or, the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God.

Josh McDowell devotes a chapter of *Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Volume I* to Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment. Since our topic is specifically Sodom and Gomorrah, we mention the fulfillment of these prophecies when related to Sodom and Gomorrah.

God gives those on negative volition and under discipline a second chance, and they still do not turn toward Him.

Amos (public ministry circa 750 B.C.) also mentions Sodom and Gomorrah with regards to the northern kingdom (Israel):

Amos 4:1 "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria [the northern kingdom, also called *Israel* and *Ephraim*], who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!'

Amos, speaking for God, identifies the recipients of his message as *the cows of Bashan who are on the mountain of Samaria*. Bashan is the northeastern portion of Israel, where the tribes of Reuben, Gad and a half-tribe of Manasseh originally settled. These are well-fed, fat cows, indicating that God has taken care of those in the northern kingdom.

Amos 4:2–3 The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks. And you shall go out through the breaches, each one straight ahead; and you shall be cast out into Harmon [possibly, *a high fortress?*]," declares the LORD.

God warns them that the King of Assyria will remove them from their land like a fish is removed from water. The breaches refer to holes in the city walls made by the Assyrian army; however, it is not altogether clear what *Harmon* (a transliteration) stands for (according to BDB, it means *high fortress*).

Amos 4:4–5 "Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel!" declares the Lord GOD.

Bethel and Gilgal are in the northern kingdom. Amos lists God's grievances against them above, spoken in irony.

Amos 4:6 "I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

The idea is, they will find it easy to clean their teeth, as God will not give them any bread to eat. This marks the beginning of corporate discipline on the northern kingdom.

Amos 4:7–8 "I also withheld the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest; I would send rain on one city, and send no rain on another city; one field would have rain, and the field on which it did not rain would wither; so two or three cities would wander to another city to drink water, and would not be satisfied; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

Holding back rain, to an agricultural economy, is an economic recession. Depending upon the severity of the lack of rain, this appears to be the 1st stage of national discipline (as found in Lev. 26). This is God disciplining the northern kingdom for their evil. It is God trying to gain the attention of those living in the northern kingdom. Sometimes He uses a recession in order to do that.

As a client nation to God, we in the United States are also subject to similar sets of discipline—which could include crop failures, but is more likely to be a recession coupled with great natural disasters.

Amos 4:9 "I struck you with blight and mildew; your many gardens and your vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured; yet you did not return to Me," declares the LORD.

Destruction of their existing crops is more discipline and warning of greater discipline to come. This sounds like the 2nd stage of national discipline (I have not yet enumerated the first 3 stages[43]). This is a natural disaster which has great economic impact on Israel.

Amos 4:10 "I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I killed your young men with the sword, and carried away your horses, and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

At this point, we appear to be up to the 3rd stage of national discipline, where there is widespread sickness and defeat in battle. The other acts of discipline continue and even intensify along with these things.

Amos 4:11 "I overthrew some of you, **as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah**, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to Me," declares the LORD.

This is the 4th stage of national discipline. God overthrowing some of them as He overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah—you will recall that first the kings of the east defeated these cities and were dragging the people off into slavery when Abraham rescued them

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[43] However, many others have: R. B. Thieme, Jr.; Westbank Bible Church; grace notes (probably from R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s Bible classes; and Ken Ford (there are many others who have posted this doctrine).

(Gen. 14). Many of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom have been similarly rescued, and yet they did not return to God.

In the Old Testament, the Jews had this rich historical record of what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19) and the stages of discipline that God reserved for Israel (Lev. 26). If they knew Bible doctrine and knew what was going on all around them, they could easily match the prophecies and historical trends to their lives. We are able to do much the same thing, as long as we *know* these things. And Jesus said to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times." (Matt. 16:2–3). The believer with doctrine in his soul ought to be able to watch a news broadcast or pick up a newspaper and understand where a nation stands with regards to God's blessing or cursing.

As an aside, you will note that I spend a great deal of time speaking of the importance of knowing Bible doctrine; of knowing God's Word. That is because we are in the epoch of conscience. Adam, as the federal head of the human race, ate from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Right and Wrong); and that meant that we entered into a world of moral decisions, by choice. We need to know what that morality is because we have, by imputation, also chosen to take of the fruit of that tree.

Let's take an analogy: when your child is age 1, you do not make any attempts to teach him fundamental morality, because he is still in innocence, despite having a sin nature. However, around age 3, you begin to teach your child some fundamental concepts of right and wrong. You cannot just let a kid do whatever from age 2 on up, because that will have some horrendous consequences. You have to teach him, which involves knowledge and a vocabulary (which vocabulary always begins with the word *no*).

Similarly, we as believers in Jesus Christ must also learn with knowledge and vocabulary what is right and wrong. You cannot just allow a person to believe in Jesus and then do whatever comes natural after that. Believers have sin natures just as unbelievers do. What comes natural is often sin and human viewpoint thinking. Hence the need for knowledge of Bible doctrine. The believer who just goes off on his own after salvation is just like a 2-year old who is given complete control of his moral choices from that point on.

Back to the final verse in Amos:

Amos 4:12 "Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

God warns them of the coming 5th stage of national discipline which will come upon them.

The people of the southern kingdom to become like Sodom and Gomorrah to God as had already happened to the northern kingdom.

There is a big difference between Isaiah and Jeremiah—the people of the southern kingdom listened to Isaiah and they were not destroyed. However, a century later, Judah, the southern kingdom, did not listen to Jeremiah, who was also proclaiming God's judgment. Therefore, the southern kingdom would suffer the 5th stage of national discipline during Jeremiah's lifetime (as did the northern kingdom).

Jeremiah (public ministry between 626–580 B.C.) speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah:

Jer 23:9 Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD and because of his holy words.

The prophets are saying things which are false.

Jer 23:10 For the land is full of adulterers; because of the curse the land mourns, and the pastures of the wilderness are dried up. Their course is evil, and their might is not right.

In the Old Testament, and adulterer is often used symbolically to stand for Israel or Judah going after different gods than Y^{e}howah.

Jer 23:11 "Both prophet and priest are ungodly; even in my house I have found their evil, declares the LORD.

Those who are supposed to teach the truth have turned against God. Evil, in the Bible, often refers to human viewpoint thinking.

Jer 23:12 Therefore their way shall be to them like slippery paths in the darkness, into which they shall be driven and fall, for I will bring disaster upon them in the year of their punishment, declares the LORD.

These prophets live in darkness. God will bring disaster upon them for lying to His people.

Jeremiah speaks of the false prophets in the northern kingdom (Samaria):

Jer 23:13 "In the prophets of Samaria I saw moral bankruptcy: they prophesied by Baal and led My people Israel astray.

This would have occurred in the past, and this was something that Jeremiah and the people who listened to him were aware of. When Jeremiah spoke, a century had passed since the northern kingdom (Samaria) was taken into captivity by the Assyrians.

He also warned about the false prophets in the southern kingdom:

Jer 23:14 But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns away

from his evil; **all of them have become like Sodom to Me**, and **its inhabitants like Gomorrah**."

Committing adultery is generally a reference to the Jewish people worshiping (chasing after) a false god.

The evil practiced by the prophets in the southern kingdom actually supports the evil behavior of the people of Judah, so that they have become to God like Sodom and Gomorrah (you will note that Jeremiah, like the other prophets, speaks as if God is speaking through him).

Jer 23:15–17 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with bitter food and give them poisoned water to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land.' Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.'"

But God warned them that, if they follow the false prophets, the prophets who tell them that everything is fine, their prophets will become like Sodom and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will become like Gomorrah.

Lesson 217 Genesis 19 Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament Part 4

We have one more set of prophecies involving Sodom and Gomorrah to examine.

It ought to be quite remarkable as to just how foundational the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is. We have spent 20 lessons on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and about a half-dozen lessons on where this destruction is later referenced in subsequent Scriptures. It is with Sodom that we first have an illustration of the 4th and 5th stages of national discipline (being controlled by an outside power; and then being driven out of your homeland by an outside power). Sodom illustrates the 6th stage of national discipline as well (the complete destruction of the people of a nation).

Please bear in mind that all of these sermons by the prophets concerning Sodom and Gomorrah would have meant diddly-squat had not the people known about Sodom and Gomorrah, having the very evidence of the destruction of these cities right before their very eyes.

God, through Jeremiah, laments the future destruction of Judah:

Jeremiah also wrote Lamentations, and he spoke of what would happen to Zion, which is a metonym for God's people, the Jews:

Lam 4:6–8 For the chastisement of the daughter of My people **has been greater than the punishment of Sodom**, which was overthrown in a moment, and no hands were wrung for her. Her princes were purer than snow, whiter than milk; their bodies were more ruddy than coral, the beauty of their form was like sapphire. Now their face is blacker than soot; they are not recognized in the streets; their skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become as dry as wood.

The discipline that they would face would be greater than the punishment of Sodom. However, God would always allow a remnant of Jews to remain on this earth.

The wringing of the hands indicates great sadness for the destruction of Sodom that no one felt. The princes named here refer to the leaders of Judah, who were, at one time, attractive to both God and men (in their souls), but now were repulsive. One can no longer tell that these are the people of God.

Ezekiel (public ministry 593–570 B.C.) mentions Sodom several times in the same sermon. He speaks for God in this diatribe against Judah, the southern kingdom:

Ezek. 16:36–37 Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your whorings with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.

Ezekiel is speaking metaphorically. All of Judah's lovers would be the false gods which Judah embraced instead of their God. Uncovering Judah's nakedness is showing Judah to be morally bankrupt for rejecting the husband (God) of her youth and pursuing after these meaningless lovers.

Ezek. 16:38–41 And I will judge you as women who commit adultery and shed blood are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. And I will give you into their hands, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places. They shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful jewels and leave you naked and bare. They shall bring up a crowd against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women. I will make you stop playing the whore, and you shall also give payment no more.

God, through Ezekiel, speaks of very harsh judgment which would come against the southern kingdom.

Ezek. 16:42–43 So will I satisfy My wrath on you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be calm and will no more be angry. Because you have not remembered the days of your youth, but have enraged me with all these things, therefore, behold, I have returned your deeds upon your head, declares the Lord GOD. Have you not committed lewdness in addition to all your abominations?

The days of Israel's youth refers back to better times; for instance, when the generation of promise entered into the land; or the people of Israel under David and Solomon. *Remembering* means that they think back to the relationship between God and Israel—they remember the truths taught to Abraham and to Moses and to David. They remember Bible doctrine. However, the problem is, they do not remember any of these things; they do not know who they are; they do not know Who God is.

Ezek. 16:44–47 "Behold, everyone who uses proverbs will use this proverb about you: 'Like mother, like daughter.' You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and her children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. And your elder sister is Samaria, who lived with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, is **Sodom** with her daughters. Not only did you walk in their ways and do according to their abominations; within a very little time you were more corrupt than they in all your ways.

The Jews hated the Hittites and the Amorites; they even looked down on Samaria, which had gone out under the 5th stage of national discipline. And they particularly despised Sodom as being incredibly corrupt. However, God is saying that the Jews in the southern kingdom were equally corrupt. They are just like the people that they despise. This is a terrible insult to the Jews.

Ezek. 16:48–50 As I live, declares the Lord GOD, your sister **Sodom** and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. Behold, this was the guilt of your sister **Sodom**: she and her daughters were arrogant, they had an excess of food and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.

The sins named here are being prosperous, but without giving any care to the poor and needy. The implication is that, Judah (and Sodom) had both enjoyed great prosperity; but that they were heartless in their prosperity. Their heartlessness was proof of their rejection of God.

Ezek. 16:51–54 Samaria has not committed half your sins. You have committed more abominations than they, and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations that you have committed. Bear your disgrace, you also, for you have intervened on behalf of your sisters. Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. So be ashamed, you also, and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous. "I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of **Sodom** and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and

her daughters, and I will restore your own fortunes in their midst, that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all that you have done, becoming a consolation to them.

Remember, Samaria is the northern kingdom and God, through Ezekiel, is saying that those in the southern kingdom have committed far more sins. Ezekiel is warning Judah about the fast approaching 5th stage of national discipline (which occurs during Ezekiel's life).

Ezek. 16:55–57 As for your sisters, **Sodom** and her daughters shall return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former state, and you and your daughters shall return to your former state. Was not your sister **Sodom** a byword in your mouth in the day of your arrogance, before your wickedness was uncovered? Now you have become an object of reproach for the daughters of Syria and all those around her, and for the daughters of the Philistines, those all around who despise you.

Sodom being a byword meant that many people knew about Sodom, its destruction; and that it had entered into even day-to-day language.

Returning to your former state is essentially the definition of reversionism, a term coined by R. B. Thieme, Jr. They have reverted to their former evils; they revert back to their human viewpoint thinking. They are the dog returning to his vomit (Prov. 26:11 2Peter 2:22), to see if perhaps there may have been some worthwhile goodies that he left behind.

Ezek. 16:58–60 You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, declares the LORD. "For thus says the Lord GOD: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, yet I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant.

Religion, in that day, was often closely related to the phallic cults and with child sacrifice.

Allow me a tangent here, because some people read this and think, *well, this has no relationship to me or to my society today*. However, it does. Just because the phallic cults are not associated with religion anymore, does not mean that this is not a problem in our society. We live in a highly sexualized society where we have actually affected the age at which girls enter into puberty in my own lifetime. Our pagan worship of sex in this society is the phallic cult, but in a different incarnation.

In many Muslim countries, children are raised for the earliest age to hate Jews, Israel and the United States. They learn from cartoons at the earliest age to desire to be martyrs for their country and for Islam. Some children are even used as suicide bombers. This is modern-day child sacrifice.

The covenant spoken of in the Ezekiel passage, is the Palestinian covenant, where God has given a land grant to the people of Israel. This also takes in the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants.

Ezek. 16:61–63 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. I will establish My covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD, that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord GOD."

You will note that God will atone for the sins of Judah—that is the cross of Christ. Judah is undeserving of what God does for her, just as we are undeserving of what God does for us.

Prophets, on many occasions, spoke of judgments against other nations. Zephaniah (public ministry between 630–620 B.C.) on Moab:

Zephaniah is going to tell us what will happen to the country of Moab. Actually, we have stopped our march through Gen. 19 and have not come to Moab yet. Moab will be descended from one of Lot's daughters and Lot himself. At the end of Gen. 19, there will be two acts of incest which will result in the tribes of Moab and Ammon. Preview of coming attractions: Lot's two daughters will have sex with their father in order to bear children; and those children will become heads of the nations Moab and Ammon, mentioned in this passage.

Zeph. 2:9–11 Therefore, as I live," declares the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "**Moab will become like Sodom**, **and the Ammonites like Gomorrah**, a land possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a waste forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them, and the survivors of my nation will possess them. This will be their lot in return for their pride, because they taunted and boasted against the people of the LORD of hosts. The LORD will be awesome against them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth, and to him will bow down, each in its place, all the lands of the nations."

Moab and Ammon would eventually go the way of degeneration, and they would be destroyed.

Moab seems to have disappeared from history, although, at one time, it was a fierce nation that David faced in battle; a nation which had its ups and downs with respect to Israel. However, after being taken captive by the Chaldeans, there never appears to be a time when these people or this nation ever existed again as independent entities.

According to ISBE: *At a later date Moab was overrun by the Nabathean Arabs who ruled in Petra and extended their authority on the east side of Jordan even as far as Damascus (Josephus, Ant., XIII, xv, 1, 2). The Moabites lost their identity as a nation and were afterward confounded with the Arabs, as we see in the statement of Josephus (XIII, xiii, 5), where he says that Alexander (Janneus) overcame the Arabians, such as the Moabites and the Gileadites. Alexander built the famous stronghold of Macherus in Moab, on a hill overlooking the Dead Sea, which afterward became the scene of the imprisonment and*

tragical death of John the Baptist (Josephus, BJ, VII, vi, 2; Ant., XVIII, v, 2; Mark 6:21-28). It was afterward destroyed by the Romans. Kir became a fortress of the Crusaders under the name of Krak (Kerak), which held out against the Moslems until the time of Saladin, who captured it in 1188 A.D.

Jeremiah (public ministry between 626–580 B.C.) mentions Sodom in His judgment of Edom. Edom is a country which is founded by Esau, who is the twin brother of Jacob, one of the patriarchs (Jacob is the son of Isaac who is the son of Abraham). God would love Jacob, but He would hate Esau, even though these men are twins (Mal. 1:3 Rom. 9:13, which passages we have already studied).

Jer 49:17–18 "Edom will become a horror. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its disasters. As when **Sodom and Gomorrah** and their neighboring cities **were overthrown**, says the LORD, no man will dwell there, no man will sojourn in her.

According to The Wycliffe Bible Commentary on Obadiah:[44] Soon after this time, Edom was pushed out of her ancient home by the Nabatæans, so that she had to move to the west side of the Dead Sea. Hebron was made the capital of her new home in south Judah. The Maccabees, especially John Hyrcanus (c. 125 BC), subdued and Judaized the Edomites (that is, they learned about the Redeemer-Creator God, Y^{e}howah). Both the Edomites, who later rejected the Messiah of the Jews; were finally destroyed with the Jews in 70 AD by the Roman general Titus. However, this does not appear to be exactly the case.

Clarifying Christianity had the following information about the fulfillment of this and other prophecies in the Bible against Edom: *The history books tell us that Edom did OK for perhaps a hundred years after their final warning from God's prophets. Then, during the fifth century (400-499) B.C. the "Edomites" were overwhelmed by other Arab groups. In turn, these groups were taken over by the Nabatæans, who started living in the area sometime around 312 B.C. By the way, the Nabataeans, not the Edomites, are the people who cut the temples in the sandstone walls of Petra. Under the Nabataeans, the city of Petra flourished until 106 A.D., when the Romans conquered Petra. From that time it slid into disuse, to the point that Edom was almost uninhabited from the 7th to the 12th century A.D. It revived slightly in the 12th century when the crusaders built a castle there called Sel. Afterward, it remained so forgotten that it had to be rediscovered in 1812 by Swiss traveler Johann. L. Burckhardt*.[45]

As you can see, by all of the references made to Sodom and Gomorrah throughout the Old and New Testaments, this is a very significant event, and something that all nations from

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[44] From http://www.thomaswilliamson.net/edom.htm accessed September 18, 2012.

[45] From: http://www.clarifyingchristianity.com/fulfill.shtml accessed September 18, 2012. Additional references found on that page.

that area could relate to. This is why we spent a great deal of time on Gen. 14 and 19, as these chapters are, in many ways, foundational to God's dealings with nations.

With this, we will return to Gen. 19 to complete this chapter in the next few lessons.

Lesson 218 Genesis 19:30–38 The Incest of Lot and his Daughters

At this point, we return to Gen. 19, to see the epilogue for the life of Lot. First of all, this will be the final historical note on Lot. We will not follow him to his death; we will not follow the lives of his daughters, except to find out that they will have two sons by incest. Finally, and we will find out nothing about the sons personally, except for their names, and, in later books of the Bible, their descendants, and only as they interact with Israel.

Apart from a few later mentions in Scripture, this will be the final narrative of Lot's life.

Gen 19:30 Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters.

We are given precious little information about Zoar, apart from it being small and not too far from Sodom and Gomorrah. Zoar, as a destination city, is God's second choice for Lot. You may recall that the two angels were leading Lot and his family out of Sodom, and they were told to evacuate to a set of mountains, and Lot asked if he could go to Zoar, which was closer, instead. Gen 19:17–22 As soon as the angels got them [Lot and his family] outside, one of the angels said, "Run for your lives! Don't look back and don't stop anywhere on the plain! Run to the mountains, or you will be swept away!" But Lot said to them, "No, my lord--please. Your servant has indeed found grace in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness by saving my life. But I can't run to the mountains; the disaster will overtake me, and I will die [that is, "The mountains are too far away and I will die trying to get to them."]. Look, this town is close enough for me to run to. It is a small place. Please let me go there--it's only a small place, isn't it?--so that I can survive." And the angel acquiesced, saying, "All right, I'll grant your request about this matter too, and will not overthrow the town you mentioned. Hurry up! Run there, for I cannot do anything until you get there." Therefore the name of the city is Zoar [= tiny, insignificant].

Zoar both describes the town and the spiritual impact that Lot has had in his life.

However, at this point in the narrative, Lot has left Zoar, the city which he begged the angels not to destroy, so that he could live there. It is possible that Lot observes similar lawless behavior in Zoar. Maybe he did not quite catch it at first, but after living in Sodom, thinking back on all that happened, and then seeing similar things occur in Zoar, Lot probably figured that moving out of town was his best choice. Or, perhaps his life just sucked in Zoar. Remember, Lot came to Zoar with just the clothes on his back and Zoar was a city that possibly should have been destroyed by God. This would suggest that *Christian kindness* was not what Zoar was known for. Whatever the case, Lot left Zoar. This was not God's place for Lot, and Lot eventually agreed with God.

Notice the incredible change of fortune. Not but a few decades ago, Lot of was rich—so rich that his stuff could not be kept separate from the possessions of Abraham, his uncle, so that they had to separate (Gen. 13:1–11). And now, Lot is living with his 2 daughters in a cave, outside a small city where their life was not quite working out. Furthermore, it appears that they have no real prospects for the future. That is, they are left with a day-to-day existence trying to just scratch out a life, and not much of a life at that.

Gen 19:30 Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters.

We do not know why Lot was afraid of the people in Zoar. I suspect that their sexual sins were similar to those in Sodom, although they may have had a different brand of sexual sin. It is not out of the question that Lot was afraid for his daughters.[46]

In most Muslim countries, women cannot just wander about—particularly in western dress—or they made find themselves being subject to rape, the men being "overpowered" by their own sexual lusts. It is possible that this was the case for Zoar. However, the Bible never specifically tells us this why Lot was afraid.

Why didn't Lot go to stay with Abraham? My guess is, Lot had too much pride. They parted as equals, but Lot came to find out that he was blessed because he was closely associated with Abraham.[47] His blessing was with Abraham and not off somewhere else. The few cattle they disagreed about—who cares about that? They were inconsequential by comparison to the life that Lot now leads. Lot's servants could have allowed every dispute to go in favor of Abraham, and Lot would have been a 100x better off had he stayed with Abraham.

The lesson to us is quite simple: Abraham followed Y^{e}howah God and he was greatly blessed; Lot did not (although he believed in Y^{e}howah God), and God allowed him to live, but not extravagantly. God preserved Lot, but not on the basis of his own spiritual life.

Perhaps Lot could not face his Uncle Abraham. Perhaps he was ashamed. So, Lot's solution was to live in a cave with his two daughters.

For some people, what follows is going to be confusing. God has just destroyed Sodom and 3 other cities because of the sexual degeneracy of the people there. However, Lot and his two daughters are going to commit a sin which is quite shocking (at least, for most people). God is going to let this sin go, more or less. At least, God is not going to rain down fire and brimstone upon Lot and his daughters. So, as we study this, ponder on the difference between the sins of Sodom, which we have observed already, to the sin of incest which will follow.

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[46] Even though Lot offered up his daughters to the mob outside of his house, people who have reverted back to sinful behavior from the past are not necessarily consistent.

[47] This is an observation that we have made; Lot probably did not come to this conclusion himself.

Gen 19:31 And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth.

Lot's daughters desire children. Even though God has rescued them from certain doom, they see their lives as meaningless, and they desire children, even though they are not married. It is the eldest sister who puts this plot together.

She makes the observation that, given their current circumstances, no man is going to come and marry them. This could refer to their station in life, living in a cave, and to the fact that Lot has no ability to provide a dowry for them.

Furthermore, it is obvious that they have no faith in God and no understanding of blessing by association. They have lived under blessing by association for decades, and they did not see it. When they were with Abraham, they were rich; and now that Lot chose to separate from Abraham, they have become poor to the point of destitution. Their relationship with Abraham was the key to all of this, and he does not live that far away.

As an aside, there is a parallel here between the relationship of Lot and his two daughters with Abraham, and our relationship with Jesus Christ. The closer Lot was to Abraham (a shadow image of our Lord), the greater his blessing. The further away Lot was from Abraham, the less blessing that came his way. His life was preserved, but little else.

So it is with our lives and Jesus Christ; the closer He is, the greater our blessing; the further away that He is, the less blessing we receive. Even as believers out of fellowship, we receive some consideration (grace) from God, but it is sometimes minimal (illustrated by God sending two angels to rescue Lot and his family from Sodom).

Now, this is an option which these women do not appear to even consider: why not go to their great uncle Abraham and say, "Whatever you need us to do, we will do. Whatever job you can provide for us, we will do that. You want us as slave girls? We will do slave labor then." Abraham is well-connected, and he is well-respected. Their association with him would have probably brought them husbands. But this apparently does not occur to them.

Also, there is one aspect of their relationship to Abraham which is not found in the Bible: what did Lot say about Abraham? Given the time period that Lot has been separated from Abraham, his girls would have been children or possibly into their late teens when living with Abraham. What their father Lot said about Abraham would have had a lot of impact on how they felt about Abraham. I cannot say that Lot spoke evil of his Uncle Abraham to his girls, because that is not recorded in Scripture; but moving to live with Abraham does not seem to even be an option with these women.

People who are out of fellowship and have little or no spiritual growth cannot make simple decisions which make sense. Living in a cave and having sex with their father? This is their decision? This is their solution to their circumstances? Only women trapped in human viewpoint would make such a decision; and yet, people do this every day. People

make the same decisions in their lives over and over again, decisions which harm their very psyche, and yet, they cannot seem to make good decisions regarding their own lives.

Now, you may say, “Well, their idea of committing incest is just foolish; anyone should have known better.” However, remember that they lived in a highly sexualized society—not one like we have, as these women were still virgins—but heavily sexualized nonetheless. So we do not know exactly what their societal influences had been, but if homosexual rape had become some kind of sport to these people, then who knows how far they had wandered from truth and in which direction.

There are distortions of sex in all societies and with many peculiarities confined to that society or geographical area. A woman in western clothing might find herself subject to rape in a Muslim country; homosexuality may be promoted in other areas, promiscuity in another. My point here is, the way that sex was distorted in that time and place can be very specific as well as, to our way of thinking, very odd. As we have studied, in Sodom, homosexual rape had become a sport of sorts, attracting the entire town (of men) to observe the rape.

Back to this idea that Lot’s daughters have that incest is a good idea. Have you ever noticed that you find it quite simple to solve the problems of the lives of other people, but your own problems seem to be far more difficult? In fact, solving the problems of others is often just common sense. Most of that has to do with the fact that, you do not have the weaknesses of that other person or their human viewpoint thinking (in that area). So it should be obvious to us, that there are a variety of other things that these women might do to have children legitimately; and that Lot has so many options other than living in a cave—the chief sensible option is just to go to Abraham. However, since they have ruled out the most sensible, logical, divine viewpoint option, what remains is, human viewpoint solutions—solutions that, in our society, we find repugnant.

No doubt that pride plays a part in all of this. Lot separated from Abraham, and, 20+ years later, Lot has nothing but the clothes on his back and he lives in a cave, while Abraham is still rich and prosperous, and will live another 75 years on top of all that. After being such a colossal failure in his own life, Lot probably could not even face his Uncle Abraham.

Gen 19:31 And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth.

There is a time frame here that is not carefully laid out. Did all of this occur over the space of a week or so? Is the narrative staying with Lot and his two daughters over the period of a few months or a few years? We are not told how long it was before these women came to this conclusion.

It is interesting that these women have just witnessed something that most of us will never see—the raining down of God’s wrath upon 4 cities to where they are destroyed along with all of the people and even all of their crops and foliage—and yet, they do not believe that God is capable of bringing men into their lives in order to preserve the family line.

Gen 19:32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father."

The older sister is suggesting incest. Although this may seem like a bridge too far, they have lived among a sexually promiscuous people as well as with very aggressive homosexuals. So their norms and standards, whatever they were when living with Abraham and company, were quite distorted at this point, and incongruous to our own.

Their cover story is, they want to preserve the seed of their father; however, like many women at that age, what they really want is to have children. Therefore, they hatch a plot. Not only do they hatch a plot, but they carry it out quickly.

It is important to note that no talk of God's will or God's plan is a part of their conversation. How God figures into all this is ignored. Two angels sent from God just rescued these women from certain destruction, destruction that they saw with their own eyes, and yet, they cannot seem to integrate God into their thinking and reasoning. They had no doctrine in their souls; they completely lacked divine viewpoint. They had no soul assets to guide them.

Gen 19:32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father."

Interestingly enough, even without public education, these women knew something about wine and sex and children. I realize that, if you are a liberal and reading this, you are wondering, "How is that even possible?" How do these women know about sex when they have not gone to an American school with sex education? However, people knew about sex long before public education came along. When it is time, people will figure out sex. We have never had a generation die out because they could not figure out sex.

In fact, all of the ills that sex education in the public schools purport to cure—reducing teen pregnancy and reducing venereal diseases through education—these problems have actually skyrocketed hand-in-hand with the increase of sex ed in our schools. And the liberal solution is: more sex education; because, obviously, the kids are not getting enough. Even though this ought to be obvious to any person who has eyes or has seen a news report that sex ed will lead to experimentation, human viewpoint thinking says, "We need more education about sex in our schools because the amount that we have isn't yet enough." When a government program does not work out well, human viewpoint thinking is, we need to expand that program.

It is always fascinating to see how a society's mores evolve. Schools were originally designed so that people could read and understand the Bible; that was the primary thrust of most early education in America, because people understood that, the more a person understood the Bible, the better that would be for society as a whole.

Now, over the past century or so, public education has evolved to a point where, the Bible is very nearly a banned book in schools, but sex ed is rampant (as is sexual

experimentation, teen pregnancy and venereal disease among teens). In the realm of societal norms and standards, it ought to be obvious how that has affected us, but it isn't.

Nevertheless, despite not having a *quality* American education, these women knew that with enough wine, they would lower the inhibitions of their father in order to commit incest with him. Obviously, they understood that sexual intercourse would result in becoming pregnant.

Gen 19:32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father."

Bear in mind that these women spent at least 23 years living in Sodom, so it is apparent that whatever moral standards they had were changed dramatically. We have no idea what they did as ladies in Sodom, apart from the fact that they appear to be promised to be married.

Despite all that these two women are doing, two things in their favor ought to be noted: (1) they are still virgins, which puts them light years ahead of most teens today and (2) when the angels came and told them to leave Sodom, they left. So, quite obviously, what they are doing is both wrong and gross; but people, believers in fact, make lousy decisions all of the time, when they ought to know better.

However, despite all that they have seen, neither woman speaks about God when making this decision. This indicates to us that, Lot did not teach them enough about their God. This is no doubt, in part, because Lot had very little interest in God himself.

Gen 19:33 So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

That very night, after putting this plot together, these girls get their father drunk, with the purpose of having sex with him.

Apparently, Lot was so drunk that he did not know when his firstborn daughter came into his bed or when she left; but he was not so drunk as to keep him from functioning as a normal male.

Throughout most of this chapter, this word *to lay down* is used to indicate having sexual relations. Here, the older sister is said to have sexual relations with her father.

Now, let me say something about one or two translations. The word used here is a euphemism for having sex and this word is more often used for a person simply laying down. Since this is a euphemism, then using a euphemism to translate this word is most appropriate. Translating this *to make love* is ridiculous (as the New International Reader's Version does)! They did not make love; Lot was barely involved, and this does not signal the beginning of some great love affair between a father and his daughter. The older sister understood enough about sex to understand what was required to get pregnant. This is

what happened. Retaining the euphemism *to lay down with* or *to lay down by* is what most translators should have done (and most correctly use a euphemism for sex here).

Lesson 219 Genesis 19:30–38 The Incest of Lot and his Daughters, Part II

So far, we have studied:

Gen 19:30–33 Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father." So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

The eldest daughter appears to have come up with this idea, and she has gone first. Now it is time for her younger sister to follow suit.

Gen 19:34 The next day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father."

The firstborn still calls the shots here, even though these are adult women. If Lot is an old man, but still able to procreate, these women are probably in their 30's or 40's (as a guess). Because of what has transpired in their lives, they have gone past the age when it is likely that they will marry; and yet, they are still able to bear children.

The older sister, in speaking to the younger, tells her what to do. She uses two imperatives here, which suggests a pattern of behavior which has continued for a long time.

Have you ever noticed that, when someone has a lousy idea or wants to do something wrong, that they don't like to just keep this to themselves, but they want to involve others in this lousy idea? People who sin generally do not like to sin alone, but they like to involve others. So the older sister is not going to do this on her own; she gets the younger sister to agree to this.

Gen 19:35 So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

It is not clear how much Lot recalled from the night before. The Bible tells us that he did not know when the older sister came into his bed or when she left. The same is true here of the younger sister. This appears to be an idiom that indicates that he recalls nothing from these nights of incest.

Gen 19:36 Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.

Lot is probably into his 60's at least. Given Abraham's age, and when it was determined that he was no longer capable of procreating (around age 100), we may reasonably guess Lot's age to be between 60 and 90.

Bear in mind that Abraham will live to be 175, so people still lived longer during that time period. Abraham was apparently sexually alive perhaps into his early 90's and sexually dead by age 99. Lot was still sexually alive, and therefore, younger. Given that he was able to be drunk and to perform sexually suggests that he was closer to 60 (age 60 at that time was quite different than 60 today).

For many people, what has occurred here is quite shocking. The daughters caused their father to engage in incest with them. Believers without doctrine and unbelievers would certainly ask, *what separates the sins of the people of Sodom and the sins of these two women?*

There are two main differences: first of all, the sins of the people of Sodom were repeated. Every time strangers came into town, they apparently would be surrounded, gang raped (probably raped until they died); and much of the town apparently watched and enjoyed these events. This was their reality TV; this was their outdoor sporting event. This apparently occurred so many times, that Lot insisted that the angels stay with him in order to protect them. Therefore, he obviously knew about these activities. The townsfolk were so overcome with lust for these angels (who appeared to be men), that they were willing to do harm to Lot and his family in order to satiate their lusts.

Secondly, these sins had become addictive, as many sins of pleasure are. So the men of Sodom wanted to participate again and again in these sins of rape, violence and voyeurism.

The daughters of Lot did not sin with their father for sexual pleasure. They did not repeat this act again and again and again. What they did was wrong—that is clear—but their sin was not one of degeneracy or of sexual addiction. This sin that they committed did not control their lives forever more (as addictions do).

Gen 19:37 The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of Moab to this day.

Interestingly enough, the firstborn does not appear to be embarrassed about what she has done. The name that she gives her son is a play on the phrase *from a father*. *From my father* would be *me'abi;* and *from a father* would be *me'ab*. If you look at the end of v. 36, these daughters are pregnant *from their father*. If that is shortened and the vowel changed, we end up with *Moab*.

The nation of Moab will play a prominent part in the Bible. God will actually honor this people because they come from Lot and he is Abraham's nephew. This is again blessing by association.

You may also recall that, when looking at the Old Testament references to Sodom and Gomorrah, there was a clear judgment against Moab.

Gen 19:37 The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of Moab to this day.

This final phrase is either a gloss or it indicates that this was written down sometime later (say, 100–400 years later). It would be possible for there to be a small family of Moabites in existence 100 years later, which would allow Isaac (or Jacob, or whomever) to record this, either as a gloss or he could have written the entire chapter, adding this comment which is outside of the historical narrative. It is reasonable that Moses eventually put Genesis together from documents which he had, and add this phrase at the end, being quite knowledgeable of the people of Moab.

The book of Genesis is short enough, and the minds of the people of that day were large enough, for this book (and probably the book of Job) to have been preserved by both memory and by word of mouth. That is, the father memorized the book of Genesis up until his time period, and he would teach it to his son. His son (or grandson) may add the words, "He is the father of Moab to this day" and then, at the very end, add things about his own life. The book of Genesis could have been, in this way, passed along through several generations, specifically going through the line of Noah to Abraham, as given in the latter half of Gen. 11 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).[48]

For whatever reason, we do not have *the Moabites* but we simply have *Moab*. Let me suggest that we are therefore looking at a family rather than at a nation of people.

Gen 19:38 The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

Ben-ammi is a transliteration from the Hebrew and it means *son of my people*. Many times, throughout the Old Testament, this full name will be retained. However, instead of it reading Ben-ammi (which translation occurs only here in this verse) we will read is as *children of Ammon* or *the sons of Ammon*. Some translations skip over or ignore the word *ben* (which means *son of*) and simply translate *Ben Ammon* as the *Ammonites*.

There are two ways to view this: the younger sister had to be talked into doing this, so she is not going to wear the name of her son as a big A on her shirt saying, "Yep, this is my father's child." This is somewhat embarrassing to her. So (1) her husband-to-be, who perished in Sodom, was named *Ammi* and she acts as if this is his son (better to have had sex outside of wedlock than to have sex with your own father); or (2) she simply suggests that the father is from her tribe, and calls him *the son of my people*. Who knows, maybe she is aggressively saying that this young man will become a people? I doubt that was on her mind; but her son would become a famous people.

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[48] This links should be good sometime in February or March.

Did you notice what was missing in this chapter? The names of these women. We will never know them as anything except as Lot's daughters. We will know the names of all the wives of the patriarchs, but we do not know the names of Lot's wife or daughters. We may reasonably assume that these women believed in Jesus Christ (in His Preincarnate form), but that they never grew spiritually. The reason we can assume this is, they were delivered out of Sodom as an answer to Abraham's prayer. He did not pray on behalf of Lot's family in particular (even though that was exactly what was on his mind); he prayed for them in principle, calling them righteous (which is a synonym for being a believer in Jehovah Elohim—Gen. 15:6). So, if God delivered these young women, certainly they were righteous, meaning that they were saved. However, they had little or no faith in Jehovah in their lives, despite the fact that He delivered them. Lot's spiritual impact was minimal and theirs was even less.

What else is missing in this final section of Gen. 19? God's name or any reference to God. The daughter never discuss whether their acts are wrong or a sin; they never talk about what God may have in store for them; they never even talk about Abraham, their great uncle. They are alive because of their association with Abraham, and they do not even know that.

We have discussed in the past the concept of **blessing by association** (HTML) (PDF). Many businesses are blessed because there might be a mature believer who is their janitor cleaning out their toilets at night and sweeping their hallways. The business men think that it is their brilliant decisions which has resulted in their great profits, but it may be related to someone whose name they do not even know.

Streets and neighborhoods and cities can enjoy great blessing, but for most of them not to have any idea why. But somewhere on that street, there is an Abraham who has spiritual impact, and God's blessing to him spills out to everyone else. The same is true of all types and manner of groups of people: schools, families, military organizations, businesses, etc.

Application: Believers and unbelievers alike cannot see what is going on around them. Our relationship with Israel is one of the reasons that we, as a nation, have been blessed. When the Republican party was steeped[49] in antisemitism, who was the standard bearer? Richard Nixon. But when the Republican party shed its antisemitism, the standard bearer was Ronald Reagan. Immature believers and unbelievers do not see this; they do not recognize it.

Always remember what God said to Abraham, 4000 years ago: "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. 12:2–3; HCSB). Who is Israel's greatest ally

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[49] *Steeped* may be too strong of a word, but there was a significant faction of the Republican party that was both antisemitic and clung to weird, antisemitic conspiracies.

today? The United States. Which is the greatest and most blessed nation today? The United States.

Application: Along the same lines, there are college-educated children today (and in every generation) who think that the United States is an evil country and that it has so much wrong with it and that, by becoming more socialistic, we can fix it or, at the very least, make it all better. These are unbelievably ignorant and blind fools. There has never been a nation on the face of this earth that has been more prosperous which has offered more opportunity to more people ever. Immigrants come to our country and they work hard; and in the second generation, their children are often wealthy, hard-working and educated. Meanwhile, people who have lived here for 200 years or more whine and say the deck is stacked against them and that the wealthy have taken away all their advantages. These college-educated people are unable to actually observe that, the poverty level in socialist nations is much more dramatic than it is in the United States; in fact, the average person in a socialist nation has less than our poor do. Poor people in North Korea actually starve; poor people in communist countries have historically starved to death, in huge numbers.

Application: There is no excuse for such willful ignorance apart from evil in the soul. Nearly everyone knows an immigrant family; in fact, many immigrant families in various states of progress; and they know, often, of their hard work and values. With the internet, we can look all over the world and find country after country in great turmoil, with a declining prosperity, and always, this is associated with a reduction in the spiritual live of the people, a reduction of Bible doctrine in the land, and a dependence upon the federal government to make things better. Any objective person can see this in country after country after country. And yet, they will point to these degenerating countries and say, "We need to be more like them." They will point to socialized medicine in other countries, and view it in the most rose-colored glasses terms, thinking that, their government provides free healthcare to their people, and it is as good as ours; so we can do this too. They are unable to see the evil and the failure and the shortcomings of whatever system there is that they want to emulate.

I went out on this tangent because here we have been studying 2 daughters who have just be delivered by God from this great catastrophe; they saw the catastrophe with their own eyes. Everyone that they knew was destroyed in this catastrophe; everything that they knew was destroyed. And yet God sent an angel to them to bring them out. They had to know about their relative Abraham and his spiritual life. They had to know that God, who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and yet delivered them was capable of anything. But, instead of turning toward God, they turned to their own human viewpoint and copulated with their own father in order to bear children.

What was the correct approach? The elder should have said to her father, "Look, since we separated from Abraham, our lives have sucked, and then they sucked more, and today, our lives seem as if they cannot get any worse. We are going to Abraham. There are young men there. Abraham knows God. Abraham is prosperous. If we have to be maids and work in the lowest position, we are willing to do that. Now, you can come with, or you can lay around in this desolate cave foraging for acorns and small game. Your

choice." That would have been positive volition. They did not have that. They took the mess they were in and simply made it worse.

God takes all things and works them together for good for those who love Him (Rom. 8:28—and loving God means positive volition toward Him and toward His plan). When we try to work out all of these things with human viewpoint, we take a lousy situation and make it even worse. This is what the two daughters of Lot have managed to do.

Why is it that these daughters do not immediately think of Abraham, their great uncle? Why is he not at least an option thrown out there, offered as an alternative to incest? Let me offer two possibilities: (1) Lot did not teach his daughters divine viewpoint; probably because he did not have any himself. (2) Secondly—and this is conjecture—what do you suppose Lot said about Abraham around the dinner table? Had Abraham been spoken of as a great man who had guided Lot through much of his younger life, then his daughters may have had a favorable enough opinion of him to at least consider going to him as one approach to their situation. However, this is never considered. Therefore, let me suggest to you that, out of personal jealousy, their father Lot talked down Abraham; he gossiped about Abraham, and said evil things about him. Therefore, the idea of moving out of this cave and going to their great uncle Abraham never occurred to these women.

We do not realize how much gossip and running people down can destroy viable options in life, particularly when it is said in front of impressionable young children.

Lesson 220 Genesis 19:38 — The Authorship of Genesis

Before we summarize this chapter, Lot's life, and a few other things, we are going to take one more look at the final verse of Gen. 19:

Gen 19:38 The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

The final sentence is, again, a gloss. Since we are so far removed from the time period that this was written, we can only speculate as to when these things were added. Did Moses write these things down while in the desert? What sorts of documents did he have? Did he essentially have the book of Genesis in his possession? Did he have several manuscripts that he combined to make the book of Genesis already? We don't know. But, phrases like this indicate that, at least 100 years later, these additional words were written and added. Someone had to tell us that here is the origin of the Ammonite people today. Whether they were added to the text or whether this represents the text written in the first draft, I don't know. As I have already said, I believe that the book of Genesis, and probably the book of Job, were passed along verbally for many years. Quite obviously, if you have the ability to remember something, then you do not need to write it down.

Before we carefully examine the authorship of Genesis, let me give you the false theories: (1) Moses wrote the book of Genesis or (2) 4 person or groups of people were involved in the authorship of the Pentateuch.

False Theories About the Authorship of Genesis

Moses is the Author:

From the NIV Study Bible: *Historically, Jews and Christians alike have held that Moses was the author/compiler of the first five books of the OT*.[1]

The Open Bible writes: *Although Genesis does not directly name its author, and although Genesis ends some three centuries before Moses was born, the whole of Scripture and church history are unified in their adherence to the Mosaic authorship of Genesis...The early church openly held to the Mosaic authorship, as does the first-century Jewish historian Josephus. As would be expected, the Jerusalem Talmud supports Moses as author*.[2]

The NASB: *No man can claim to know with absolute assurance who wrote the Book of Genesis. Since Genesis is a necessary foundation for Exodus to Deuteronomy, and since the available evidence indicates that Moses wrote these four books, Moses is likely the author of Genesis itself. The New Testament evidence points in the same direction (cf. Especially John 5:46, 47 Luke 16:31 24:44)*.[3]

The Pentateuch is a Compilation of Authors:

Liberal theologians, for the most part, came up with the idea that there are 4 influences on the final compilation of the Pentateuch: the Yawehist (J), who wrote the portions which primarily name God with the name Jehovah/Yaweh; the Elohimist (E), who usually speaks of God using the title *Elohim;* the Deuteronomist (D), who composed most of the book of Deuteronomy; and the Priest (s) (P) who wrote portions which favor the Levitical priesthood. Various editors in years to follow (R, for Redactor), intertwined these texts. This is called *Documentary Hypothesis* or the JEPD (JEDP) theory. The idea that there were several documents which were later woven together (long after the time of Moses) is a theory which is presented by scholars and intellectuals and is taught in many of our seminaries. Even the original source material is said to have been written long after the events actually occurred.

This theory contradicts common sense, what the Bible says about itself, and what Jesus says about the Mosaic authorship. So, if you hold to this theory (if you have heard about it before), many scholars will agree with you, but Jesus does not.

I do not want to spend any serious time with a false theory of authorship, but if you believe this, or if you are intrigued by this notion, let me recommend Josh McDowell, *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict,* ©1975 by Campus Crusade for Christ, pp. 117–292. I am quite sure that this has been reprinted in other compilations which McDowell has put together more recently. McDowell very methodically destroys this false view of authorship.

[1] *The NIV Study Bible;* ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 2.
[2] *The Open Bible;* the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 1.
[3] *New American Standard Bible, Study Edition;* A. J. Holman Company, ©1975 by The Lockman Foundation, p. 2.

After writing most of this lesson, I did an internet search on what people seem to believe today on the authorship of Genesis. Much to my pleasant surprise, many people have taken the view that Genesis was originally written by several authors, and that Genesis pretty much existed in its completed form by the time of Moses or that Moses may possibly have been the final editor of these documents.

Who Wrote Genesis—from the Internet

Author	Abbreviated Opinion of Website on Authorship of Genesis
Answers in Genesis	they dismantle the JEDP theory, and they take a position sort of halfway between the Mosaic authorship of Genesis and multiple historical authors of Genesis. I have a chart listing the possible authors of the book of Genesis (which would have been written in the mid to late 1990's). There is a very similar chart on this page.
Biblical Hermeneutics	This is a mishmash of ideas and opinions, not necessarily from scholars, but some from people who just had a thought and decided to share it (like the guy who thinks Genesis was written during the exile). However, on this page we have the interesting thought *P.J. Wiseman posits the theory that the 'toledoth' indicates authors who were eyewitnesses to the events mentioned in Genesis. This is based on the pattern of writing found on ancient Babylonian tablets predating Abraham where the word translated 'generations of' is used to indicate the ownership or authorship of the clay tablet*.[50] This is essentially what I believe, but with some modifications.
Lay evangelism	Teaches that Moses is the author of Genesis.
Russell Grigg	Documentary Hypothesis is false; Moses probably compiled the book of Genesis from existing records. This short piece covers the JEPD theory in more depth than I do; and his opinion of the possible Mosaic authorship of Genesis is not far from mine (I certainly allow for the possibility that Moses compiled Genesis from existing documents; however, I lean more towards Genesis to already existing in completed form by the time Moses comes along).
Dr. David Livingston	Moses wrote the book of Genesis, possibly from a direct dictation from God on Mount Sinai.

[50] From http://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/1255/was-moses-the-probable-author-of-genesis accessed January 14, 2013.

Who Wrote Genesis—from the Internet	
Author	**Abbreviated Opinion of Website on Authorship of Genesis**
Peter Salemi	Salemi appears to build upon the 1936 work of P. J. Wiseman, which attributes authorship of Genesis to several eyewitnesses.
Don Stewart	Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, with some slight wiggle room when it comes to Genesis.
Wikipedia	As one would expect, the weirdest and most liberal theories of the authorship of Genesis are offered up, almost uncritically. The day that I checked,[51] Mosaic authorship or the *toledoth theory* were not even mentioned. This being Wikipedia, that could change tomorrow.
Hundreds of articles can be found on this subject. These are just a representative few.	

I am of the opinion that the original narratives were written (or, more likely, memorized) by the people who experienced them. For many years, I thought was mostly alone in this theory, but the internet has revealed a number of people who believe roughly the same thing. What I have not seen is the theory proven from the Scriptures.

Moses is clearly called the author of the books of the Pentateuch other than Genesis. Moses is called the author of the book of the Law of Moses in Joshua 8:31 2Kings 14:6. Moses is called the author of Leviticus in Ezra 6:18. The Old Testament is referred to as *Moses and the Prophets* in Luke 16:29, 31 and as *the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms* in Luke 24:44. Jesus told His audience that they do not really believe Moses' writings because they do not believe Jesus' words (John 5:45–47). Furthermore, Moses is called by Jesus the author of Exodus (Mark 7:10 12:26 John 6:32), the author of Leviticus (Matt. 8:4 Mark 1:44 Luke 2:22 5:14), the author of Numbers (John 3:14) and the author of Deuteronomy (Matt. 19:7–8 22:24 Mark 7:10 12:19)—or, at the very least, his authorship is clearly implied in these passages (in each of those passages, a quote from that book is attributed to Moses).

Interestingly enough, Jesus spoke on several occasions about marriage, and referred back to Adam and Eve, but did not reference Moses as the author on those occasions. In fact, this is how it went down:

Matt. 19:3 (Literal Translation of the Holy Bible) And the Pharisees came near to Him, tempting Him, and saying to Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every reason?

As occurred on many occasions, the pharisees came to our Lord and attempted to trap Him. The idea was to put Him into a theological hole from which he could not dig Himself.

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[51] From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis accessed January 14, 2013.

Matt. 19:4 But answering, He said to them, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning "created them male and female"?

Jesus quotes from Gen. 1:27, but does not cite Moses as the author.

Matt. 19:5 And He said, "For this reason a man shall leave father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

Jesus cites Gen. 2:24, and the reference is to God speaking. Moses could be called the author here by our Lord, but he is not.

Matt. 19:6 So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.

God, not Moses, speaks of a husband being joined soulishly and physically, and what God has joined, man is not to separate with divorce laws.

Matt. 19:7 They said to Him, Why then did Moses command to "give a bill of divorce," "and to put her away"?

Here the pharisees quote Deut. 24:1 and attribute this to Moses (which is proper, as Moses was teaching).

Matt. 19:8 He said to them, In view of your hardheartedness, Moses allowed you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so.

Jesus agrees that Moses said this, but that was not God's original intention, for men and women to marry and divorce. This is well and proper, to say that Moses said this, because Deuteronomy is Moses speaking in several sermons to the generation of promise.

Matt. 19:9 And I say to you, Whoever shall put away his wife, if not for fornication, and shall marry another, that one commits adultery. And the one who marries her who was put away commits adultery.

And Jesus has given the only reason to allow a divorce by Moses: fornication.

So, you notice in this passage that Jesus very carefully attributes to some portions of the Pentateuch to Moses, but not that which came out of Genesis.

We have a similarly parsing of authorship in John 7:19–24:

John 7:19 [Jesus is speaking] "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet not one of you does the Law? Why do you desire to kill Me?"

The Law, which begins in Exodus and is concluded in Deuteronomy, is given to the Jews by Moses. God spoke the Law to him (which Moses very carefully isolates from his own

writing of narrative in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers); but Deuteronomy is several sermons by Moses to the people of Israel in the final days outside the Land of Promise.

John 7:20 [Some in] the crowd answered and said, "You have a demon [that is, *you are nuts*]. Who seeks to kill You?"

People in the crowd are making fun of Jesus here. They claim that Jesus must have a demon to make Him think that they want to kill Him (despite the fact that this was in their hearts).

John 7:21 Jesus answered, saying to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel [at it].

Jesus healed on the Sabbath. They could not stop talking about it and trying to determine if it violated the Sabbath.

John 7:22 Because of this, Moses has given you circumcision; (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on a Sabbath, you circumcise a man.

They circumcise on the Sabbath, and they do not consider that a work. But notice how carefully Jesus speaks of Moses—circumcision is not of Moses but it is of the fathers. The fathers (also called the patriarchs) are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and perhaps Jacob's sons). So, circumcision did not originally come from Moses, but from the fathers. If you will recall when we studied circumcision, God told Abraham to be circumcised, along with all of his household prior to the conception of Isaac. Later, God told Abraham to circumcise Isaac. So, if you want to be a stickler, this came from God, and not from man. However, Jesus tells them "Not that circumcision is of Moses, but it is of the fathers." So we are referring not that God told Abraham to be circumcised but that this was *recorded* (in some fashion) by the fathers originally (and not by Moses). My contention is, this was recorded in their memory and passed down.

So there is no misunderstanding this point, Jesus could have said, "Not that circumcision is of Moses; it came from God" (or, "It was given to Abraham by God"). Jesus says, instead, "It is of the fathers;" who are the patriarchs. So He refers here back to authorship not to the ultimate source (the same is true many times when Moses is cited, even when Moses is quoting the Revealed Lord). In other words, Jesus is attributing the *recording* of the tradition of circumcision to the *patriarchs*.

John 7:23 If a man receives circumcision on a Sabbath, that the **Law of Moses** is not broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man whole and healthy on a Sabbath?"

Note the reference to the *Law of Moses;* Moses wrote down the Law as given to him by God, but the Law was commonly called the *Law of Moses* because he wrote it down and taught it to the Jews. So, again, we are not speaking of the ultimate origin, Who is God, but to the one who recorded this information—the patriarchs and not Moses in v. 22 and Moses in v. 23. Jesus did not have to speak so carefully if Moses wrote Genesis, even if God simply dictated Genesis to Moses (as God dictated much of the middle Pentateuch

books to Moses). But if Moses was not the original author of Genesis, then Jesus could not attribute the recording of the first circumcision to Moses.

I realize that this is splitting hairs, but in two situations, where Jesus could have easily spoken of Moses as the source for the information in Genesis, He clearly did not. However, elsewhere, where God dictated portions of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers to Moses, Jesus still referred to the human author, Moses as the source. The One carefully splitting hairs is, in truth, the Lord.

Similarly the Apostles referred to Moses as author of the Law (Acts 13:39 15:5 28:23 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 9:19 10:28), of Exodus (Rom. 9:15—where God is said to have spoken to Moses 2Cor. 3:13–15), of Leviticus (Rom. 10:5 Heb. 9:19), of Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22 7:37 Rom. 10:19 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 10:28 12:21); and Moses is associated with the book of Numbers in Heb. 3:2, 5. However, when given the chance to call him the author of Genesis, the Apostles did not in Acts 3:25 7:1–16 Rom. 4:1–3, 9–23 9:6–12[52] 1Cor. 6:16 Gal. 3:5–9, 15–18 4:22–26 Eph. 5:31 Heb. 6:13–15 7:1–6 11:8–21 James 2:21–23 1Peter 3:5–6.[53] In most of those passages, a direct reference to Genesis often reads something along the lines of: And **the Scripture** foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham: "All the nations will be blessed" "in you." (Gal 3:8 quoting from Gen. 12:3; LTHB). When the source for Genesis is mentioned, it is always *it stands written* or *the Scripture says;* in every instance referring back to Genesis, it is never, *and Moses wrote* or *and Moses commanded (said)*.

There are two verses in Genesis that are so personal, that only the person who was there would have written these lines (actually, there are many more than just these). When Jacob, Abraham's grandson, is speaking of working for his uncle in order to secure the hand of Rachel, the woman he loved, he had to work for 7 years. Gen. 29:20 (ESV) reads: So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. But to him, it seemed only like a day. This is written by a man who loved Rachel, not by someone who recorded this hundreds of years later from reading historical documents. This is a man who looked back, remembered how strongly he felt about her, how much he thought about her; and how every day that he worked, his mind was on Rachel. So those 7 years just zoomed by. Jacob would have said or written that; anyone coming along a few hundred years later would not.

There are incidents with Joseph, Abraham's great grandson (and Rachel's son) where his feelings are described when he meets his full brother Benjamin again after many years, and how he teared up to meet Benjamin (Gen. 43:16–34). These things were not written by some dispassionate historian hundreds of years later; but they were recorded by the men who actually experienced these things.

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[52] But Moses is mentioned in v. 15 in association with a quotation from Exodus.

[53] There are even more passage which refer back to quotations from Genesis, and not a single one is ever attributed to Moses.

So, in my opinion, if Moses assembled or edited together the manuscripts of Genesis, he may have simply added a few extra phrases like, *and Ben-Ammi became the father of the sons of Ammon today*. Or, someone in a later generation, like Joseph, memorized the words of Genesis, as they were given to him, and he (or someone else) added the phrase, He is the father of the Ammonites to this day. It is possible that the books of Genesis and Job were passed along to Moses verbally—perhaps even by his mother or his sister.

One more thing: it is clear that the people of Moses, the Exodus generation, knew God and knew about God. When suffering under the slave masters of Egypt, they called out to God. This suggests some familiarity with their personal history and Abraham's interaction with God. If you personally are in some terrible, hopeless jam, then, most likely, you are going to call out to God for help. This does not come from out of the blue; you have to have a reason that you turn toward God. You might say, "Well, I'm saved and the Bible says God loves me." You have reasons, based upon what you know about the Bible, why you can turn to God for help. The Exodus generation, who were under terrible slavery to the Egyptians, called out to God for help. This had to be based upon something. They will not just call out to God without believing that He will answer if they did not know something about Him. I would suggest that the basis of their faith in God was based upon the book of Genesis. I am not saying that they knew this book well, but that they knew enough to call out to the God of Abraham (Ex. 2:23–24), with Whom they had a relationship both by faith and by birth.

In any case, Genesis (And possibly Job) would have certainly been an end to whatever oral transmission there was, because in the 4 books of the Pentateuch, Moses will be told on several occasions to write things down (Ex. 17:14 34:1, 27). This information would have to be disseminated to an entire nation.

This particular lesson will be inserted into the **Introduction of Genesis** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Lesson 221 Deut. 2:8–9, 17–19 Psalm 83:1–8 Lot, an Addendum, Part I

We have just completed the study of Gen. 19, where Lot's daughters had sexual relations with their father in order to perpetuate their father's line. Although they never expressed sentiment about having children, very often this is an innate desire in many women. Perpetuating the seed of their father was very likely a rationalization.

We also took a brief recess to determine who wrote the book of Genesis. Now it is time for us to complete a study of Lot and then move into the next chapter.

Lot, an Addendum

Although, from time to time, Lot's name will crop up in the Bible, Gen. 19 is the last time that he will be spoken of in an historical narrative. His daughters will not be spoken of

again, nor will Lot, nor will these sons, Moab and Ben Ammi. However, their descendants will be spoken of on numerous occasions in the Old Testament.

What we have now, are the very beginnings of the Jews, the Ammonites and the Moabites. God gave grace to all of these peoples, meaning He looked out for them, He provided a plot of land for them, and He preserved them—things which these people did not earn or deserve. This goes back to Abraham and Lot both being believers; and Lot having an association with Abraham, a mature believer.

Although there are many references to Moab and Ammon throughout the Bible, there are only two passages which speak of them specifically as being Lot's progeny.

God gives specific plots of land to Moab and Ammon.

In Deuteronomy, Moses is speaking to the younger generation to come out from Egypt, the generation of promise,[54] reminding them of the events which they experienced and he put these into a spiritual context.

In the following passage, Moses is speaking to the children of Israel (specifically the generation of promise) before they cross over the Jordan to take the land.

Deut. 2:8b–9 And we turned and went in the direction of the wilderness of Moab. And the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the people of Lot for a possession.'

God reserved a particular plot of ground for the Moabites. There are several reasons for this: Lot is Abraham's nephew and Lot went with Abraham to the Land of Promise. So, simply as a relative of Abraham's who is in Canaan, Lot and his progeny are treated in grace by God. Secondly, given that some of what occurred in the line of Lot is recorded in the Bible, this means that Abraham (or Isaac or Jacob) spent some time learning about what happened to Lot and company. Similarly, Lot would have told his daughters and later his sons/grandsons about Abraham. So, there would be some knowledge and wisdom passed down in Lot's line. Whenever truth is in the soul of an individual, God will vindicate this truth. There will be individuals in these lines who will place their faith in the Revealed Lord and therefore be declared righteous by God.

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[54] Two generations of Jews leave Egypt; Gen X, the older generation, the failures, whom God will kill in the desert; and the Generation of Promise, the younger generation, who left Egypt as children, and entered into Israel as adults, taking the land under the leadership of Joshua.

Furthermore, there will be times that some people in Moab have their heads on straight. Ruth, the Moabitess, aligns herself with Israel, fully discussed in the book of Ruth (which takes place during the very degenerate time of the judges). And, at one time, David had a trusted relationship with the Moabites that he sent his parents to them for safekeeping (1Sam. 22:3–4). However, this trusted relationship changed a few decades later (2Sam. 8:2).

http://www.wall-maps.com/bible/TheExodus0687-043662.gif

Map of Canaan, Moab and the Negeb. Moses is simply recounting the Jews traveling up north along the eastern border of the Salt Sea, which has occurred over the past year. They would come up from around the southern tip of the Salt Sea (the Dead Sea), and move through the lands of Moab and Ammon.

Deut. 2:17–19 [Then] the LORD said to me, 'Today you are to cross the border of Moab at Ar. And when you approach the territory of the people of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.'

God had given a particular plot of land to the sons of Lot, despite the manner in which they were conceived. And God forbade the Jews from taking their land from them. These are all the details that we know. Did God every appear to Moab or to Ammon? We don't know. Did God ever tell them, "This is your land; I give this land to you"? Again, we do not know. However, as a part of God's plan, these plots of land belonged to the Moabites and the Ammonites. As we have seen in previously noted prophecies, there would be a point where Moab and Ammon were destroyed, but their countries did continue on for a considerable period of time.

There did come a point at which, the people of Moab and Ammon and other peoples conspired to destroy Israel. Asaph writes about this in Psalm 83, which is known as an imprecatory psalm. That is, the writer was praying to God, via this psalm, for God to destroy the enemies of Israel.

God will destroy the enemies of Israel, even Moab and Ammon.

Psalm 83:1 "O God, do not be silent." Do not hold Your peace or be still, O God!

The first phrase is the title of this psalm. The psalmist is not looking to have God speak to him; he wants God to take down Israel's enemies. Essentially, this is a metonym, where the words for *silence, peace, still* are the psalmist calling for God to take action against Israel's enemies (these words listed are all associated with negatives).

There are people who have difficulties with psalms like this, because Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You will love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matt. 5:43–47). First of all, given the context, Jesus is speaking on a personal level here, even though what was being taught was, for the Jews to hate the gentiles; particularly the Romans who controlled Judæa when Jesus walked the earth.

Douglas MacArthur, the great general out of WWII, walked this fine line of being able to kill the enemy in battle, but being able to love his enemies at the same time and subsequent to the war. After we destroyed two cities in Japan with atomic weapons, MacArthur ruled over Japan, calling for missionaries and Bibles to be sent to them and other parts of the world which had been defeated in WWII. The idea was, we would restore these nations to their own sovereignty while simultaneously evangelizing them and teaching them the Word of God. MacArthur's justification was, you either fill the souls of these people with truth, or they will turn to communism to fill the emptiness (vacuum) of their souls. In this way, we preserved their national sovereignty, and gave them the Word of God and the message of Jesus Christ.

This is exactly what our nation should have done. We conquered our enemies decisively, which is completely doctrinal; and then, instead of plundering them and taking all that we could from them, we gave them the gospel and the Word of God, as well as the laws of divine establishment—exactly what we should have done for them. We could not have a more perfect example of how, in a world war, we are to love our enemies.

How we succeeded in Japan and South Korea[55] is exactly how we failed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Leaving the people to wallow in their religion of evil, thinking that democracy was the key rather than the Word of God, is why the United States will ultimately fail in Iraq and Afghanistan. What is even sadder is, these wars were originally presided over by a Christian president who knew history far more than most of the other presidents who preceded him,[56] and yet this simple fact of history eluded him—the fact that solutions are spiritual and/or related to the laws of divine establishment. Solutions are not brought about by introducing a really good political system into the region (in this case, democracy). The problem was not that George Bush was some sort of an evil man; he simply did not know

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[55] South Korea sends out a huge number of Christian missionaries, second only to the United States.

[56] Although there are a lot of jokes made about the intelligence and literary interests of President George W. Bush, he was one of the most well-read presidents of modern history.

nearly as much doctrine as Douglas MacArthur did. MacArthur perceived that the ultimate solution is spiritual; and Bush believed the ultimate solution to be political. Douglas MacArthur was 100% right in his approach and President Bush was wrong (not wrong in engaging in war, but wrong in not recognizing the spiritual impact of the Word of God on a people).

Psalm 83:2 For behold, Your enemies make an uproar; those who hate You have raised their heads.

The psalmist is calling upon God to be as vocal as the enemies of Israel. They are making all of this anti-Israel noise. The raising of their heads suggests that these enemies are looking over at Israel and thinking about conquering this prime piece of real estate. For a time, their heads are down and they are engaged in their own business; but, suddenly, they lift up their heads and look over to the west, and there is Israel; and they begin to think about taking that which Israel possesses.

Psalm 83:3 They lay crafty plans against Your people; they consult together against Your protected ones.

There are conspiracies and plots devised against Israel; these various nations band together to plot out Israel's destruction. Israel has great riches and they desire to take these riches from Israel. Incidentally, Israel has all of these great riches because she has been blessed by God.

As an aside, that is the key to our prosperity here in the United States: we are blessed most graciously by God. However, we are beginning to make a series of decisions which could result in severe discipline for the United States. God deals with our nation, taking several things into consideration: (1) the percentage of believers in the United States; (2) the percentage of mature believers in the United States; (3) our relationship with the Jews in general and with Israel in particular; and (4) the application of laws of divine establishment. These things appear to be working in tandem. They seem to become strong together or they seem to flail together. Right now, it is clear that the United States, the greatest nation in the world, is on the decline. The percentage of believers and mature believers is declining; there is a great deal of equivocation between Israel and Palestine found in the United States this past few years; and we are rejecting the laws of divine establishment in our daily lives.

Back to these other nations looking up and thinking about conquering Israel: this is Satanically inspired. If you are ever unsure about where a person is, philosophically and theologically speaking, then ask them their opinion of the nation Israel. Those who believe that Israel is as much at fault as the Palestinians and those who surround Israel, are confused and anti-God. Israel is God's jewel in the Middle East; and God will restore Israel in the Millennium (Jer. 16:14–15 Ezek. 36 Nahum 2:2 Acts 3:20–21 15:13–16 Rom. 11:1). Today, as a nation, the United States has no greater ally than Israel. There is no nation that we are more aligned with philosophically, politically and theologically than Israel, particularly in the middle east, which is filled with unequivocal evil. And this evil in

the Middle East cannot be contained. We can be assured that it will spill over into the rest of the world.

Given that there are many Jews in Israel who do not believe in Jesus Christ, you may ask, *what about the spiritual solution?* First of all, there are many Christians who live in Israel and, secondly, Israel is a nation which adheres to the laws of divine establishment, because this is their background. Any nation which adheres to divine establishment laws will be great. However, it should also be obvious how precarious the future of Israel is, which becomes even more so, the more that we in the United States move away from divine viewpoint.

Psalm 83:4 They [the nations around Israel] say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!"

The word *come* indicates an alliance between several nations which hate Israel. It is Satan's desire to destroy Israel completely and totally; which includes every Jew on this earth. If Satan does that, then God cannot fulfill His promises which He made to Abraham. If God cannot fulfill His promises to Abraham (the very promises that we have been studying), then God is not God.

Essentially, Satan's strategy in the Angelic Conflict is to show that God is not God; to show that God's essence is not consistent throughout human history. One way to do that would be to show that God's promises are not kept. If there are no Jews, then the promises to Abraham and to his seed cannot be kept. This is why there must be and always will be Jews on the earth. No matter how much Satan tries, he cannot destroy the Jews.

It is interesting that these nations said this: "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!" We all know Jews; but we do not know the ancestors of any of the people who said these things against Isreal. We do not know any Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, Assyrians or Ammonites. These people have faded from history. Even if some of their ancestors still remain, they cannot in any way trace themselves back to these people. The very people who said, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!" have been wiped out and they can no longer be found. It is as if they never existed. All we have is a few words here and there in various historical documents; but mostly testimony from the Bible that these people actually existed. By the way, the testimony of the Bible is, *do not mess with Israel*.

Psalm 83:5 For they conspire with one accord; against You they make a covenant [that is, *a treaty*]--...

A covenant means that these various nations make alliances with the intention of attacking and destroying Israel (not unlike today). The opposition that these nations show against Israel also reveals their opposition to God. This is how we know the heart of a country; do they hate the Jews? Do they speak out about the Jews? Do they demonize the Jews? Do they band with other nations that want to do the same thing? These enemies of the Jews are also the enemies of God; and the psalmist prays to God to have them destroyed.

And just to make a clear, unequivocal statement to apply this to today: these nations which are clearly enemies of Israel ought to be our enemies as well. If need be, we ought to have the moral will to wipe them off the face of the earth, if necessary.

In my opinion—and I say this not as a prophet, but just as one who reads historical trends—we in the United States are on a collision course with Islam. Although we do not have the moral will at this moment to go to war against Islam, as soon as Iran gets nuclear weapons and the means to deploy them, and then uses them, that could begin a world war where we correctly deal with Islamic countries as our enemies, and very nearly destroy several of them. However, just as it took Pear Harbor to cause the United States to become engaged in WWII, it will likely require a similar incident for us to become engaged in a war against Islamic countries. But, just as you see here, they will band together to destroy Israel. It is in their evil theology and it is in their DNA.

Psalm 83:6–7 ...the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;...

At this point, the psalmist names some of those who have allied together against Israel. Some of the alliances are named: Edom (the descendants of Esau) and the Ishmaelites (the descendants of Ishmael). Moab allies with the Hagrites; there is a 3-way alliance between Gebal, Ammon and Amalek. Moab and Ammon are the descendants of Lot, who have, on several occasions, plotted against the Jews in order to harm them.

Again, we do not know any of those people today. We cannot clearly identify any of their ancestors today. You may say, *Well, what about the Palestinians? Aren't they descended from the Philistines?* As far as we can tell in history, the Philistines were Greeks (originally from the family of Japheth). There is no straight line between the Philistines of that era and the Palestinians of today, although some claim that there are. If anything, the Palestinians today appear to come from the people of Shem. However, there is a great deal of discussion on this very topic, with a huge disagreement as to answers.

Psalm 83:8 Asshur also has joined them; they are the strong arm of the children of Lot. Selah

What is interesting is, the children of Lot, Moab and Ammon, appear to be behind much of this. They are the ones pushing for war against Israel, and somehow, through their efforts, these other nations become involved.

Every generation is different. There were times when Israel got along well with Moab. However, the Jews will be the people of God; the descendants of Moab will not be unless they believe in the God of Israel (which many did).

Moab and Ammon occur elsewhere in the Bible, but these are the places where they are specifically related to Lot.

For a more detailed exegesis of **Psalm 83** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

At this point, we have come to the end of Lot's life in the Genesis narrative. He chose to live among a degenerate people, probably at his wife's insistence (recall that she looked back longingly during the destruction of Sodom and died there).

We have studied how Lot's line was perpetuated, and his 4 mentions in later Scripture. It only seems appropriate that we now summarize his life.

This chapter is the last time we will hear of Lot except in retrospect. Here is the **Doctrine of Lot**.

A Summary of the Life of Lot

1. Lot was Abraham's nephew. Gen. 11:27
2. Lot's life will be contrasted with Abraham's throughout Gen. 11–19. They are both clearly believers, but God will continually differentiate between these two men. The idea is, not all believers are equal—not in life (and not in death). Lot has every bit the potential that Abraham has, in the spiritual realm, but he will never act on it.
3. Lot originally moved up the Euphrates river with Abraham's family, and then went with Abraham to the Land of Promise. It is not clear how much Lot or Abraham really understood about moving to this land that God had promised Abraham. Gen. 11:31 12:4
4. Given that Abraham was 75, Lot was probably anywhere from 20–40 when he moved with Abraham. This is based upon the fact that, when Abraham is fathering Isaac (past when he ought to be able to, at age 99), Lot is clearly capable of fathering children. The Bible is quite careful about documenting the age of Abraham. However, Lot's age can only be deduced or guessed at. Gen. 18 compared to 19:31–38
5. Lot did acquire a wife, and had two daughters and probably sons, but we know most of that from Gen. 19. Nothing is said about Lot's wife in Gen. 12:4–5 13:1 when he moved to the Land of Promise with Abraham; so he *probably* acquired a wife later.
6. At some point in time, Lot developed his own business as a rancher right along side Abraham. Gen. 13:5
7. Essentially, Lot was blessed by his association with Abraham. Gen. 12:3 13:5
8. However, at some point, Lot's and Abraham's possessions became so great that, they went their separate ways because they could not keep the overflow of their wealth separated. Gen. 13:5–12
9. Lot chose to live among the people of Sodom (Gen. 13:10–12), whom God saw as being very sinful (Gen. 13:13) and Abraham lived at times among the Canaanites and others who were quite respectable and oriented to the laws of divine establishment[1] as well as to Abraham's God (example: Gen. 20).
10. Similarly, Abraham's relationship with those that he interacted with was usually

A Summary of the Life of Lot

quite good (example Gen. 14) where Lot's could be strained (Gen. 19:9—which is not necessarily a negative reflection on Lot).

11. The people of Sodom and that general area were apparently under the threat of discipline from God, and they had been under the 4th stage of national discipline (controlled and/or taxed by an outside power) and were going into the 5th stage of national discipline (where they would be removed from their land and put into slavery). Gen. 14:1–12
12. When Abraham heard about this, he rescued Lot, the people of Sodom, and was blessed by developing a relationship with Melchizedek, the priest of Salem (Gen. 14:13–24). There was no indication that Lot had any interest in Melchizedek or the interaction between Abraham and Melchizedek.
13. This rescue by Abraham of those which did not deserve it, sets him up as a type of Christ, delivering those who are undeserving of salvation, and then entering into the throne room of God (Gen. 14). At best, by analogy, Lot could be seen as nothing more than the undeserving person receiving deliverance.
14. When God and two angels come to Abraham, they promise him that he would have a child by Sarah in the coming year, and they also tell him of the destruction of Sodom, where Lot and his family live. Abraham prays that God will preserve the city if there are 10 believers there. However, Abraham miscalculated the number of believers there, and God destroyed the city. Nevertheless, God delivers Lot and his family from this destruction, answering *yes* to the desire of Abraham's prayer. Gen. 19:1–29
15. So that Lot gets some credit, when the angels came to Lot, he did go out of his way to protect them, and, when the angels told Lot that he had to grab a few things and leave, he did. Gen. 19:1–17
16. However, on the negative side, when Lot's life was threatened, he was willing to give up his own daughters to be raped. Not to excuse Lot, but it is possible that he simply could not think under pressure. He may have realized, to a limited degree, just how degenerate the city had become; but it is possible that he had never seen this first-hand as he did when the angels and his family were all threatened. Gen. 19:8
17. Further on the negative side, Lot and his family dawdled about somewhat until the angels told them to get their butts in gear; and then, when Lot was told where to go to, he suggested a different destination to the angels (suggesting this essentially in the midst of this judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah). Gen. 19:15–22
18. The last that we hear of Lot directly, in his historic context, is, his daughters will get him drunk, have sex with him, and raise up sons gotten by incest with their father Lot. His daughters did not have enough spiritual training to inquire of God, to think about or talk about God's will; or to consider going to Abraham as a viable option to their personal poverty. Gen. 19:30–37
19. Lot is essentially mentioned two more times in the Old Testament and twice more in the New Testament. His sons/grandsons, by his daughters (that sounds icky just to type those words) were given a piece of property and God told Israel that

A Summary of the Life of Lot

they could not take it from them. Deut. 2:9, 18–19

20. Interestingly enough, Lot is not included in the genealogies of 1Chron. 1–9.
21. However, the psalms speak of Lot's progeny developing alliances with other countries to fight against Israel. Psalm 83:2–8
22. As a result, Moab and Ammon would be destroyed as nations. Jer. 48 49:1–11 Ezek. 25:1–7, 8–11
23. Jesus refers to the times of Lot in Sodom, where people are marrying and giving in marriage, which simply indicates that, the men of that area were simply living from day to day without a relationship with God. He also warns us to remember Lot's wife, and her choice to look longingly back to Sodom. Luke 17:28–32
24. Peter acknowledges that the sins of the Sodomites weighed heavily on Lot (which may have explained another reason why he watched the city gates for strangers coming into that city). So, despite his many shortcomings, Lot did have some sense of morality. 2Peter 2:7

One might say that Lot lived somewhat of a mediocre Christian life; he often zigged when he should have zagged, and it was apparent, from the actions of his daughters that, although they feared/respected God, they did not really take the time to understand Who God is; and it appears that Lot did nothing to encourage their learning about the character of God, and, in the short time that we studied Lot's daughters, it was clear that they had almost no truth in their souls.

[1] This changed in time; the Canaanites, over the centuries, became more degenerate with successive generations.

Many actual historical incidents and people of the Old Testament are illustrative of great truths. There are two classifications of believers in this life: there are Lot's and there are Abraham's.

Abraham and Lot—Compare and Contrast

Abraham	Lot
Abraham listened to God's promises and he believed them.	Lot appeared to be disinterested in God's promises or God's ways.
Abraham went along with God's plan. When God told Abraham to go from point A to point B, Abraham did it.	To the very end, even when faced with destruction all around him, Lot argued with God's plan A. He suggested his own approach as an alternative.
Abraham certainly made mistakes and he certainly sinned.	Lot did have his good points. He tried to look out for the angels who had come into Sodom.

Abraham and Lot—Compare and Contrast	
Abraham	**Lot**
Abraham, as a growing believer in Y^{e}howah Elohim, had spiritual impact wherever he was. Those who knew Abraham, associated him with his God.	Lot had a high political position in his city and had little or no impact on those around him. Spiritual impact is real and permanent; political impact is fleeting and temporal.
Abraham prayed on behalf of Lot to save him.	We are not aware of Lot contacting God at any time for any reason.
Abraham's son Isaac will know divine viewpoint.	Lot's daughters were filled with human viewpoint. When faced with the problem of having no husbands, and, therefore, no children, Lot's daughters never consider the will of God or any approach to this problem which involved God's thinking.
Abraham was greatly blessed, being one of the richest men in the world.	When associated with Abraham, Lot had great wealth. When he disassociated himself from Abraham, his wealth quotient fell to zero.
Abraham, a wealthy man of livestock, is better known in history than anyone else of his era, including kings of countries.	From that era, Lot is also well-known, but probably less so than Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. Also, most people view him as a failure.
It is reasonable to take the lives of these two men and perpetuate them into eternity. Abraham is called the friend of God and we may reasonably expect that he will be greatly rewarded in heaven.	Lot is a believer, and, as such, he will be in heaven, with God, and eternally blessed. But there will be inequality in heaven just as there is on earth. Lot will represent the other end of the spectrum—whatever eternity has to offer, Lot will certainly have the bare minimum.
There is no equality among believers on this earth. God chose Abraham and his line to bless. God looked after Lot and eventually after his progeny, but their reversionism caused them to be removed from history.	

Lesson 223: Genesis 20:1 Abraham Moves South/ Abraham's Dishonesty

At this point, in Gen. 20, we would expect it to be 3 months later or a year later, and Sarah is pregnant with Isaac and giving birth. We would expect Abraham and Sarah to be dealing with her pregnancy. We would have expected Gen. 17 (where God promises a

year from then that Isaac would be born) to go straight to Gen. 21 (the chapter where Isaac is born). However, for whatever reason, Gen. 18–20 is thrown into the middle of this. Gen. 20 is the oddest insertion of them all.

Gen. 17:19, 21 was quite clear: God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." This means *at this set time next year*.

In Gen. 18:10–14 The LORD 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. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" 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 hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." (ESV)

Now, even though the ESV translation of *about this time next year* sounds almost like an exact year, that is not necessarily the exact amount. The Hebrew allows for this to be more than a year, but, given the information about Abraham's age, at most, we are looking at 14–16 months down the road. Probably the child would be born in the same season that they were in, in the following year. However, Gen. 17:21 is more precise (in the Hebrew).

After making this promise in Gen. 17 and then in 18, God and two angels spoke to Abraham of the impending destruction of Sodom. Abraham intercedes for his nephew Lot who is living there, and we learn about the concept of intercessory prayer as well as the concept of a pivot of believers whose presence preserves a geographical area. In Gen. 19, we have the actual destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah followed by the incest of Lot's daughters (which acts of incest could have occurred any time after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, unrelated to the the birth of Isaac, which birth is yet future in our study).

However, Gen. 20 is an even odder chapter to find, because in this chapter, Abraham and his wife move to another area—and yet, we do not even know whether or not she is pregnant yet. Her pregnancy would occur a few months or so after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, assuming that these chapters are in chronological order (and there is no reason to think that they are not). Furthermore, this chapter appears to take place over a period of a month or two at least.

God has promised Abraham that he would have a son, Isaac, through his wife Sarah, and, God put a time frame on this. God told Abraham back in Gen. 17:21: "My covenant I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time in the next year." And then all of these things happen—the meal with Abraham and our Lord, the warning of God's judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and

the move in this chapter—all of these things falling in between this promise, which has a fairly short timetable, and the fulfillment of this promise.

Gen. 20 is the one more thing that happens to seemingly slow down the promise of God (it doesn't actually, but it seems to). Abraham and company will pull up stakes and move, finally settling in Gerar. At some point, he is questioned about Sarah and he says that Sarah is his sister. When Abimelech, the king of Gerar is told this, he takes Sarah as his wife, but never consummates the marriage. God comes to Abimelech in a dream and warns him of impending death if he does not return Sarah to Abraham. So he does, but he first chews out Abraham for deceiving him as he did.

When studying the Bible—particularly the psalms—the key to understanding a passage often goes beyond interpreting the verses themselves, but setting up a theme or an outline or a structure. Once that has been established, everything else seems to fall into place. One of the keys to Gen. 20 is in how it parallels Gen. 19, although that is not obvious at first.

Gen. 20 belongs here in the book of Genesis thematically as much as it does chronologically. There are two important parallel themes found in both Gen. 19 and 20. So, it is possible that the final editor of Genesis, throws Gen. 20 in at this point simply as a contrast to what was found in the previous chapter.[57]

We might ask ourselves, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, "If the rest of Canaan is like this, should it not be destroyed as well?" In Gen. 19, we saw the great degeneracy of Sodom and how that affected the souls of Lot's daughters, even after Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed (they committed incest with their own father in order to perpetuate their name). They showed absolutely no fear of God, no understanding of God's power and the concept of destiny; they just did what was right in their own eyes. This was after witnessing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah while two angels led them to safety. As an aside, this tells us that a great experience does not advance a person spiritually; what occurs in your soul is what advances you spiritually.

Not all of the people of Canaan were like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. An example of this that comes to the mind of the person compiling this material is the people of Gerar. The king of Gerar and most of his servants will clearly present themselves as believers in the Revealed Member of the Trinity, Jehovah Elohim in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ in the New. God even reveals Himself to this king in a dream. How can God reveal Himself to someone who does not believe in Him?

There is another thematic parallel between this and the previous chapter (actually, previous chapter and a half): Abraham will act as a mediator between the people and God in both chapters. At the end of Gen. 18, Abraham spoke to God about preserving Sodom because of the number of righteous people in Sodom. Abraham began at 50 righteous and

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[57] However, we will eventually conclude that Gen. 20 is correctly placed thematically and chronologically speaking.

continued speaking to God until he was down to 10 righteous people, and left it at that, expecting that Lot and his family totaled 10 believers. Here in Gen. 20, Abraham will also intervene on behalf of the people of Gerar. In Gen. 19, God will honor the desire behind Abraham's prayer, but not the actual prayer; and in Gen. 20, God will honor both the request and the desire behind the request.

A third parallel theme is, Abraham was more than willing to excuse the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah (about which he knew very little at the time), and yet was willing to prejudge the people of Gerar (he will again lie about his relationship with Sarah, thinking these men to all be heathen). Abraham prayed to God not to simply preserve Lot and his family, but to preserve Sodom, which was wholly given over to great degeneracy. However, Abraham simply took it for granted that the people of Gerar—their king in particular—were godless souls which lacked any true concept of morality.

Fourthly, we will note a contrast between the way Lot interacts with the men of Sodom and how Abraham interacts with Abimelech, king of Gerar. Lot knew the people of Sodom for over two decades and even had a position of authority in this city; and yet, when they were overcome with lust, they were ready to kill him. Abimelech barely knew anything about Abraham. He took his "sister" to wife. However, when God spoke to Abimelech, he snapped to and he will become more than accommodating to Abraham.

The insertion of this chapter seems to be very much in keeping with the Hebrew mind. The content of Genesis is as important to them as is chronology. This is reflected in the very way that their language is structured. In the English, we have a clear emphasis on time; our language is based upon a past, present and future verb structure. If a politician sins, we often ask, "What did he know and *when* did he know it?" The mind of the ancient Jew is not like this. Past, present and future is not the foremost thing in his mind; and the very verb tenses of this language reflect that (perfect, imperfect, and imperative).

This does not mean that the Jewish writers of Genesis were confused about chronology. The writer of Genesis often puts a time frame on a chapter. In Gen. 15:1, we begin with the phrase *after these things*. We find similar phrasing in Gen. 22:1, 20 39:7 40:1 and 48:1. We have several places in the history of Abraham where the action is tied to Abraham's age: Gen. 12:4 16:16 17:1, 17, 24 21:5. So, it is not that Jewish writers were oblivious to time and chronology; it simply was not their first consideration or the defining structure for their writings.

It is also important to recognize that this chapter is tied directly to the chapter which follows, which chapter describes and defines much of Abraham's life while living in the land of the Philistines. We learn about Abraham's first encounter with Abimelech, how Abraham manages to make the very worse first impression that a believer can make on another person; and yet, God, in His grace, allows Abraham to get past this. In the chapter that follows, we will see another meeting between Abraham and Abimelech, and this meeting will be the result of a very important dispute (important to those involved in the dispute). This will actually define Abraham's life for several decades, so much of this chapter is the setup for that.

So that there is no misunderstanding, I have not solved the problem of whether this chapter is chronological or simply placed here for thematic reasons. However, we will eventually come to the conclusion that Gen. 20 is correctly placed in time, because of where Abraham is before Gen. 20 and where he is afterwards. Gen. 20 is consistent with Abraham's geographical moves, which follow a certain chronology. Before Isaac is born, much of the Abrahamic narrative takes place in east-central Judah; and after Isaac is born, Abraham will be living in southwestern Judah. Isaac will be born in Gen. 21:1–4 and the very end of Gen. 21 will confirm that Abraham is living among the Philistines.

There is one more thing that this and the previous two chapters accomplish: they make it seem as if a very long time passes between the promise of a uniquely-born son the Abraham and Sarah and the fulfillment of that promise. There is enough which happens in Gen. 18–20 to nearly forget about God's covenant with Abraham and about his soon-to-be-born son. This is one of many parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of our Lord.

What is happening in Gen. 20 is, Abraham is going to go to a new area where heathen (in his opinion) are in charge, so he will lie about who Sarah is—again—presumably to protect himself. He did this before back in Gen. 12:11–13 and this reveals that Abraham really did not learn anything from that incident.

One of the interesting things that we find in the Bible narrative is, these many parallel incidents which are found throughout the Bible. Over and over again, some incident will occur; and then, 10 years (or 100 years or 1000 years) later a very similar incident would occur, and be recorded in Scripture. As a result, there have been all kinds of theories—the most common by liberal scholars (those who do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God) is, we are seeing the same narrative, but recorded at different times by different people as a result of a different oral tradition; and that this accounts for the differences. However, in our own lives, we have parallel situations which occur. That in no way means that we remember the same incident in two different ways in later life.

Gen. 20 is one of those parallel situations. Abraham had been in this situation before and he mishandled the situation, and, this time, he will make the same mistake. However, what we are to understand is, the Bible is filled with parallels. The relationship between a father and a son parallel God's relationship with us. When Abraham offers up his uniquely-born son as a sacrifice to God (this is coming in a future chapter), that was a parallel to Jesus offering up Himself on the cross to God. In the psalms, we come across remarkable passages, where the writer seems to be recording his thoughts and feelings about one incident; but that the words that he writes actually look forward to a parallel situation (for instance, Psalm 22, which appears to both describe David when deathly ill and, at the same time, describe our Lord on the cross).

Therefore, God wants to get our attention with these parallel situations in Scripture, so that we are able to recognize other parallels which are pertinent to our lives and our relationship with Him.

You know that Jesus taught in parables and He is the Living Word of God (John 1:1–3, 14). So it is logical that the written Word of God contain real life situations which have meaning beyond the narrative given.

One more thing: it is important to realize that, Abraham has not reached some pinnacle of sinlessness so that God can now bless him with a child. Although, as we get older and more spiritually mature, it is likely that our sins will reduced; but that does not mean that we will ever enter into some kind of sinless perfection. So, what appears to occur right before Sarah gives birth is, there is again another attack upon the line of Abraham and another failure on the part of Abraham.

Genesis 20:1a And Abraham moved from there toward the south country...

We're not really given any reason for Abraham picking up stakes and moving on, but there are two reasons that come to mind: trading groups that usually pass through there may no longer because the entire Sodom and Gomorrah area has been destroyed. And, Abraham has livestock and they need to be constantly attended to and moved about to those greener pastures.

At some point, someone knew that Lot was still alive. Since we don't really know anything about Lot after his daughters had sex with him, it is possible that Abraham did not know if Lot was still alive at this point in time. However, at some point, perhaps a few generations later, the presence of the Ammonites and the Moabites became better known; and, obviously, their origins became known as well.

I don't know what Abraham was thinking or feeling at this time, as it was clear the whole area where Lot lived had been devastated, as there was billowing smoke coming from there (Gen. 19:27–28). We don't know if Abraham went down there to investigate and found out or if he wrote Lot off as dead, and simply moved to the southern part of Judah. Abraham could have gone through or near that area traveling in the direction that he does.

In any case, Abraham is moving southwest; south, would have been the direction of Lot and the destroyed cities. Now, whether Abraham chose to go this route to first look for Lot, we are not told. If they ever saw one another again, we are not told. It seems unlikely.

Genesis 20:1 And Abraham moved from there toward the south country, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.

All of this is in what would later become southern Judah. In fact, Shur refers to the desert which is between Egypt and Israel. Kedesh here refers to Kedesh-Barnea, which is about 100 km south-southwest of Beersheba on the boundary line below, below the southern portion of the map below.

From: http://www.genesisfiles.com/Maps/Gerar/Gerar_MR.jpg

Map of Gerar and Beersheba. So Abraham has moved far into the south. Even though this is within the territory of Philistia, Abraham is still within the geographical will of God, because God gave Abraham a huge amount of land, in which Abraham was to walk (Gen. 13:17).

Lesson 224: Genesis 20:1–3 — Abraham's Dishonesty/The Sin unto Death

So far we have examined Gen. 20 overall and have concluded that it belongs here both thematically and chronologically. And we have studied the first verse:

Genesis 20:1 And Abraham moved from there toward the south country, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.

This move could have taken anywhere from a week to a month. I mention the time, as we are in a countdown to the conception and birth of Isaac. Abraham has moved from the

east central part of Judah to the southwestern part of Judah. The land that he has moved to is controlled by Philistines.

Genesis 20:2a And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister."

Abraham is near a large city and the king there, Abimelech, has become aware of Abraham's arrival. He did not know Abraham or anything about Abraham, other than he is said to be traveling with a very beautiful woman (Sarah is apparently quite beautiful despite her age).

This sort of action by a ruler appears to be customary. He would send for the most prominent woman of a caravan, and such an action would apparently establish a peace between the two parties. He got the women and the caravan were at peace with him in the land that he controlled.

Now, this ought to also strike us as unusual: Sarah is still attractive enough to be desired at age 90. Recall that the age of man was higher then than it is now; and that Abraham will live to be 175. Now, my recollection of Suzanne Somers is that, at around age 70, she is still very attractive. This suggests that it is possible, in that day and age, for Sarah to be attractive at age 90. As you will recall, man's age began to fall after the flood from living 800–1000 years, and, with Abraham, we are down to 175 years. Sarah will live to be 127 years old.

In our day and age, it is typical for a woman to enter into menopause between the ages of 40 and 61. Sarah became menopausal around age 85–90, as she clearly does not see herself as having children when the Revealed Lord told her that she would (Gen. 18:11–12). However, this narrative suggests to us that she does not look like any 90 year old woman that we have ever seen.

Genesis 20:2a And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister."

This is the second time that Abraham has done this. It suggests that whenever he and Sarah went anywhere where there was a prominent ruler, he take this approach. He continued with human viewpoint. Recall that God has promised him a son by Sarah, and that was going to occur in the very near future. We are talking mere months away. And yet, with this deception, Abraham appears to doubt the protection of God.

This tells us that Abraham vacillated between very strong faith (when he allowed himself to be circumcised) and no faith, e.g. here, where he thinks that lying is the best solution. in a previous chapter, we learned his reasoning: that some heathen leader would simply kill him and take his wife (Gen. 12:11–13).

I want you to notice just who is put at risk here: Sarah. This has happened before. If a ruler takes a liking to Sarah or if a ruler decides to take Sarah, Abraham figures that, if they are brother and sister, he will be preserved and Sarah would go into a harem. However, you will recall in the previous chapter that God's promise to Abraham would be fulfilled in

Sarah. She will bear his son. She cannot bear a son to Abraham if she is in the harem of some foreign prince. This would forever call into question Isaac's paternity.

Abraham should have continued to exercise faith in God; yet he chooses not to.

What is in the making is one of the most important births in human history, and it was designed to not just move the Jewish race ahead to a second generation, but to foreshadow the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as well. Therefore, Sarah being in a harem is not a part of God's plan.

Genesis 20:2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

Even though Abraham has come a very long way, spiritually speaking, he is certainly not a sinless man. Again, he claims that Sarah is his sister and not his wife. Despite her age, Sarah is apparently still a beautiful woman, attractive enough for a king to take as his wife.

Two things that we learn from this: God has given Abraham a beautiful woman who has remained beautiful throughout most of her life. Secondly, Abraham is not living in sinless perfection. He still sins, and God still blesses him.

Now, Sarah is definitely an older woman, but we do have examples today of women who are older, who are quite attractive. Suzanne Somers comes immediately to mind. Furthermore, recall that people from the era of Abraham still lived long lives (Abraham will live to be 175).

Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and He said to Abimelech, "Listen, you are about to die, for the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife."

It is interesting that God speaks to Abimelech in a dream. This would suggest that (1) Abimelech is a believer in Jehovah Elohim and (2) God is threatening him here with the sin unto death (the sin unto death is where God removes a believer from this life—usually for persistent sin or reversionism; however, sometimes, the sin unto death is used to make an example or an important point, as in Acts 5).

Usually, when there is a doctrine out there which covers the topic, I defer to that doctrine; however, there are at least 3 sources out there, which, individually, present an incomplete picture. Therefore, I have taken their material and put it together below. However, almost none of the doctrine below is original with me.

Doctrine of The Sin Unto Death

1. Introduction and definition
   1) The phrase "sin unto death" describes the final stage of divine discipline in which God removes from the earth the person who is totally alienated from God. The "sin unto death" is not a particular sin; but it is, rather, a

mental attitude of total indifference to and rebellion against the will and purpose of God.

2) The spiritual condition of the person who comes under the "sin unto death" is characterized by continual and maximum carnality (remaining out of fellowship); and this punishment represents God's final step of chastisement to those who are in maximum alienation from God. Only God can discern the true nature of a person's mind, attitude, or volition; and only God knows whether a person is actually implacable and deserving of physical death.

3) The "sin unto death" is described as a principle in 1John 5:16 Psalm 118:17,18 Ezek. 18:21-32.

4) The sin unto death is not a particular sin nor is it a list of sins.

5) There are definite characteristics by which to recognize the conditions which lead to God's applying the "sin unto death":

(1) A persistent, unconfessed sin.

(2) Sin which continues unchecked with no repentance, may bring a person under this category.

(3) The person who persistently ignores Grace, warnings, and discipline may come under the "sin unto death." Lev. 26.

(4) Sin which has a maximum adverse effect on other people (causing stumbling) may lead a person into severe discipline, even to the sin unto death.

2. Illustrations

1) Illustrations of the Sin Unto Death.

(1) Gen X of the Exodus generation. They are described in Num. 14:26–30 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumblings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. Say to them, 'As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.' " See also Num. 14:20–23, 33 Joshua 5:6 Heb. 3:7–11

(2) Nadab and Abihu. Their lines were ended, and Eleazar was not commanded to provide for their lines to be preserved. Lev. 10:1-2 1Chr. 24:1-2

(3) Eli and his sons. 1Sam. 2:12-17,22-36 3:1-21 4:4-18

(4) Saul and his sons. 1Sam. 15:10-35; 31:1-7 1Chr. 10:13-14

(5) Ananias and Saphira. Acts 5:1-11

(6) Hymenaeus and Alexander. 1Tim. 1:20

2) Illustrations of the Sin Unto Death judgment being stayed.

Doctrine of The Sin Unto Death

(1) David's almost dying the sin unto death. 2Sam. 12:13
(2) Hezekiah's close call. 2Kgs. 20:1-11; Isa. 38:1-22
(3) The Corinthian man who committed incest. 1Cor. 5:5 2Cor. 2:6-11

3) Illustrations of the Sin Unto Death judgment being stayed, then reinstated.
(1) Moses' deferment (Ex. 4:24) and later judgment (Deut. 32:48-52).
(2) Balaam's deferment (Num. 22:31) and later judgment (Num. 31:8).

3. Suffering the sin unto death does not mean a loss of salvation. With regards to the incestuous believer in Corinth, Paul wrote: You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (1Cor. 5:5). Our salvation is dependent upon Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for our sins. It is not dependent upon the sort of life we lead post-salvation. If you can lose your salvation after God has saved you, then your salvation is dependent upon you. Our salvation is a matter of faith alone in Christ alone; and once we have believed in Jesus Christ, we cannot lose the eternal life which God grants us. John 5:24 Point of fact: I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. 2Tim. 2:13 if we are faithless, He [yet] remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

4. There are at least nine descriptive terms for the Sin unto Death in the Bible.
1) Delivered over to Satan (1Cor.5:5 1Tim.1:20 Phil.3:19).
2) Carcasses falling (Heb.3:17; 1 Cor.10:5; Num.14:29).
3) Given over to death (Psalm118:18).
4) Taken away (John 15:2 Acts 5:1-11).
5) Swift destruction (2Peter 2:1, 12).
6) Destroyed by the Destroyer (1Cor.10:10 Jude 5).
7) Crawling out a burning house with clothes on fire (Jude 23)
8) Premature death (Eph.6:1-4 Ex.20:12 Deut.5:16)
9) Sleep (euphemism for death of believer) (1Cor.11:27-32/ Eucharist/ 11:30)

5. There are sins which are not "unto death."
1) First of all, there is a sin not unto death (ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον). 1John 5:16–17
(1) The context is a confident prayer ministry based upon our life in Christ. 1John 5:13-15
(2) Intercessory prayer is prescribed for brothers sinning non-leading-to-death sin.
(3) We should never request that any brother is subject to the sin unto death. Such a request is an ἐρωτάω request (1John 5:16b) rather than an αἰτέω request (1John 5:14–16a).
2) A sin which is confessed is not "unto death." God does not discipline us with the sin unto death for a forgiven sin. 1John 1:9 1Cor. 11:31 Psalm 32:5 38
3) A sin which is discontinued is not "unto death." Heb. 12:1 Ezek. 18:21-32
4) The person who responds positively to divine discipline is not involved in the "sin unto death." Heb. 12:6, 11-15

5) The antithesis of death as a purpose-consequence is the glory of God purpose-consequence. John 11:4
   (1) Unrepentant, unconfessed sin results in operational death and premature physical death.
   (2) Confessed sin restores operational life and extends physical life with the purpose-consequence of God's glory being achieved.

6. So there is no fear that you might be suddenly subject to the sin unto death, there is a series of steps leading to that point. Heb. 12:5–11
   1) Light discipline, called knocking in Heb. 12:5a Rev. 3:19–20 (which is a discipline passage, not a salvation passage, as it is too often incorrectly portrayed).
   2) Heavy or severe discipline. Do not faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the lord loves He disciplines and He scourges every son whom He receives (Heb. 12:5b–6). Scourging certainly represents severe discipline.
   3) Then the sin unto death.
   4) There are exceptions to this, as we saw above with Ananias and Saphira. They were give a very short time to be honest and they chose not to be.

7. Summary and conclusions
   1) The OT and the NT provide multiple illustrations for the Sin Unto Death.
   2) Illustrations are provided as warnings. 1Cor. 10:1-11
   3) The bottom-line cause of Sin Unto Death is idolatry (which is placing something else over God in your scale of values). 1John 5:21
      (1) The case of "lying to the Holy Spirit" (Ananias and Sapphira). Acts 5:1-10. Ananias and Saphira pursued the idolatry of approbation-lust (Acts 5:1-11).
      (2) The case of persistent carnality while sitting at the Lord's Table. Defiling the Lord's Supper is the idolatrous practice of eating the table of demons. 1Cor. 10:20-22 11:30–31
      (3) Apostasy is the idolatrous practice of living the teachings of demons. Rev. 2:20-24 1Tim. 4:1
      (4) The case of disobedience to the Word of God.. King Saul did not kill Agag although directly ordered to do so by God; he insisted on personally offering sacrifices in the place of divinely appointed priests; and he consulted a witch, itself a capital offense. 1Chron.10:13,14 1Sam. 13:9-14
      (5) The case of self-righteousness and dependence on man which was perpetuated (case of Hezekiah). Isa. 38
      (6) The case of apostasy on the part of a believer. Num. 31:8 1Tim. 1:19,20.

Sources:
http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/sindeath.html
http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=539
http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D100105.pdf
Both accessed February 11, 2013. However, L. S. Chafer taught the sin unto death briefly in his 8 volume set *Systematic Theology* (Vol. VII, p. 166); which doctrine was expanded upon considerably by R. B. Thieme, Jr. I believe that most of the doctrine above is ultimately original with Thieme.

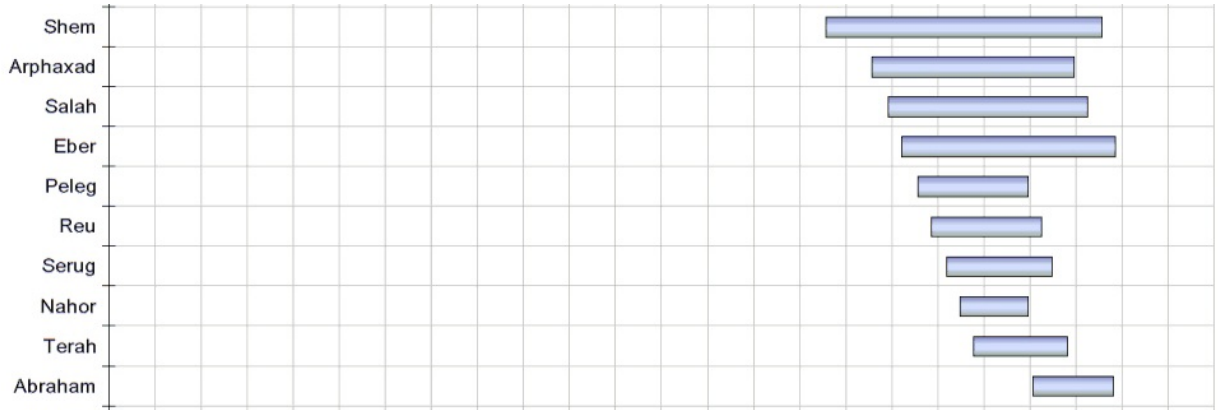
Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and He said to Abimelech, "Listen, you are about to die, for the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife."

How did Abimelech become a believer? We do not know, but there is evidence that not only Abimelech believed in Jehovah Elohim, but that many of his people believed as well. We do not know how people were evangelized prior to nation Israel; and we have only a few examples of geographical areas being evangelized after the establishment of nation Israel.

It is clear that the priest Melchizedek was a believer in the Revealed Lord, as we studied back in Gen. 14, and that he had a very active ministry which Abraham supported financially (Gen. 14:20 Heb. 7:4, 9–11). So Melchizedek was likely teaching about the Revealed Lord, the God of Creation; and, as I have suggested before, probably had the Scriptures up to his date and time (which is why Abraham was willing to accept his authority so easily).

This was also a period of time when the patriarchs Shem, Ham and Japheth were either still alive or only recently passed away. Many people would have known the Revealed Lord through them or through their sons (or through their sons' sons)—all of whom were alive up until about this time in human history. So, even though we have already studied these ten generations going from Shem to Abraham, many of these people are still alive or only recently deceased. Therefore, many people of this era know of the Revealed Lord who destroyed the earth with a great flood and then, later, confounded the language of the people.

How Shem's Lifetime Overlapped Abraham's Lifetime



This chart is according to the Hebrew Bible. Recall that the Greek Septuagint has another generation in here of an additional 130 years (if memory serves). The entire chart is found at http://churchages.com/images/ages-of-the-patriachs.gif

We also know other things apart from the Bible concerning this time period. For several hundred years, there seemed to be an emphasis upon determining what sorts of laws man *ought* to be subject to. When men are with men in close proximity, *what things are illegal and punishable by death; what things should be adjudicated in a court,* etc. The idea was to rule over the most righteous country. This was important to men as cities began to flourish a few hundred years after the flood. Because there was a great migration and population explosion, mankind had to determine the best ways to deal with large groups of people in cities.

Many of us view rulers today with great suspicion and skepticism, which is generally justified. However, there are a handful of leaders today, and probably a larger percentage in the ancient world, who are concerned with having a righteous and just society, where that which is wrong is discouraged or punished, and that which is good is encouraged or rewarded. Presently, it appears as if the interest is, what kinds of sins can be legalized, regulated, and, most importantly, taxed? If taxing sin were the solution to our financial problems, then California and Nevada would be the two most fiscally solid states in the union. The two states which legalized marijuana usage (I write this in 2013) will find out that hard way that legal dope will cost the states far more than it will bring in revenue (in loss of productivity, increased welfare costs, crime, and traffic accidents). But I digress. My point was, organizing a society in a just and righteous way was important to the leaders of that day (Sodom and Gomorrah being glaring exceptions to this).

Being a righteous man heading a righteous nation was important to Abimelech. He, like most rulers of his day, placed a premium upon honesty.

Lesson 225: Genesis 20:1–7 Abraham a Mediator/He Foreshadows Jesus Christ

So far, we have studied the first 3 verses of Gen. 20.

Genesis 20:1–3 Then Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev, and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he was temporarily residing in Gerar. And Abraham said regarding Sarah his wife, "She [is] my sister." Therefore, Abimelech the king of Gerar sent [for her] and he took Sarah. Then Elohim came unto Abimelech in a dream that night and He said to him, "Listen, you [are] perishing because of the woman whom you have taken, since she is married to a husband."

After the promise of having a son in the next year, and after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham and Sarah, who are ages 99 and 89 respectively, move southwest into the territory controlled by Philistines. Abraham uses deception again in order to protect himself (showing a lack of faith in God's promises and His provision), and Abimelech, the Philistine king, takes Sarah as his own wife. However, God comes to

Abimelech in a dream and threatens him with the sin unto death (which we studied in the previous lesson).

Genesis 20:4 But Abimelech had not come near her. And he said, “Lord, will You also kill a righteous nation?

God came to Abimelech in a dream, and Abimelech responded to God, “Lord, will you also destroy a righteous nation?” This would suggest that Abimelech ruled over a nation of believers; or, at the very least, those who adhered to the laws of divine establishment. This would mean that, there had to be information both about the True God and about the laws of divine establishment available to Abimelech. Abimelech had responded to that information with faith in the Revealed Lord.

Please note that God is not giving the land to Abraham right at this point in time. The Land of Promise will be given to Abraham’s descendants. The only portion that was filled with degenerates and needed to have been dealt with was Sodom and Gomorrah. However, the people of this land had not fallen into great degeneracy as a whole. In fact, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah staved off a wider destruction, because the cancer had been removed.

Somehow, Abraham received the Scriptures of God, and I suspect that they were given to him by Melchizedek (they would have likely have been communicated verbally). This is only a theory, and there is no Scripture to back this up. However, Melchizedek is clearly presented as a priest to God in Genesis; and Abraham, in his early life, is said to come from a background that was not ideal.

One of the things which I missed in these lessons was the importance of Gen. 11:31 And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there. (NASB).

The portion I missed was about entering the land of Canaan. If Terah was simply moving his family to the west and just intended to stop at Haran (Charan), then there would be no reason to mentioned Canaan. However, there is the implication that the true destination was Canaan, but they stopped part way to Canaan in Haran (Charan). Further evidence of this is found in Acts 7:2–3 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham **when** he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' (ESV)

So, Abraham (Abram then) was told back in Ur to go to Canaan. He was also told to separate from his family. However, he moved with his family and they only got as far as Charan and then they stopped. God had clearly asked Abraham to separate from his family, which he was unwilling to do at first. So, despite the many meetings with God, Abraham did not start out doing exactly what God told him to do.

We will also find evidence in the Bible that some in his family were (or became) idolaters (or became idolaters) and turned away from the Revealed Lord.

My point in all of this is, it was not yet time for Abraham to take Canaan. The people of this land were not completely degenerate (apart from Sodom and Gomorrah). This king is a perfect example of a man who believed in the Revealed Lord (and therefore was saved) and it will become clear that his nation is righteous as well.

Abimelech will continue to defend his actions before God in his dream:

Genesis 20:5 "Did he himself not say to me, 'She [is] my sister'? Furthermore, she also said, herself, 'He [is] my brother.' [Therefore] I did this in the integrity [or, *innocence*] of my heart and in the innocence of my hands."

Abimelech continues to present his case to God—in this dream. Abraham told him that Sarah was his sister, and she confirmed that relationship.

The word *integrity* is tôm (תֹּם) [pronounced *tohm*], which means, *integrity, completeness, innocence; safety, prosperity; fulness [for number and measure]*. Strong's #8537 BDB #1070. There were social norms and standards to which Abimelech was holding to. Despite the model of man and wife given to us by Adam and Eve, Abimelech, along with many kings of that era, collected wives. We know, from the Mosaic Law and from the New Testament, that this is not God's plan for man to collect wives. However, the Mosaic Law had not yet been given. So, in Abimelech's own estimation, his heart was innocent because these were the norms and standards of his day. He did not have a reason to think differently. He was not contradicting the standards of that day; so he was therefore demonstrating integrity and innocence.

This does not mean that Abimelech is completely blameless. He would have known the example of Adam and Eve. God did not give Adam a harem. God gave Adam exactly one wife. At this point in time in human history, Shem, Ham and Japheth are all still alive or only recently deceased. Therefore, for those who want to know God, would have known about Adam and Eve.

Abimelech claims to be innocent. The word *innocence* is, niqqâyôwn (וְנִקְיֹן) [pronounced *nik-kaw-YOHN*], which means, *freedom from guilt [punishment], innocence, innocency; purity; cleanness [of teeth]*. Strong's #5356 BDB #667.

Abimelech, according to the laws of his city and according to the norms and standards of his own thinking, was innocent. He saw an attractive woman and he took her into his harem. That was the privilege of the king.

The political class often exempts themselves from the standards they apply to everyone else. Not too long ago, Martha Stewart was legally pursued for having committed *insider trading* (I think she was charged with something else, but the insider trader led to that point). However, insider trading is something which politicians have done for decades.

They know the sorts of regulations or investigations that they might do to this or that business, to this or that sector, and then they buy stocks accordingly, in anticipation of such action. If one followed the average stock portfolio for the average Congressman or Senator, you would find yourself being amazed at how they beat the market consistently; and how they beat some of Wall Street's best stock pickers. In a similar vein, many politicians buy cheap land, and then, a few years later, by happy coincidence, some public improvement project just happens to occur adjacent to that land, doubling and tripling its value in a year or two. The head of our Senate, Harry Reid, is famous for making money on such land deals. He is a multi-millionaire today, despite making around $200,000/year. He is just such a "wise" investor when it comes to land.

So Abimelech is blameless in the sense that contemporary politicians who pick stocks and make land deals all of the time are innocent. These politicians make investments based upon legislation which they know will affect the stocks and land which they have an interest in, and this was completely legal for many years and politicians of both parties took advantage of this. Abimelech, as king, could take on several wives. Since he works for the public, he can support these wives with public funds (as did David and Solomon). However, before God, this was not legitimate; just as, before God, Abimelech was not completely innocent and pure. In one sense he is; and in one sense he is not. Abimelech, by the laws of his day, was innocent. In the eyes of God, he was not.

Abimelech continues to make the argument with God. Abimelech had very good reason to believe that Sarah was single and available because of what both she and Abraham said.

Genesis 20:6a Then Elohim said to him in the dream, "I—even I—have known that you did this in the integrity [or, *innocence*] of your heart.

This is an interesting thing that God says to Abimelech. God uses the first word to apply to Abimelech, but not the second. Abimelech was consistent with the laws and standards of his day, he had not violated his own norms and standards, but he was not necessarily completely innocent. Just like the Congressman who has seen great returns on his stock portfolio and land purchases, who may be acting in accordance with the law, so he is adhering to the laws and standards of his time—but he is certainly not completely innocent. He just isn't breaking the law (which laws, he helped to pass).

So God recognizes that Abimelech is acting within the norms and standards of his day, and agrees to that.

Genesis 20:6 Then Elohim said to him in the dream, "I—even I—have known that you did this in the integrity of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you [the opportunity] to touch [or, *violate*] her.

God has a specific plan and that is for a new race to begin with Abraham. From him would come the Jewish race. Had Abimelech taken Sarah and copulated with her, this would have sullied the beginnings of the Jewish race (much like the seed of Lot was sullied in the

previous chapter through incest). We could no longer be assured that Abraham had fathered the child-to-come. There would have been corruption in this line that God was establishing.

God speaks to Abimelech and acknowledges his reasoning; and adds that, God had not allowed Abimelech to have sexual relations with Sarah. It was God who has kept them apart, although the specific mechanics are not given here.

God intends for Sarah to have a uniquely-born son by Abraham, which is the result of a miracle, and this son is to be separate from all other claims to the promises made to Abraham—that is, that son uniquely will be heir to the promises of God. This child, who will be born will be uniquely able, through birth, to claim the promises which God had originally delivered to Abraham. Therefore, God cannot allow there to be any impurity in Sarah, in this regard. She must carry Abraham's seed only. There can be no corruption of this line. At this point in the narrative of Abraham's life, we are perhaps a month away from Isaac's conception.

Genesis 20:7 Now therefore, restore his wife to the man. For he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. And if you do not restore her, know that you will surely die, you, and all that are yours."

If you are the kind of person who has a schedule to read through your Bible once every year (or 2 years or whatever), you probably breezed right by this verse and did not notice anything remarkable.

Here is the first time that the word *prophet* is found in the Bible: Abraham is called a prophet. God did not make up this word on the spot. He did not tell Abimelech, "This Abraham is a gurglesnap" and then later defined it. Abimelech knew what God was saying. Abimelech knew what the word prophet meant, at least to some limited degree (as the revealed Word of God was limited at that time).

The word is nâbîyʾ (אִיבָנ) [pronounced *naw^{b}-VEE*], which means, *prophet [true or false]; spokesman, speaker*. When speaking of a true prophet of God, he speaks God's message to man (or he represents God to man). God speaks to the prophet and then the prophet speaks God's message to man. Strong's #5030 BDB #611.

On the other hand, a priest represents man to God. Jesus Christ is both a prophet and a priest. Note here that Abraham will pray on behalf of Abimelech. When Abraham does this, he is standing in between God and man, acting on behalf of the man in speaking to God. He becomes an intercessor.

There is another word in this verse which occurs for the first time: pâlal (לַלָפ) [pronounced *paw-LAHL*], which means, *to pray, to intercede, to make intercession for, to ask for a favorable* determination. Strong's #6419 BDB #813. This is the first time that these two words occur in the Bible and they are both found here, right in this one verse.

You may not realize it, but finding these words together in the same verse at the same time is *very* significant. And it is even more significant that these two words are found together for the first time in the Bible in the same verse.

God has essentially warned Abimelech that he was facing the sin unto death. Not only would God take out Abimelech under the sin unto death, but God would have taken out Abimelech's family as well. There is blessing by association; but there is also cursing by association, which fact is revealed here. So, God warns Abimelech in this dream, and tells him that this Abraham is a prophet and that he will pray or intercede for Abimelech.

If Abraham prays on behalf of Abimelech, he would be acting as a priest, speaking to God on Abimelech's behalf. A priest represents man to God. Think of him as a defense lawyer, if that helps. So, hidden in this verse is both Abraham as a prophet (speaking for God to man) and Abraham functioning as a priest (speaking to God on behalf of man). This would make Abraham a unique person before God, and in this way, as the intercessor between Abimelech and God, Abraham foreshadows Jesus Christ. Abraham was able to do this. He could speak to God for Abimelech, and God would not act against Abimelech.

This may not seem fair to you. Abraham was the one who was dishonest. Abimelech was just acting according to what he believed to be true. Why is Abimelech at fault? This is a parallel which is set up. Abimelech is simply acting within his own nature according to the laws as they were in that day. In this way, he is representative of all mankind—he is acting according to his own nature. On the other hand, Abraham represents the Revealed Lord. Through Abraham alone could Abimelech emerge from this situation unharmed. Through Abraham alone was Abimelech protected. Don't get confused; this is all illustrative. Abimelech and Abraham are both believers. We are not talking about a real relationship here, we are talking about a representative relationship; we are talking about a relationship between man and God that is foreshadowed here. We require Jesus to stand between us and God, to intercede for us; and that is what Abraham will do on behalf of Abimelech. Abimelech is already saved; he already believes in the Revealed Lord; but this is done for us today to simply illustrate how Jesus acts as both priest and prophet; He represents us to God and He represents God to us, acting as an intercessor between us and God. Many times in the Bible, there is an intercessor between man and God, and this intercessor illustrates Jesus Christ.

See if you have a better understanding of Rom. 8:33–34 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is **interceding** for us. (ESV) 1Tim. 2:5–6 For there is one God, and there is one **mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. (ESV mostly) A mediator is nearly the same thing as an intercessor. He is equal to both parties and he stands in between both parties to reach an agreement.

Because this chapter is often skipped, thinking it to be repetitive, it is actually very revealing and has information which is pertinent to us today.

So that there is no misunderstanding, even though this is all illustrative, what God warns here is real. If Abimelech stands in front of the plan of God, then God will remove him and his family. So, this is a very serious situation. So, this is not some made-up story to illustrate something; this is a true situation—this really happened—and God the Holy Spirit includes this in the narrative of Genesis because it foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prophet of God, our Priest and our intercessor, our only Mediator between us and God. 1Tim. 2:5 **For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.** This is all found right here in this verse, foreshadowing Jesus Christ.

God is preserving the line of Abraham; God is preserving Sarah as being Abraham's alone; and God is guaranteeing that the son of promise will be born to Abraham and Sarah. The line cannot be corrupted.

Lesson 226: Genesis 20:8–13 Abraham's Dishonesty and Judgment of Abimelech

So far we have studied:

Gen, 20:1–7 Abraham moved to the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was living in Gerar, Abraham told everyone that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sent men to take Sarah. God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You're going to die because of the woman that you've taken! She's a married woman!" Abimelech hadn't come near her, so he asked, "Lord, will you destroy a nation even if it's innocent? Didn't he tell me himself, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she even say, 'He's my brother'? I did this in all innocence and with a clear conscience." "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience," God said to him in the dream. "In fact, I kept you from sinning against me. That's why I didn't let you touch her. Give the man's wife back to him now, because he's a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give her back, you and all who belong to you are doomed to die." (God's Word™)

For the second time, Abraham presents his wife Sarah as his sister in order to protect himself. She was taken into Abimelech's harem, but Abimelech had not yet touched her. God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and warned him.

Genesis 20:8 And Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called in his state department [lit., *all his servants*], and told them all these things. And the men were greatly afraid.

In the Hebrew, we have 4 wâw consecutives followed by 4 imperfect verbs, which indicates a series of successive actions. Abimelech had to act upon what God told him, and he does immediately. He gets up early to take care of it. His swift and obedient action indicates to me that he is a believer in Jehovah Elohim. The God Who came to him is the Revealed God; and if he obeys what the Revealed God said to him, then obviously Abimelech believes in Him.

Abimelech tells his servants these things, and they are afraid. Now, if his servants do not believe in Jehovah Elohim, then why would they be afraid? They would have thought to

themselves, “It is just nutty old Abimelech and another of his weird dreams.” However, these people believe in Jehovah Elohim, in the Revealed Lord, and therefore, they take Abimelech’s word for what has transpired.

Their fear would be based upon recognizing that they are a corporate entity before God. Believers who understand some doctrine know that they can be destroyed as a nation by God, as happened to Sodom and Gomorrah, whose devastation was even visible in the time of Josephus.

Furthermore, these Philistines (who are possibly not related to the Philistines who lived in this area during the time of Joshua, the Judges and David) stand in stark contrast to the Sodomites that we have studied. The Sodomites are completely controlled by their lusts; Abimelech and his state department are not. The difference is quite apparent. When the Sodomites showed up at Lot’s front door, they were eaten up with desire. However, when it comes to Abimelech, the king of Gerar, and his state department, they feared God more than the king was willing to give into his own personal desires.

Do you recall how God was not going to take over all of the Land of Promise because the iniquity of the Amorites had not yet reached completion (Gen. 15:16). At this point in time, there were a number of peoples who lived in the land of Canaan who were believers in Jehovah Elohim. They led righteous lives and they believed in the imputed righteousness of Jehovah Elohim. 4 generations from now, that will all change; but, at this point in time, God will not harm them because they trust in Him.

You will note that, not one of the men of Abimelech’s state department steps forward and says, “Look, Abimelech, you just had a bad dream. Let it go and be happy. Don’t worry about it.”

The big difference is, Abraham will pass along his faith to his son, and grandson and great grandson. However, the faith of Abimelech here will, within 3 or 4 generations, die out throughout most of Canaan, leaving great pockets of degeneracy in its wake, which degeneracy will be wiped out the Jews about 500 years in the future from this narrative.

Why does this happen? Why does Canaan go from this point where the king speaks to God in dreams, the people in his cabinet respond appropriately, to the point where, God will tell the Jews to wipe out the people in Canaan?

One big change is, Ham, Shem and Japheth will die, as will their sons and their sons’ sons, etc. The people of the earth will know for a half millennium men who were alive during the previous civilization, men who saw the great flood and some who were even alive during the time of great degeneracy. And suddenly, they will die out, along with several generations all at once.

Furthermore, the Word of God is not preserved by the Canaanites as it will be preserved by Abraham and his descendants.

Genesis 20:9a Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned regarding you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom [this] great sin?

Again, just like before, Abraham, who ought to be seen as a mature believer, misrepresented Sarah as a woman who was not his wife, to his host country. Abimelech has a good reason to complain to Abraham. God had made clear and unequivocal threats against Abimelech and his people, and Abimelech believes God (see Gen. 15:6).

Abimelech does not really understand more than Abraham has deceived him and that this is a pretty big deal. Abimelech uses the verb for sin, asking Abraham what did Abimelech do to sin against him to cause Abraham to bring a great sin upon him.

The verb used here is the normal verb translated *to sin:* châṯâʾ (אָטָח) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*], which means, *to sin, to miss, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err; to do wrong, to commit a* transgression. Strong's #2398 BDB #306. There are two possible prepositions which could follow this verb which would indicate that Abimelech has sinned against Abraham. However, the lâmed preposition does not necessarily mean that Abimelech sinned against Abraham, but that he has done something which was clearly wrong that may have involved Abraham, but not directly.

Then Abimelech accuses Abraham of bringing *sin* upon him and his realm. There are at least two related words translated *sin,* and this is the one which is more rare, found fewer than 10 times in the Old Testament (the verb above occurs about 240 times). Abimelech is not complaining about the guilt or about the judgment against him, but about the *sin* or *offense* that Abraham has brought upon Abimelech personally. That is the fact that Abimelech has a married woman in his harem. He holds Abraham responsible for that.

As was discussed previously, Abimelech bears some responsibility because, even though he has a clear understanding of the morality of taking another man's wife, he has strayed from the morality of one man/one woman.

Genesis 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned regarding you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done."

The word for *deeds* is maʿăsîym (מִיְשַׂאַמ) [pronounced *mah-ğuh-SEEM*], which means, *deeds, works, production, that which is produced or done [crops, property, goods]*. Strong's #4639 BDB #795. This is a morally neutral term. Abraham has simply done things which should not have been done. This focuses on Abraham's dishonesty to begin with, his not attempting to speak to Abimelech in private, his not attempting to set things straight. Abraham has just gone along with all of this, and all that he did made it appear that Sarah is just his sister and nothing more.

We fully understand the narrative, which is not as clear to Abimelech. We understand that we need to have an unadulterated line from Abraham to Jesus Christ—this unadulterated

line includes a natural born son to Abraham and Sarah. We need to pick up again with the great theme of Gen. 3:15 of the seed of the woman and how important this all is, and where this is leading to. He may know about the seed of the woman, the flood, and the Creator God (Whom he believes in), but Abimelech would not know about God's promises to Abraham about his lineage. He is completely outside of the loop in this regard. He brought a woman home to marry, and suddenly, God has threatened to kill him. If Abimelech was not so frightened, he would be thinking, "This is really quite remarkable, whatever it is that is going on."

Genesis 20:10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see that you have done this thing?"

Abimelech is asking Abraham, *what did he observe In Gerar that made him think that he needed to lie to him*. Abimelech apparently presided over a society which adhered, for the most part, to the laws of divine establishment. This city-state had an adherence to the same God that Abraham had faith in. So Abimelech asks Abraham, "What did you observe that made you think that you needed to lie to me?"

We do not know if there was anything that Abraham had actually observed. He was certainly aware to a limited degree about the Sodomites, but he certainly does not have a clear picture of the other peoples in this land. Some of them, like Abimelech and his state department, appear to be very honorable.

Genesis 20:11 And Abraham said, "Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will kill me for my wife's sake.

Abraham gives an honest answer here. He does not give a background of Sodom and Gomorrah, insofar as we know. They were extremely degenerate and willing to do anything to get what they want. Abraham had assumed that, because he did not clearly observe that these men believed in Jehovah Elohim, that they could not be trusted as being sufficiently moral.

Abraham apparently has assumed, that God has come to him only, and not to these people. However, based upon what we have already read, it is clear that these people have trusted in the same God that Abraham trusts in. However, the people of Gerard are very concerned for their own well-being when they disobey the Sovereign God. That is strong faith.

As we have already discussed, it appears as though there was a true respect for God in this land. Abimelech woke up in deep fear over his dream; and when he relays this to his state department, they respond in the same way.

In our time, we have trivialized God. We think of Him as our Buddy, our Pal. But God has, on several occasions, wiped out thousands of people and has either ordered or allowed the destruction of millions. God's threat to Abimelech was real. "Listen to my instructions

and do them, or you will die and everyone that you know will die." That rightly struck fear in Abimelech's heart.

Noah represented the only uncorrupted line of Adam before the flood. The entire human population had become corrupted and God destroyed all of them, which would have been millions of corrupted beings. So there is no doubt that God would have ended everyone in the house of Abimelech to protect the line of Adam, Noah, Shem and Abraham.

We have a relationship to God through Jesus Christ His Son. There are things which we enjoy in this dispensation that no other believer prior to this time enjoyed. You as a believer can enjoy direct and personal fellowship with God. You may be the most inconsequential person in the world, to the thinking of many, and yet you have a direct and personal relationship with the Person of God.

However, bear in mind that, we are here for a reason. We are on earth with a purpose, and it goes far beyond being nice to people and treating them in the same way we want them to treat us. That is an establishment principle (which makes it valid and important); but it is not the Christian way of life. You can view your place in God's plan is unimportant, and God may simply choose to take you out of this world, as He did to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–10).

The fear felt by Abimelech and his cabinet members was real and appropriate to this situation. And Abimelech acted quickly to resolve the conflict revealed to him by God.

Genesis 20:12 And yet truly she is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. And she became my wife."

Here, Abraham properly explains the relationship between Sarah and himself; she is actually his younger half-sister. So, on two occasions at least, Abraham told this half-truth about his wife and half-sister, Sarah.

Genesis 20:13 And it happened when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness which you show to me, at every place where we will come, say of me, He is my brother.' "

So Abraham formulated a policy early on once he and Sarah left their father's home. This tells us that what Abraham did in Egypt, when he lied about Sarah, was not just a one-time thing. It was the Abrahamic policy for dealing with heathen. Therefore, it makes sense that we see this situation occur more than once.

Notice what else is implied here: Abraham blames this on God; God is the reason he chose to do this. God caused him to wander from his father's home.

There is one fascinating thing hidden in the Hebrew which is not generally pointed out in most translations: God is coupled with a plural verb here. Now, that normally is not the case; normally, the plural noun *Elohim* is nearly always coupled with singular verbs.

Elohim can be translated *God, god* or *gods*. But Elohim, the Triune God, acts as a Single Entity and a single purpose, and therefore, takes a singular verb—when we are speaking of the Triune God. However, Abraham is actually saying here, "Gods caused me to wander from my father's home." That is very odd. It is sort as though Abraham is talking down to Abimelech. Rather than speaking of the one God (the One Who spoke to Abimelech in his dream), Abraham here appears to be speaking of several gods. It is sort of like being around Muslims and referring to God as *Allah*.

In a way, this Abraham moving west was very much like Americans moving out west in the United States during the gold rush. He felt as if he was going from a fairly civilized land into a rough and tumble country, where nearly anything goes (in Abraham's perception), so he adjusted to compensate for that. However, Abraham has, on two occasions, come across men who are just the opposite from what he expected. Here, we find King Abimelech, who is a man who fears God; and back in Gen. 14, Abraham met Melchizedek, a priest of God. Both are believers in the Revealed Lord, the Creator of all mankind.

Abraham admits that this is his idea. He has misjudged the host nation in which he finds himself, and he has misjudged the character of Abimelech. In fact, Abraham continues to misjudge Abimelech by using a plural verb with the noun *Elohim*. By that, he is assuming that Abimelech worships many gods. In other words, Abraham does not yet recognize the legitimacy of Abimelech's faith.

To me, this is fascinating—that Abraham is still wrong about Abimelech and about his people. He has warmed up a little and recognizes the mistake that he has personally made, but Abraham is not yet ready to simply recognize that they both worship the same God.

So there is no misunderstanding, I am not saying that there are many roads to Rome and Abraham was on one of these roads and Abimelech was on the other. That is not my point at all. There is only one Mediator between God and man; the man Christ Jesus. I am saying that they both worship the same Revealed God, and that Abraham does not recognize that.

Lesson 227: Genesis 20:1–18 — Abimelech Restores Sarah to Abraham

So far we have studied:

Gen, 20:1–13 Abraham moved to the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was living in Gerar, Abraham told everyone that his wife Sarah was his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sent men to take Sarah. God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You're going to die because of the woman that you've taken! She's a married woman!" Abimelech hadn't come near her, so he asked, "Lord, will you destroy a nation even if it's innocent? Didn't he tell me himself, 'She's my sister,' and didn't she even say, 'He's my brother'? I did this in all innocence and with a clear conscience." "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience," God said to him in the dream. "In fact, I

kept you from sinning against me. That's why I didn't let you touch her. Give the man's wife back to him now, because he's a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't give her back, you and all who belong to you are doomed to die." Early in the morning Abimelech called together all his officials. He told them about all of this, and they were terrified. Then Abimelech called for Abraham and asked him, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you that you would bring such a serious sin on me and my kingdom? You shouldn't have done this to me." Abimelech also asked Abraham, "What were you thinking when you did this?" Abraham said, "I thought that because there are no God-fearing people in this place, I'd be killed because of my wife. Besides, she is my sister-my father's daughter but not my mother's. She is also my wife. When God had me leave my father's home and travel around, I said to her, 'Do me a favor: Wherever we go, say that I'm your brother.' " (God's Word™)

About a year before Isaac is to be born, and right after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham pulled up stakes and moved to Gerar, which is a Philistine city.

Abraham set up a general policy of how he would interact with the various peoples of the land of Canaan. This was not something that God directed him to do; nor did this mean that he was surrounded by very degenerate groups of people. The only people who were truly degenerate and could not be trusted were those in Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham prayed on their behalf because Lot lived among them. However, there are apparently many other groups of people who are very honorable, many of whom believe in the Revealed Lord and will be in heaven as well.

Despite the way the Abraham generally impugned his character, this is how Abimelech responds:

Genesis 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men-servants and women-servants, and gave them to Abraham. And he restored him Sarah his wife.

This is quite interesting—Abimelech even blesses Abraham, giving him livestock and slaves, as well as restoring Sarah to him, despite Abraham's duplicity. Why he does this is easy to explain: God came to Abimelech in a dream and threatened him. This suggests to him that Abraham is an important man in God's plan; and that his marriage to Sarah is a key component of this plan. We know this to be true because we have studied the previous chapters in Genesis. Most of us know what will happen next. Abimelech knows this to be true because of a dream where God spoke to him, even though he may be sketchy on the other details—that is, *why* God is this concerned. Insofar as the king knows, he is violating adultery laws, but he is probably wondering just exactly why God is speaking to him about this.

Because the narrative often focuses in on just a few people (like Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech), we often forget that Abraham traveled with quite a large number of servants and employees. Even though the Bible often times seems to present Abraham and Sarah as just a couple with a servant or two with them, it should be obvious that they had quite a number of people still traveling with them. Otherwise, giving them all of these things

would be difficult for them to oversee. However, Abimelech knows enough about their caravan that Abraham is able to integrate this into his possessions.

Furthermore, there would have been a large staff under Abimelech, so that he could collect these things and give them to Abraham.

Genesis 20:15 And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you. Live where it pleases you."

Abimelech is apparently quite shaken up because of his meeting with God. So he tells Abraham to examine the land that belongs to Abimelech. He probably gave Abraham a general idea of what the boundaries were.

This may strike you as odd at first; Abimelech's life has been threatened, and this is because of Abraham and Sarah. So now he wants to keep Abraham and Sarah around? Abimelech understands, probably far more than most Americans understand, that there are great blessings which come by association. Abimelech knows that Abraham and Sarah are important to God—that they play an important role in God's plan. God came and spoke to Abimelech personally about them. Therefore, having them nearby is a blessing to Abimelech and to his nation (which is probably a city state with some unincorporated area around it).

Genesis 20:15 And Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you. Live wherever it pleases you."

Essentially what Abimelech is doing is saying is, "My troops patrol the land 30 miles (or, whatever) in all directions; you choose a place that you like, and my troops will be instructed to give you protection." Abimelech is offering more than just land to stay on. Since he is king, he must hold this land; in order to hold this land, he must have an army to both hold the land and protect the people on that land. He cannot claim some city 40 miles away that is occupied by Aramæans and say, "Live there, if you want." He is offering any portion of land that he has taken and that he protects.

Abimelech gives Abraham a free pass on his land, to travel on it wherever he chooses to. Recall that God is giving this huge land grant to Abraham, and it is on God's urging that Abraham is traveling throughout the land of Palestine. Abimelech assures Abraham that the doors are open for him to travel anywhere in the land that he controls.

Do you see how differently the men of Sodom treated Lot? When they crowded around his house, one demanded, "Who is this foreigner who made himself a judge over us?" And they threatened his life. Abimelech, the king of Gerar, a man who could simply call for a woman to be his wife and she was, treats Abraham with great deference and respect.

In the future, we are going to see Isaac interact with Abimelech (probably this Abimelech's son); and he will eventually be asked to leave this general area. The problem will not be so much with the leaders of that country, but with the people. So, one generation from

now, we are going to observe a perceptible loss of morality and establishment principles from among this people.

Genesis 20:16 And Abimelech said to Sarah, "Listen, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It [is] to you a covering of the eyes, to all that [are] with you, and with all [this], you are reproved [or, *made right*]."

Abimelech, in making restitution, is somewhat sarcasm with Sarah. "Listen, I have given *your brother* a thousand pieces of silver." Abimelech does not call Abraham her husband.

So Abimelech also has given Abraham 1000 silver coins. It is quite obvious that this face to face contract with God in his dream had quite an effect upon Abimelech.

Let's just say that these are 1 ounce coins. It is easy to know how much money this is, because metals like silver and gold have intrinsic value, whereas currency and coins have a face value but, essentially, no real value (unless they are composed of metals with intrinsic value). So, if we figure out the value of this silver in today's terms, that will give us a feel for their value then. Today (2013), an ounce of silver is worth around $50. Therefore, Abimelech is giving them $50,000. I doubt that these could be larger than 10 ounces each, which would make their value $500,000. This gives us a reasonable range for the value of this gift. This could certainly refer to a weight of silver that he is giving them. But, whatever—Abimelech is giving Sarah and Abraham a lot of money here. Remember, all that Abraham has done was to show up and lie about his wife. Other than that, Abraham has offered nothing of value to Abimelech.

The Old English *behold* means *look, listen up, hey*. It often draws one's attention to see if from the point of view of the speaker. The intent is to grab someone's attention and to say, "Look at this." This is followed by a masculine singular pronoun, which I have translated as a neuter singular pronoun (as there is no neuter in the Hebrew). It likely refers back to the *silver,* which is also a masculine singular noun.

A *covering of the eyes* suggests that Abimelech wants Abraham and Sarah to overlook what has happened. Abimelech has not done anything wrong, but God came to him in a dream and instilled the fear of God in him. Therefore, from his side, Abimelech is doing everything possible to iron things out. If he has done anything which is untoward, then he wants for this to make up for that.

Even though the verb *to be* is not found in this verse, the words used often come with an implied verb.

The final phrase is: ...and with all [this], you are reproved [or, *made right*]." With all that Abimelech has done (given them money and livestock and slaves), this should make her right; that is, this should be a more than reasonable compensation for the inconvenience of the separation; and certainly this is done to mollify God as well. This word *made right* can also mean *reproved, corrected;* so that, Abimelech is chiding Sarah to some degree.

Not only does all of this make things right, but what he has done has subtly reproved Sarah as well.

Genesis 20:17 And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave women, and they gave birth.

The amount of time that Sarah was in Abimelech's harem had to be long enough for this to be noticeable. My guess is, this took place over at least 1 to 4 month's time. There needs to be enough time that passes where it is clear that none of Abimelech's wives are being impregnated and the same was possibly true concerning his livestock. Quite obviously, women do not have to be showing in order for the king to figure out whether or not they are pregnant; if his wife and mistresses have their periods, then no one is getting pregnant.

At the same time, those who are already pregnant are not giving birth. Although that seems to be the focus of v. 17, that no conception took place appears to be the import of v. 18.

It is at this point that I started having a minor problem with the timeline. Remember that God came to Abraham and promised him that he would have a son by Sarah, in 1 year. But then we have Sodom and Gomorrah and then we have Abraham moving into Gerar. Somehow, he has to be in Gerar long enough and his wife has to be under Abimelech's control long enough for these women not to give birth. When this is combined with the beginning of this chapter, where Abraham is moving about, it is difficult to fit all of this into a 3 month period of time, but not impossible. Essentially, Abraham has to move out for Gerar almost immediately after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Actually, Abraham first went in a southwesterly direction, stopped for awhile at one point, and then moved in a northwesterly direction to go to Gerar. So one must add in a month for traveling as well.

What seems logical is, Abimelech collected women, and he had several women ready to give birth, but, once Sarah was brought into the fold, no one gave birth. It is likely that no one conceived either (since God is said to shut up the wombs in the next verse). This suggests that Sarah may have been under Abimelech's control for a week or so (maybe as long as a month); and during that time period, some women were ready to give birth, but that never took place. Not as long as Sarah was there. So, women not giving birth gives us an upper limit to the time frame here. When a woman is ready to give birth, this is quite noticeable; and there are only so many days that they can go without giving birth (and it my limited knowledge of this subject can be taxed at this point, it is my understanding that doctors will induce labor at a certain point in most women).

Therefore, no births occurring could be noticeable in a week's time, depending on how far along the pregnant women of the Abimelech household are. No doubt, within a month's time, this would be a crisis. Because of this, a reasonable upper limit may be placed on this time that Sarah is in the harem. Therefore, all of this can be placed into a timeline

which was given to us by our Lord when He said He would return in a year and Isaac would be born.

God has already given Abraham and fairly specific timetable and this child would be given birth to by Sarah, so we are in a bit of a time crunch here. We are nearly to the point where Abraham is ready to impregnate Sarah (even though they have both expressed some serious doubts about that actually happening), and Sarah is sudden whisked away by Abimelech.

One of the things that we need to learn is, sometimes God's plan in our life grinds to a halt for a year or two; and sometimes, for many years. Abraham and Sarah's spiritual lives have come to a halt here because they had been dishonest with king Abimelech. That dishonesty has resulted in Sarah being taken into Abimelech's harem. God's plan for them was not on hold for a long time; just for a little while in this instance.

There have been at least two occasions in the past when the plan of God for Abraham was put on hold. God told Abraham to leave his family and move to Canaan, but he did not. He went about three-fourths of the way to Canaan, and he also went with his family. Abraham eventually corrected this, left his family behind, and moved to Canaan. On another occasion, Abraham sired Ishmael, and, for about 13 years, the plan of God seemed to stop for Abraham there as well (we have nothing in the Bible about that intervening time).

Genesis 20:18a For the Lord had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech...

Somewhat after the fact, we are told that God had shut up the wombs of the women in the house of Abimelech. Again, this had to be noticeable for it to be meaningful, which suggests that Sarah was at least a week-long guest of Abimelech's. It also suggests that Abimelech had collected enough wives so that he had several women ready to give birth, and yet none of them did. Some may have miscarried and those who could be impregnated were not.

If the shutting of the womb also refers to these women not conceiving, then Sarah's stay here has to be at least for a month. Enough time would be given for Abimelech to think he should have been impregnating his women, but it was not happening. For there to be enough time for this to be noted, that would require about a month. Again, this would require a lot of women as well. If Abimelech had but 3 women, it might not be noticeable if none of them is impregnated after a month. But, if he has say, a dozen or two dozen women that he is attempting to impregnate, then, after a month, this would be noticed.

If Abimelech has taken Sarah out of a miscellaneous caravan, which he did; then this suggests that he was quite a collector of women. In other words, this is all in line with the assumptions that we would have to make in order for all this to fit into a timeline of a month or less.

This verse speaks of closing the wombs of the house of Abimelech, so this could apply to any of his grown children and their wives as well. Again, a month's time would have made it clear that no one is getting pregnant and no one is giving birth.

Genesis 20:18 For the Lord had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

God's plan was for Sarah to bear Abraham's child and here we are but a month or less before that conception takes place, and Sarah finds herself confined to the palace of Abimelech. The child of Sarah and Abraham is going to be one of the most important births in human history, and God puts a halt to any similar activity taking place in the house of Abimelech. There cannot be any births and there cannot be any conceptions taking place, so that there is no doubt as to the fatherhood of Isaac (who will be born in the next chapter).

In the past few months, some of the most unusual things have taken place related to the birth of Isaac. The first threat was from the nearby cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose perversion had reached such a startling climax that God needed to destroy those cities. Yet God preserved Lot, Abraham's nephew, because Abraham prayed for his deliverance. Then we have another perversion that seems to take place almost simultaneously with the conception and birth of Isaac; Lot's two unnamed daughters decide that sex with their father is necessary in order for them to have children (actually, we do not know the time frame for this, but it could have easily been coterminous with Isaac's conception and birth). The daughters of Lot will raise up two sons who will become thorns in the side of the descendants of Abraham.

Finally, in this chapter, possibly only weeks before Sarah is to conceive, Abraham foolishly tells all who ask that she is only his sister (indicating that Abraham is not a perfect man by any means), and Abimelech, the king of Gerar, comes in and snatches up Sarah because of Abraham's lie.

God then shuts up all of the wombs of those in Abimelech's house, because the one birth which is necessary has been halted by Abraham's sin and Abimelech's power.

However, God will begin to fulfill His promises to Abraham in Gen. 21.

Lesson 228: Genesis 12–20 What We Learn From Gen. 20/Testing of Abraham

Here is the text of Gen. 20 in paragraph form:

Abraham set out from there toward the land of the Negev and he stayed between Kadesh and Shur. Therefore, he resided temporarily in Gerar. And Abraham said, regarding Sarah his wife, "She is my sister."

Therefore, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent servants for Sarah and took her. Then God came to Abimelech in a dream that night and said to him, “Listen, you will die because of the woman you took, since she is already married.”

Now Abimelech had not come near to her, so he said to the Lord, “Will you also kill a righteous people? Didn’t he himself tell me, ‘She is my sister’? Didn’t she herself tell me, ‘He is my brother.’ Therefore, I did this with the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands.”

Then God said to him in the dream, “I knew in eternity past that you acted in the integrity of your heart. Therefore, I restrained you from sinning with regards to Me. For this reason, I have not given you the opportunity to violate her. Now, therefore, return this man’s wife to him, for he is a prophet and he will pray on your behalf to deliver you from My judgement. And if you do not return her to him, know that you will certainly die, you and all that belongs to you.”

Consequently, Abimelech rose up early the next morning and he summoned all of his officials. He declared all that had happened in his dream to them and the men were very afraid.

So Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What is it that you have done to me? How have I wronged you? Listen, you brought a great disaster upon me and my kingdom. Things which should not be done to anyone, you have done to me!” Abimelech also said to Abraham, “What made you do this thing?”

Abraham replied, “For I thought, ‘Surely there is no fear or reverence for God in this place. Therefore, they will kill me for my wife.’ Also, she is actually my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. She became my wife. And because God has caused us to move from my father’s home, I said to her, ‘Do this gracious thing for me wherever we go: say with respect to me, “He is my brother.” ’ ”

Abimelech then took sheep and oxen, and both male and female servants, and gave them all to Abraham. He also restored Abraham’s wife Sarah to him. Then Abimelech said, “Listen, my land is before you; live in whatever place pleases you.” He also said to Sarah, “Listen, I have given your brother 1000 silver coins as a covering for your eyes. This situation is being corrected for all who are with you and for all others.”

Then Abraham prayed to God and God answered his prayer by healing Abimelech, his wife and his mistresses, and they were able to give birth. This prayer was required because Jehovah had shut down all of the wombs in the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

When I first began to study Gen. 20, I admit to being somewhat confused. Why is this in the Bible? What does God want us to get out of this? It appears to be a repeat of Abraham’s journey down into Egypt. However, there is much more to be found in this chapter than just that.

What We Learn from Genesis 20

1. We find out that Abraham, although greatly blessed by God, is not a sinless person. He makes the same mistake here as he had made before. He is dishonest with his host, Abimelech. He also incorrectly prejudges Abimelech and his people.
2. God does not end His relationship with Abraham simply because he repeats this mistake from before.
3. There are some minor things that we learn—simply how Abraham ends up over in the land of the Philistines, and this helps to explain things which happen later in Isaac's life.
4. We discover that there are entire nations in Canaan that still believe in Jehovah Elohim, and that, somehow, apart from Abraham, they learned about Jehovah Elohim, they believed in Him, and their nations were based up the laws of divine establishment. This is likely because we are close enough to the flood where Shem, Ham and Japheth may all still be alive, along with their sons, grandsons and great-grandsons (at least within the past 100 years or so).
5. This chapter gives us evidence that, the sin of the Amorites is not yet complete. There will be a time when almost all those in Canaan will turn to idolatry, but that time is not yet come. The King of Gerar clearly believed in God, because immediately after his dream, he gets up early and he begins to deal with the problem of having Sarah in his harem. He wastes no time in obeying God.
6. Not only has the king believed in Y^{e}howah Elohim, but his staff has as well. When the king told them of his dream, they did not say, "Behold the dreamer comes." They instead feared God. Abimelech's staff took his dream seriously.
7. We learn from this and previous chapters that God appeared to man either face to face, as he did with Abraham; or in dreams, as He did with Abimelech.
8. Also, we will study two incidents which follow this in time, and we will observe a steady decline in personal honor in the people of Gerar. This helps us to understand why God would have the Jews come into this land and destroy so many groups of people.
9. Unbelievers are capable of morality just as believers are. In fact, what keeps a nation together is believers and unbelievers alike adhering to the **laws of divine establishment** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). The closer a nation adheres to the laws of divine establishment, the more that nation will prosper. The laws of divine establishment are simple laws which are as dependable as the law of gravity.
    1) A simple example of this is raising a child. The laws of divine establishment prescribe that a family consist of a mother and a father and their biological or adopted children. This is taught in the Bible.
    2) A child who lives in a home with his mother and father will fair much better than a child in a home with just the mother. Study after study affirms this. Much has been made of the disproportionate number of blacks in prison; however, if you take and equalize out the number of children who come from two-parent homes for all races, then there is no disproportionate number of minorities in prison. A disproportionate number of single-mother homes results in a disproportionate number of criminals. If one

sub-group in a nation has more single mother families, then there will be more children from that subgroup in jail.

3) Look at King David's children: his first set of children, who did not suffer from any financial want, as they were supported by the state at state (taxpayer) expense; and they were all failures, insofar as we know. One was a rapist; another was a murderer and a revolutionist; another attempted to seize power when David will ill; and the rest of them were easily frightened. None of them were a part of David's army. None of them are named in the Bible in any positive way. Then look at David's last 4 children, born to him and one woman, to whom he was faithful; and at least two of them (Solomon and Nathan) turned out okay (both of them being in the line of Jesus Christ—Nathan's line leads us to Mary and Solomon's line leads us to Joseph).

4) Any of the laws of divine establishment can be followed out to yield similar statistical results. The end result is going to be a stronger society when the laws of divine establishment are studied and obeyed. Much of the content of the Mosaic Law is divine establishment law.

5) In a previous study, we took note of the many kings of this general era who made every attempt to find or develop the right set of laws in order to insure a good, just and stable society. This also suggests that men who were leaders and men who had power were much more concerned with right and wrong than most leaders today—many of whom are interested only in the perpetuation of their own power.

10. At this point in time, many people in the land of Canaan were living decent, moral lives; and many countries in the land feared God. The great exception to this was Sodom and Gomorrah. However, because of Sodom and Gomorrah and the recent demise of the fathers of humanity, who told about the flood, many other peoples were respectful of God and God's laws.

11. At some time in the future, when the Philistines, the Canaanites and the Hittites turn away from God, God will judge these people. God will protect the remnant of people in the land who are His (the Israelites in the exodus), and He will destroy those who are not (much like the end of the tribulation).

12. In Gen.20, we have the first occurrence of the word prophet and the word prayer as applied to a mediator or an intercessor. Both of these words occur for the first time in one verse and both are applied to Abraham. This presents Abraham as both a prophet and a priest. A prophet represents God to man; and priests represent man to God. It is very significant to have these words occur together here for the first time; and this significance is pretty much ignored by most commentators. In this regard, Abraham is a type of Christ. In nearly every chapter of Genesis, there is some sort of foreshadowing of Jesus Christ or the cross (we will cover that in a future lesson).

13. We also find out that there is no benefit to Abraham for him to lie. Had his people been at war with Canaan, that would be a different thing, as lying and subterfuge against your enemy are legitimate in war (which is taught in the Bible). However, Abimelech was a gracious host to Abraham; and therefore, Abraham should not have lied to him. It is a clear failing on Abraham's part.

14. We find out the Abraham misjudges his host country; and acts according to it.
15. We find out the exact relationship between Abraham and Sarah, and from whence Abraham came up with his half-lie that she is his sister.
16. We find out that God is protecting Sarah from other men; she will have a uniquely-born son, who will, in this way, be a type of Christ. The parallels between Isaac and the birth of our Lord will be quite spectacular (also to be studied in the near future).
17. We find out that Sarah must still be quite attractive at age 90 to be taken into a harem as she was. She will live for 37 more years after this. She might look today as a very attractive woman in her early 40's.
18. For a short time, there were no births in Gerar; and, apparently, no conceiving. This brought the blessing God gave to Gerar to a halt (births are a blessing). Abraham and Sarah, who were about to conceive a child, were also put on hold. God had to separate Abraham and Sarah from all of this in order for His plan to continue through them.
19. We ought not allow our own spiritual lives to come to a halt.
20. Despite the sin of Abraham, God still blesses Abraham greatly.
21. Despite his sin, Abraham is still able to pray on behalf of Abimelech and he is healed (that is, the women in his house are able to conceive once again).

There were but 18 short verses in this chapter, but they had a lot to say.

The Testing of Abraham—Part I

When it comes to teaching the Bible correctly, there are many different approaches to the same passages. In looking at Robbie Dean's notes on Genesis[58] and my own, there has been one aspect that I have all but ignored, and that is the concept of testing. Much of Abraham's life has been God giving Abraham the Word—sometimes by way of a directive and sometimes by way of promise—and then God steps back and allows Abraham to act. Essentially, when Abraham is faced with truth, God then gives him some time to think about that truth and to apply it. In other words, Abraham is being tested by God, an aspect of the spiritual life which some of us may not like very much. After all, who likes being tested? However, truth and testing are intermingled throughout our lives as believers in Jesus Christ.

God has two basic things in mind for the life of Abraham: he needs to be in the Land of Promise and he needs to have a son who will change world history. God will accomplish these things in Abraham by moving him and then giving him both truth and the opportunity to apply truth, which means, *testing*. If Abraham applies the truth he learns, he passes the test; if Abraham doubts the truth, does not learn from it or does not believe it, then he fails.

As a former teacher, I was fond of giving tests; yet not quite as enamored of taking them (unless the result would be very good for me; I certainly did not mind that). There is also

[58] Credit needs to be given to Robbie Dean's notes, which are the basis for the approach to this and the next lesson of Genesis. Notes accessed January 21, 2013.

the concept of successfully doing something and being happy with that, and being able to move on.

Throughout these 9 chapters of Genesis, God has given Abraham truth, and then has allowed Abraham to make a series of decisions based upon the truth that he has been given. Sometimes Abraham succeeds and sometimes he fails.

As an aside, there is nothing magical about this numbering of tests. Anyone could probably go through these chapters and find more tests than are listed below.

Tests #1–2, the geographical will of God.

Gen 12:1 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. Much of the Biblical text used will come from the English Standard Version. From time to time, it will be modified (they do not capitalize the pronouns referring to God and I do).

God comes to Abraham in a manner unknown and tells him to leave Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2–4). His family had originally come from area around Ur, a little more than 200 miles southeast of modern-day Baghdad, Iraq. God required Abraham to separate from his family. Abraham responded with half-way obedience. He moves with his family, rather than leaving them behind; and he and his family only get as far as Charan (Haran). It appears that his father Terah is calling all of the shots (Gen. 11:31).

Either God tells Abraham again to leave his family and go to the land of Canaan, or Abraham thinks back to this mandate and follows it completely this time. So, first time that Abraham hears this command, he does not follow it exactly. However later—whether a few years or a few decades later—Abraham follows the command as God gave it.

Gen 12:2–3 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."

God promised Abraham that he would be blessed, that a great nation would come from him, that his name would be made great, and that other nations would be blessed or cursed depending upon their attitude toward Israel (the nation that would come from Abraham). All nations of the earth would either enjoy blessing by association or cursing by association, depending upon their attitude toward Israel and the children of Abraham.

If you were to choose the nations today where you would most like to live, all things considered (personal freedom and economic opportunity, as well as personal safety), the nations which you choose will likely be allies with Israel today. And if you were to list those nations lowest on your list of nations in which to live, these nations would be hostile toward the Jew.

Gen 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran (Charan).

Abraham passes this first test, eventually—he leaves his family and he goes to the Land of Promise. His nephew Lot, also goes with him, which was a good choice on the part of Lot. Abraham obeys God's directive, which automatically places him into the geographical will of God.

A few chapters back—and I neglected to point this out when it came up—it appears that Abraham was told to go west on two occasions: once when he was in Ur of the Chaldees and then later when he is here in Charan (Acts 7:2–4 is possibly different from Gen. 12:1–3, even though the content of the order is the same). It is also possible that this represents just one order from God. If that is the case, then Abraham heard it in Ur (And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, **before he lived in Haran**, and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. Acts 7:2–4), but he did not fully obey this mandate until Gen. 12:4.

So, Abraham first moves west with his family, in the direction of Canaan (Gen. 11:31), but then stops with them at Charan. Then God came to Abraham again and said, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." It does not appear that God spoke just once to Abraham because of the construction of the Hebrew sentences. That is, Acts 7:2–4 tells us that Abraham got the call from God to move to Canaan *when* he was in Ur. The Hebrew sentence structure of Gen. 11:30 and 12:1 suggests that God *again* told Abraham to move to the land of Canaan.[59]

Abraham's test was to do what God told him to do, and he eventually did. Abraham will then built an altar to God once he arrives and settles in the Land of Promise. Gen. 12:8

13 more tests will be covered in the next lesson.

Lesson 229: Genesis 12–20 — The Testing of Abraham Part II

Credit needs to be given to Robbie Dean's notes, which are the basis for the approach to this and the previous lesson of Genesis (he lists 12 tests in total). His notes were accessed January 21, 2013.

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[59] We have a series of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs. If what God said to Abraham in Gen. 12:1 had come in the past, then Gen. 12:1 would have been a wâw conjunction followed by a perfect verb (i.e., *and God had said*...). But it reads, *And so, God says*..., which suggests action from that time period. We have a similar situation, but reversed, in Gen. 15:6, where it says, And Abram had believed in God, and God credited that to him as righteousness. That verb structure means that Abram had believed God in the past, separate from the narrative of Gen. 15.

Abraham's first two tests were for him to leave his home and his family and move to the land of Canaan. He first heard this when living in Ur and he obeyed this halfway. Then he either heard this from God a second time or decided, eventually, to obey God, and he did leave his family and moved to the land of Canaan.

The Testing of Abraham—Part II

Test #3—Remaining in God's geographical will.

For Abraham's third test, he was to remain in the Land of Promise. He did not.

Gen 12:9–10 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb. 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.

In life, there are difficulties. However, you may recall from our study of this section of Genesis that God did **not** come to Abraham and say, "Look, there is going to be a famine in the land of Canaan; so, you get up and move to Egypt." Abraham decided to do this on his own. This does not mean that Abraham is incapable of making his own decisions or that he needed for God to come to him every 2 minutes and tell him whether to turn to the left or to the right. However, Abraham's blessing was clearly associated with his move to Canaan and with the land of Canaan itself. So, moving out of that land was therefore the wrong choice. You may recall from that chapter that Abraham lied to the Pharaoh of Egypt about Sarah being his wife. Furthermore, it is likely that, on this same trip, Abraham and Sarah (then, Abram and Sarai) picked up a little slave girl named Hagar.

Although Abraham initially failed this test, he did return to the Land of Promise, putting him back into the geographical will of God. Gen. 13:1

Test #4—the prosperity test and the grace test

Abraham returns from Egypt to the land where God wanted him to be.

Gen 13:2–4 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 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 the LORD [or, *proclaimed (or) read aloud by the name of the LORD*].

Abraham was back where he belonged, and God had greatly prospered him. God clearly does not hold grudges against believers, even when they make mistakes and travel out of His geographical will.

Gen 13:5–7 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.

There are always problems in life. In the middle of Gen. 12, the problem was a famine in the land. Here, in Gen. 13, Abraham and Lot just have too much cattle together—they are just too prosperous. In fact, they had so much cattle that the land would not support them. Their joint business venture had grown too large. It was time for them to break up the business into two businesses.

At this point, Abraham had to make the call. There was too much strife and too many disagreements about the wealth that he and Lot controlled.

Gen 13:8–9 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are brothers. 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."

Abraham takes the grace position. He is in the land, God is still God; so, no matter what Lot does, Abraham would be prospered. He tells Lot to go in whichever direction, and Abraham would go in the other direction. Abraham, who is the oldest and has the authority, could have made the choice himself and told Lot to go in the other direction. Since Abraham was in the geographical will of God, and had the promises of God, he knew that God would bless him, no matter what. So he graciously gave Lot the choice.

Abram passes the prosperity and grace test. He is not so hung up on his personal wealth that he determines that he must choose first which way to go; he gives that choice to his young nephew, and that is grace.

Test #5—Will Abraham be gracious to Lot and rescue him?

This is one of the most interesting tests because God does not go to Abraham and say, "You need to rescue Lot; now here is My plan." Lot lived among a group of degenerates who had stopped paying tribute to the kings of the east; so these kings came to beat down Sodom and Gomorrah, and they took many of them prisoners (as slaves). Sodom and Gomorrah had been under the 4th stage of national discipline (they were under the control of an outside nation), and their rebellion against the kings of the east meant that they would be placed under the 5th stage of national discipline (God would remove them from their cities). All of this was a warning to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

When they rebelled against the kings of the east, those kings showed up and soundly defeated them on their own land, using their own geography against them. Then they were going to be taken out of the land en masse, and put into abject slavery.

Abraham, with a very small force of 318 men, actually defeated and put on the run one of the greatest armies of his day—the coalition of eastern forces. This was an event which

literally changed history and kept this eastern coalition out of Canaan for a very long time. Gen. 14.

Test #6—Abraham submits to the spiritual authority of Melchizedek.

The seventh test is when Abraham actually meets Melchizedek and he both recognizes Melchizedek's authority and tithes to him.

After Abraham and his men defeated the armies of the kings of the east—which was clearly a great victory of God—Abraham then meets Melchizedek, the priest of Salem (Jerusalem), who was a type of Christ. We speculated at that time that Abraham was able to submit himself to Melchizedek's authority, because Melchizedek may have possessed the Word of God (which would have been in oral form). It would have been very easy for Abraham to say, "Well, I have spoken to God face to face on many occasions; so maybe you ought to do obeisance to me and pay tithes to me." However, Abraham acted graciously, respectfully, and recognized Melchizedek's authority.

You see, it would have been so easy for Abraham to try to play *spiritual king of the mountain,* but Abraham was not arrogant. Abraham recognized this man's spiritual authority. We do not know with certainty why Abraham submitted to the authority of Melchizedek and paid him tithes, but this was the basis of a very important lesson in Hebrews, as Melchizedek represents a type of Christ. Gen. 14:18–20 Heb. 7:4–9

This, by the way, is one of the keys to King David's greatness. On many occasions, David was subject to the words of the prophets, and, once and a while, they excoriated him for what he did (as Nathan did in the matter of Bathsheba). David, being humble, took it. He did not defy the prophets of God; he did not put them in jail or threaten their lives, as some kings of Israel would later do. David, one of the most powerful kings in history, set his authority aside and recognized the spiritual authority that these prophets had over him.

Test #7—The greed test.

After defeating the armies of the kings of the east, the people and goods of Sodom, Gomorrah, et al, were under the control of Abraham. He could have easily said, "These people now belong to me; these goods now all belong to me." However, he did not. He gave the people and their possession back to the king of Sodom, keeping back only enough to pay his servants for combat pay. Gen. 14:21–24

Test #8—The faith-rest test.

Abraham became concerned about having this child of promise—he was uncertain that he was going to have him (Gen. 15). When God began to make promises to Abraham, Abraham began to be reassured.

Gen 15:2–3 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."

Abraham had begun to doubt whether he would have a true heir through which the promises of God would be fulfilled. What seemed logical is, Eliezer of Damascus, who was likely Abraham's head servant (possibly the servant in Gen. 24), would be his heir. Abraham has no natural heir (Gen. 11:30).

Gen 15:4–5 And behold, the word of the LORD came 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."

Then we had that famous quotation which is repeated many times in the New Testament:

Gen 15:6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

That referred to a past event. Then God reminded Abraham from where he had come. The Hebrew tense that we find here does not mean that God said this, and Abraham believed him; God said something like this in the past and, at that time, Abraham believed God. From what happens in this chapter, Abraham's faith seems to be renewed.

Gen 15:7 And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess it."

This chapter indicates that Abraham continued to believe God. He placed his trust in God's promises concerning his seed.

Test #9—Will Abraham continue to believe the promises which God made to him?

The ninth test also comes from Gen. 15, where Abraham asks God, "How do I know that I am going to inherit [or, *possess*] this land?" God then makes a covenant with Abraham, with animal sacrifices, and Abraham drives away birds which attempt to swoop down upon these carcases (which represents Israel taking and holding the land of Canaan against the Hittite, the Canaanite and the Amorite).

God then makes both a far-off and a near promise to Abraham. God tells Abraham when his seed will take this land; and He also promises Abraham a very long and full life. The covenant and the additional promises appear to be believed by Abraham. So, despite not yet having a son, Abraham continues in faith.

Test #10—Will Abraham wait on God to fulfill the promise of his having a son?

The tenth test was that Abraham faced was with God's promises about his seed. He was getting older; Sarah was getting older; and they had not had children yet. God's promises

can only be fulfilled if Abraham has a son and they had not produced a child. Sarah suggests that Abraham have a son through her personal servant, Hagar, the Egyptian girl.

At no time has God implied or stated that Abraham needed to have a child through a surrogate. However, Abraham will listen to the voice of his wife instead of listening to God, and become the father of Ishmael, Hagar's son. Abraham failed this test. For this reason, the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham will be placed on hold for 12 or 13 years. Gen. 16

Test #11—God requires the sign of circumcision

As a result of Abraham failing the previous test, God essentially puts His plan for Abraham on hold. Abraham has a son by Hagar at age 87, and God does not come to Abraham for further guidance until he is 99 (Gen. 16:16 17:1). So, God waits for two things: for Ishmael to grow to an adult age so that he can be removed from Abraham's compound with his mother; and for Abraham to no longer be able to father children.

All of this is found in Gen. 17, one of the most amazing chapters in the Bible.

God asks for a great sign of personal faith on the part of Abraham: God asks Abraham to circumcise himself and the males of his compound; and to circumcise all males on the 8th day after birth. Circumcision for Abraham represented taking that which was dead (Abraham's phallus) and assigning life to it by removing a portion of it. The parallel is this: we are born dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1); God has come and has circumcised our hearts (Deut. 30:6 Rom. 2:28–29); this means we have been given new life (John 3:3–7 2Cor. 5:17 1John 5:11); and, at death, we will enjoy ultimate sanctification, where the sin nature is removed from us (1Cor. 15:35-54 Phil. 3:21 1Thess. 5:23 1John 3:2).

For those in Abraham's compound, circumcision represented their faith in the Revealed Lord of Abraham. Circumcision represented that their faith and salvation was hidden from the outside world, but their faith and salvation could not be denied. For the most part, because we are clothed, we are unable to see if a man is circumcised or not; but there is no question to those who are. The circumcised male represents a man who is saved; and the uncircumcised male represents the unsaved man. The key to circumcision is not a circumcised phallus but a circumcised heart (Deut. 30:6 Jer. 32:39 Ezek. 11:19 Rom. 2:25–29).

Abraham passes this test and is circumcised. God's plan for Abraham moves forward.

Test #12—The test of human graciousness

The next test is in Gen. 18 when two angels and the Revealed Lord come to Abraham. Abraham passes the test of human graciousness. Abraham enthusiastically prepares a meal for his guests, which includes freshly killed meat and other foods made fresh that day.

This is contrasted with Lot's hospitality (Gen. 19:1–3). Lot did bring them into his home to protect them, but his dinner party was nothing like Abraham's.

Test #13—A test to see how Abraham would react to hearing that Sodom, where Lot lived, would be destroyed. Abraham uses intercessory prayer. Gen. 18:17–33

The thirteenth test is where God reveals to Abraham that He would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham attempts to talk God out of it. This is intercessory prayer. It may appear, on the surface, that Abraham's prayer was for nought. However, he established the concept of a pivot (the believers in a nation who preserve that nation) and of God's corporate relationship with groups of men (which was clearly understood by Abimelech, the king of Gerar in Gen. 20).

We find that a fairly small pivot of believers would have delivered Sodom and Gomorrah. Had there just been 10 righteous living there, God would have not destroyed those cities. However, the number of righteous was 4; and God delivered 3 of those 4, but destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

Test #14—Corruption of the promised line.

The next test is in Gen. 20, which chapter we just completed, where the promise of Abraham's seed was threatened with corruption. Abraham should have done nothing to endanger Sarah, his wife, or the promised child, who had not yet been conceived. As we saw, Abraham essentially failed this test, risking the life of his wife and the purity of his seed to protect himself. However, failing this test does not mean that God would stop blessing him. The child of promise would be born to Abraham and Sarah in Gen. 21. God promised this child to Abraham; God was unequivocal about it. The timing had already been given. So, despite Abraham's failure, God cannot go back on His Word.

The Bible is filled with promises and principles. You and I may be some of the most spectacular spiritual failures on earth, but we can still, at any point, go to God's promises and principles and claim them, and God must stand by His Word. God will and must vindicate His Word.

Test #15—The offering of Isaac

The final test is future from us in this study, and it is the most important of all: God will tell Abraham to do something that God has never told a man to do ever before—to offer up his own son as a sacrificial offering. We will study that in Gen. 22. 2000 years before Jesus, God needed to illustrate the cross that was to come, so that we could read and study these pages and appreciate that God's Word stands forever, and that we can depend upon God's Word.

Although the listing of these tests is, essentially, a review, it looks at these past few chapters of Genesis in a completely different light. One might say that this is viewing

Abraham's life more from a divine perspective. God gives Abraham the doctrine, places a set of circumstances before him, and then steps back to see what Abraham will do.

Lesson 230: Gen. 1–22 Genesis a retrospective — Jesus in Genesis

There are many ways to view sections of the book of Genesis. Most of our time is spent on a verse by verse analysis. However, recently we took a step back to took a look at Gen. 12–22 from the standpoint of God testing Abraham.

In this lesson, we will also view what we have studied in a slightly different light. We will take a look back at how many times we find Jesus and His work presented in the first 22 chapters of Genesis (we have not yet exegeted Gen. 21 and 22 yet).

There are many illustrations of Jesus Christ, the cross of Jesus Christ or of the death of Jesus Christ in Scripture.

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22

Jesus Christ in Genesis	Text/Commentary
Jesus Christ the Creator is found in Gen. 1–2 **Gen. 1** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) **Gen. 2** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) We have been studying the book of Genesis verse by verse and chapter by chapter, but somewhat informally. The chapters listed above and below go into greater detail, but retain all the text of the weekly lessons as well. The commentary on each chapter of Genesis is typically 150–300 pages long.	Gen. 1:1, 26a In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." We find the Trinity both in the plural form Elohim (translated *God*) and in 1st person plural suffixes in Gen. 1:26. John 1:1–3, 14 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. This tells us to the Revealed God—Jesus Christ—created all things. Col. 1:15–17 He [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by means of Him all things hold together.

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22	
Jesus Christ in Genesis	**Text/Commentary**
Jesus Christ as our Savior is found in Gen. 3:14–15 (also called the protoevangelium; i.e., the first evangelism). **Gen. 3** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)	Gen 3:14a, 15 The LORD God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Enmity would exist between Satan and his minions (seed) and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman (Gal. 3:16 4:4). Satan would bruise the heel of Jesus in the crucifixion (not a deadly wound); and Christ would bruise Satan's head, a deadly wound.
Jesus Christ as our sacrifice in Gen. 3 **Gen. 3** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)	Adam and the woman covered their own nakedness with leaves. God replaces these leaf aprons with animal skins, which skins had to have come from a sacrificed animal. This would have been the first time Adam and the woman observed an animal being killed. The slaughtering of this animals represents Jesus Christ on the cross.
Jesus Christ as our sacrifice is found in Gen. 4. It is clear in this passage that the issue is, works versus grace. **Gen. 4** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)	Cain brings God the works of his own hands (a collection of his very best vegetables); which offering God rejects; Abel brings God a sacrificed lamb—representative of Jesus Christ, slain for us—and God has respect for that offering. Human works versus the grace of God goes back all the way to Gen. 4.
The gospel message is given to us in the names of the line of Adam in Gen. 5 **Gen. 5** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)	If we take the meanings of the names of the genealogical line of Adam to Noah, we end up with this sentence: **"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 made strong in Christ] [bringing them] rest [or, *comfort, repose, consolation*]."** So here we have the gospel of Jesus Christ as well as the history of mankind hidden within the names of the chosen genealogy.

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22	
Jesus Christ in Genesis	**Text/Commentary**
The Ark is a picture of our salvation in Gen. 6–8. **Gen. 6** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) **Gen. 7** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) **Gen. 8** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)	The corrupted and unrepentant seed is outside of the ark; God's chosen ones are inside of the ark. Those inside of the ark are preserved, as believers in Jesus Christ will be preserved. The word used for *ark* in this passage is the exact same word used in the *Ark of the Covenant;* which is also a picture of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ *is* the ark. Those who are outside of the ark (Jesus Christ) will be destroyed.
Jesus Christ as our sacrifice is found at the end of Gen. 8. **Gen. 8** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)	When Noah and his family emerge from the ark, he offers up animal sacrifices, which is a picture of the sacrifice of our Lord. Over and over again, the slaughter of an innocent animal foretells of the death of our Lord for our sins.
The line of Jesus Christ, as found in Gen. 5 and 11. **Gen. 5** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) **Gen.11** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)	Gen. 5:3–31 11:10–27 This is quite an amazing thing. There are only a few linear[60] genealogical lines which are given in Scripture. These linear lines, recorded by perhaps a half-dozen authors over a period of at least 1500 years, take us from Adam to Jesus. There are no excess linear genealogies found in the Bible.
Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, in Gen. 12:7 13:15. **Gen. 12** **Gen. 13** (not posted yet)	Gal 3:16 (Green's LTHB) But the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed (it does not say, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," which is Christ). Genesis 3:15 21:12 22:18, Rom. 9:6 Heb. 11:18

[60] Meaning a line of descendants with 4 or more generations in view.

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22

Jesus Christ in Genesis	Text/Commentary
Melchizedek foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ, as the priest in Gen. 14:18–21. He would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. **Gen. 14**	Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The LORD says to My Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool." The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:1, 4). For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him...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). Compare Heb. 5:6, 10 6:20. Even though Jesus is our High Priest, He is not from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe; or from the line of Aaron, the priestly line.
Jesus Christ is represented by the burnt offering that Abraham offers up. Gen. 15:7–11 **Gen. 15**	This burnt offering seals the promises of God, which God made to Abraham; which promises represent God's assurance of our own salvation through His covenant with us. This salvation is called the New Covenant of His Blood in 1Cor. 11:25, the Old Covenant being done away with in Christ (2Cor. 3:14).

In fact, the writer of Hebrews pulls together the covenant promises, the priesthood of Melchizedek, and Jesus Christ offering up Himself in Heb. 7:20–28 And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22	
Jesus Christ in Genesis	**Text/Commentary**
The everlasting covenant that God makes with Abraham represents our everlasting covenant with God through His Son. Gen. 17:7 **Gen. 17**	God speaking to Abraham: "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7–8). Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant (Heb. 13:20).
The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a preview of the destruction of the unbeliever when Jesus Christ removes all unbelievers from the earth in the baptism of fire. Gen. 19 **Gen. 19**	In Gen. 14, God warned the people of Sodom. In Gen. 19, God judged Sodom, where the population was out of control. God preserved the righteous and destroyed all the people of Sodom. This devastation was known by and witnessed to 2000 years later by historian Josephus. Rev. 11 speaks of the two witnesses who will be killed in that which is symbolically called Sodom and Egypt; and the great judgment to come upon the world is spoken of in Rev. 11:18–19.
The destruction of those in Sodom and Gomorrah also represent the final judgment of eternal fire for unbelievers, which judgment is carried out by Jesus Christ. Gen. 19 **Gen. 19**	And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, **serve as an example** by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire (Jude 6–7). And all such judgment is given to the Son. John 5:22 2Cor. 5:10

Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22

Jesus Christ in Genesis	Text/Commentary
Abraham, as a prophet (who represents God to man) and as a priest, (who represents man to God) acts as an intermediary between God and Abimelech; just as Jesus Christ is our Mediator. Recall that it is significant that these words occur for the first time right here. Gen. 20:7 **Gen. 20**	And now return the wife of the man, for **he is a prophet, and he will pray for you**, and you shall live. And if you do not return her, know that dying you shall die, you and all that are yours (Gen 20:7). As Moses promised: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to Him." (Deut. 18:15). And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." (Matt. 21:11). For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1Tim. 2:5). The conclusion that we may draw is this: We have such a High Priest, Who has sat down on the right of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven (Heb. 8:1).
Jesus Christ as Mediator of the New Covenant is found in Heb. 9:15 Therefore He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.	
The unique birth of Isaac in Gen. 21 foreshadows the unique birth of our Lord. **Gen. 21**	This will be covered in detail in Gen. 21. There are a dozen or so parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of our Lord.
The unique offering of Isaac, the uniquely-born son, by his father, in Gen. 22 as a sacrifice foreshadows our Lord offering Himself on the cross for our sins. **Gen. 22**	Notice how we go directly from Isaac's unique birth to Abraham offering up Isaac as a sacrifice to God. This is because Jesus was brought into this world to die for our sins. That was His purpose. 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). This will be covered in great detail in Gen. 22.
Jesus Christ was born to the intent that He die for our sins. **Gen. 21** **Gen. 22**	The two most important chapters on Isaac are about his birth and his being offered up as a sacrifice to God (Gen 21–22). One follows the other. This represents Jesus' reason for coming to this earth and walking among us.

Unless otherwise noted, most Scripture quoted is from the ESV, pronouns referring to Deity having been capitalized.

Lesson 231: Genesis 21:1–7 — The Birth of Isaac

We have spend a few lessons summarizing what we have been studying, and taking an overall perspective of what we have been studying. With this lesson, we will return to a verse-by-verse analysis of each chapter of Genesis.

At this point, we begin Gen. 21, which is about the birth of Isaac. Now, recall, the immediate promise of the birth of Isaac occurred way back in Gen. 18:10a (ESV) The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Then God warned Abraham about what He was about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. Then we had a chapter on Sodom and Gomorrah. Then we had this odd chapter of Abraham and Sarah moving to Gerar and Abraham lying about his wife. So, it seems like, between an imminent promise and the actual birth of Isaac, a lot of time has passed, even though only one year has passed. There was actually a purpose in all of that, which we will study.

Genesis 21:1 Y^{e}howah visited Sarah as He had promised. And Y^{e}howah did to Sarah as He had spoken.

You will note here that, not only is the child that Sarah bears uniquely-born, but this involves a visit from Jehovah Elohim. *To visit* here is the very common Hebrew verb pâqad (דָּקַפ) [pronounced *paw-KAHD*], which means, *to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit, to charge to the care of, to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census*. If you are familiar with the British expression, *to sort [something] out;* where someone needs to deal with a situation or solve a problem acting directly, that is what this word means. Strong's #6485 BDB #823. We are not given any details here as to what the nature of this visit is, but Sarah's reproductive system, which appeared to have problems from the beginning (Gen. 11:29–30—although the problem could have been partially with Abraham) and was certainly out of order due to her old age (Gen. 18:11), was regenerated by this visit. Similarly, Abraham, who was sexually dead (Gen. 18:12), was now no longer sexually dead (you will recall that circumcision [PDF] was the sign of regeneration—new life was given to his sexually dead phallus). Furthermore, this effect on Abraham will continue for another 40 or so years. He will be sexual active and potent for some time now.

Given that Sarah was thought to be beautiful even in the previous chapter, her not having a child was probably not due to a lack of trying—which fact is backed up by her associating sex and conception with pleasure in Gen. 18:12. It is reasonable to suppose that she and Abraham both continued having sex up until the time of Abraham's age-induced impotence. And this was all overridden by God, as per this verse, where God visits Sarah as He had promised.

Prior to this point in the narrative, we know that Abraham was sexually dead; and that Sarah was long past the age of giving birth. Therefore, God has to make a change in both Abraham and Sarah in order for her to become pregnant, but, the Bible focuses only upon

the woman. The Bible does not tell us that Jehovah visits Sarah on one day and Abraham the next. The Bible narrative only focuses upon Sarah. Why? This is because the unique birth of their son is a type of Christ, Who is also uniquely-born. Although God spoke to Joseph about Mary's pregnancy, God affected no change in Joseph (see Matt. 1:18 Luke 1:27–38). This is because Jesus was virgin-born, so there was no contribution from Joseph (she became pregnant before they married; and there was no out-of-wedlock sex between them—Matt. 1:21–25). Therefore, the narrative here in Genesis says nothing about God visiting Abraham and causing a physical change in him (although, logically, that had to have happened[61]). The idea is to parallel the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ (even though these history of these events were all *recorded* about two millennia before Christ). Since Joseph had nothing to do with the birth of our Lord, nothing is said about God visiting Abraham and restoring his potency to him. *After the fact,* an angel visited with Joseph and explained to him what had happened, so that he did not privately divorce Mary (Matt. 1:18–20). So, even though Abraham is a willing and necessary participant in the conception of Isaac, his contribution is not spoken of, only Sarah's is. That is because Isaac's birth is a picture of our Lord's birth.

One of the amazing things is how carefully the Bible fits together as a puzzle. This portion of the book of Genesis, which I believe to have been written[62] 4000 years ago, fits as a carefully-designed counterpart to first chapter of Matthew and Luke. That is, the birth of Isaac is very much a foretelling of the birth of Jesus—actually, to be precise, the birth of Isaac is the type and the birth of Jesus is the antitype.

Now, let's just assume that Matthew and Luke, just wrote about the birth of Jesus with this in mind—to be a parallel to this chapter of Genesis—then why don't they allude to it? Why doesn't one of them say, "And the birth of Jesus fulfills the type established by Isaac"? Or words to that effect? If I was in their shoes and trying to make up stuff about Jesus, but so that it matched up with the birth of Isaac, would I not allude to some of the parallels once of twice? Insofar as I know, most of the parallels drawn between these two births has been done over the past 100 years. Some parallels were drawn before, but this particular subject was most completely fleshed out only recently. So either this is a spectacular hoax, where one author, 4000 years ago writes about the birth of Isaac, including quite a number of details, which two other authors, 2000 years later notice and weave into the birth account of Jesus (but without making mention of it) so that a few writers and exegetes 2000 years after them might catch all of these parallel details and write about them; or this is the Word of God and the plan of God. It is much easier to believe the latter than it is to believe the former. When you see all of the parallels between Isaac's birth and our Lord's, you will be quite amazed.

One of the reasons for studying the Word of God and learning what is in the Bible is to build your faith upon substance. Like anything else, these are just words, but we know when these words are written, and we know that there was a clear time period between the

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[61] And Gen. 25:1–4 confirms to us that this was essentially a permanent state of potency for Abraham for many decades to come.

[62] Actually, passed down verbally until Moses.

Old and New Testaments. Also, these different testaments were preserved by different entities (Jews and Christians) who did not always see eye-to-eye. However, the more I have studied the Bible, the more everything fits together; the more it all makes sense. And there is little reason to think it is this gigantic hoax. That takes greater faith than believing this is the Word of God.

Genesis 21:2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

At the time that God made His final promise to Abraham and Sarah, Sarah is 89 years old, and she will give birth at age 90. This occurs here at God's set time. God has perfect timing which, to us who are impatient, often seems to be too far off in the future. For 25 years, God has been speaking to Abraham and making a series of promises to him, but this appears to be the first promise upon which God actually acted. The birth of Isaac is the basis for every other promise that God makes to Abraham. For perhaps 30 years, God has been making promises to Abraham, but none of these promises can come to pass without Isaac being born. Everything else depends upon His birth. And yet, all of this time, Abraham was strong in faith. And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; he did not hesitate at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised He is also able to perform (Rom. 4:19–21; VW). My point is, Abraham did not see this promise fulfilled for 25 years, and then the most fundamental of all the promises is fulfilled. He did not see any of these promises begin to be fulfilled until he was 100 years old, about 25 years after he first stepped out in faith (comparing Gen. 12:4 with Gen. 21:5). Or, see the Abrahamic Timeline (HTML) (PDF). Yet Abraham remained strong in faith all of this time.

God has kept Abraham and his wife alive during some incredible historical events, but that simply kept them alive long enough to have the most fundamental promise of God fulfilled. All of the promises of inheritance in the world would have meant little to a childless Abraham and Sarah. In fact, all of God's promises to Abraham would have meant nothing at all, apart from the birth of Isaac.

Is there any chance you see the parallel to the birth of Jesus at this point? All of God's promises to us mean absolutely nothing apart from the birth of Jesus Christ. We have no inheritance unless Jesus has come to this earth. What's more is, none of these promises made by God to us has any foundation unless Jesus dies for our sins. Therefore, almost immediately after Isaac's birth—that is, in terms of this recorded narrative—God will ask Abraham to offer up his own son as a sacrifice.

It is also worth noting that the writer of this passage refers to the Word of God 3 times in the first two verses:

Genesis 21:1–2 Y^{e}howah visited Sarah **as He had promised**. And Y^{e}howah 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**.

What God speaks and what God promises is His Word. Even before there was a Bible, there was the concept of God speaking to man, and conveying very specific thoughts. For 25 years, God has been making promises to Abraham; and now, the first of these promises is being brought to pass. The most fundamental promise of all, of those made to Abraham, is being brought to pass. Therefore, Gen. 21:1–2 emphasizes that these are the *words of God and God fulfills His Word*.

Genesis 21:3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him (whom Sarah bore to him) Isaac.

God had told Abraham to name his son Isaac (Gen. 17:19). He was given this name for two reasons. When God told Abraham that he would soon have a son, he fell on his face and laughed. The word *laughed* is tsâchaq (צָחַק) [pronounced *tsaw-KHAHKH*], which means *to laugh; to mock; to play*. Strong's #6711 BDB #850. God, knowing all things at once, knew that Sarah would also laugh at the prospect of having a child (Gen. 18:9–12). Isaac's name is derived from this verb *to laugh*.

Genesis 21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

Circumcision was a sign between God and Jewish believers, as was discussed earlier. It was an external sign of an internal change in a person (exercising faith in the Revealed Member of the Trinity resulting in the rebirth). Furthermore, this external change was not generally observed by others. When you meet some male, you do not know whether or not he is circumcised just as, when you meet any person, you do not know whether or not they have believed in Jesus Christ. However, this was a sign of an acknowledgment of a fulfilled promise (fulfilled in this chapter), the first of many promises which God would fulfill to Abraham.

We have already studied the **Doctrine of Circumcision** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). More importantly, there is the relationship between **Circumcision and Regeneration** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Circumcision takes that which is dead and gives it new life—that is the reason for circumcision in the first place. Man is born dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1 Col. 2:13), but God gives him new life (John 3:1–12 Col. 2:13–14), as circumcision represents (Deut. 30:6 Ezek. 11:19–20 Rom. 2:28–29a).

The Jews were thereafter associated with circumcision—not because circumcision was necessary in order for a Jew to be saved—but because circumcision is representative of the second birth or being born again, something which Jesus kept repeating to Nicodemus in John 3. 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 (Rom. 2:28-29a). Several times in the Old Testament, God speaks of the circumcision of

the heart. This is because the key to the relationship of the Jew to God was not this external sign of circumcision, but the internal sign of the circumcision of the heart. Or, to put it in another way, Abraham believed Y^{e}howah and this was credited to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). Righteousness is achieved through faith in Y^{e}howah, the Revealed Lord; not through circumcision. Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous--even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith (Rom. 4:11; NLT).

Genesis 21:5 And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

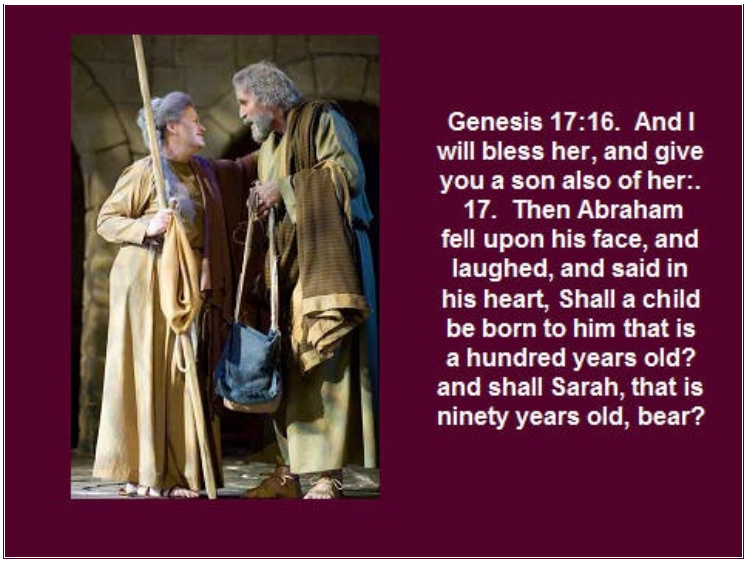
Abraham and his wife were well past the age of having sex; and yet, God made it possible, after Abraham was circumcised, for him to be capable of having sex and for his wife to be capable of conceiving a child. Where there had been death, God made life. God took that which was dead and regenerated it; He gave it life. Circumcision represented the removal of the old, dead skin and a regeneration of the phallus, representing a regeneration of the life.

Sarah had been unable to conceive for all of her marriage to Abraham (Gen. 11:30), except at this time. This made the birth of Isaac unique. There will not be another birth like his throughout all of Scripture.

The time frame given here is in accordance with all that is in the historical record.

Genesis 21:6 And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me."

There is a masculine noun and a verb found here, both related to *laugh;* and which are the basis for the name of Isaac. Sarah has quite a relaxed attitude about all of this. The entire situation made her laugh; it made her husband laugh; and so they named their child *laughter*. Furthermore, this suggests that this is a blessed occasion, as it were. A very happy occasion.



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Recall that Abraham and Sarah had quite a large family business. Abraham was able to call up 318 men to go to war back in Gen. 14, so, even though this narrative

focuses upon Abraham and Sarah, bear in mind that they had quite a large entourage with them who saw to their livestock business. Therefore, there were many people who celebrated this birth with them all.

Abraham also seemed to have a fairly good relationship with those around him; so there was likely some celebration which occurred with neighboring groups of people as well.

Genesis 21:7 And she said, "Who could have said to Abraham, will Sarah suckle children? For I have borne a son to him in his old age."

Sarah has given birth and she still cannot imagine that this happened. Sarah is testifying to the fulfillment of the promises which God made to Abraham and to her. This all came about as a fulfillment of the promises of God.

Lesson 232: Genesis 21:1–7 The Parallels of the Births of Isaac and Jesus

So far, we have studied the first 7 verses:

Genesis 21:1–5 The Lord kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what He had promised. She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. And Abraham named their son Isaac. Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. (NLT pronouns referring to God have been capitalized)

God had a specific time frame, and Isaac was born according to God's timing and God's plan.

Genesis 21:6–7 And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!" (NLT)

Even though Abraham and Sarah would live longer than we do today (to ages 175 and 137, respectively), age 100 for a father was too old and age 90 for a mother was too old. This was outside of the realm of possibility. However, with God, all things are possible (Mark 10:27b). This does not mean that your or I will grow to 175 and have children at age 100—all of that took place for a reason. Isaac's birth was not simply another person born in the line of Christ; Isaac's birth was to foreshadow the birth of Jesus.

Like many actual historical events of the Old Testament, the birth of Isaac foreshadows the birth of our Lord. This is a topic that we have covered before, and it has been posted online as well (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

The Parallels Between the Birth of Isaac and the Birth of Jesus	
Birth of Isaac	**Birth of Jesus**
His birth was impossible. Abraham and Sarah were long past the age of being able to have children. Gen. 17:17 18:10–14 21:7 Rom. 4:19	His birth was impossible. He was born of a virgin. Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:22–23 Luke 1:26–31
Isaac's birth was unique. No one in the Bible was born the same way as Isaac. Gen. 21:1–2	Our Lord's birth was unique. No one was ever born as He was. Luke 1:36–37 John 3:16 (*only-begotten = uniquely born*).
His birth was foretold. God, on many occasions, spoke to Abraham, telling him that Isaac would be born to him. Gen. 12:7 13:15–16 15:1–5 17:1–7, 16 18:10	His birth was foretold on many occasions in the past. God spoke of the Seed of the woman and His words are recorded in Gen. 3:15 Isa. 7:14 9:6–7 Luke 1:26–31, 35 (as well as elsewhere).
There was a long interval between the prophecy of birth and Isaac's actual birth. From the first time that Abraham heard about his offspring, it was 25 years before this was brought to pass.	There was a long interval between the prophecy of birth and our Lord's birth. Isaiah's prophecies are the best known, and he wrote and spoke about 700 years before the birth of our Lord. God spoke of the Seed of the woman thousands of years before our Lord's birth. Gen. 3:15 Isa. 7:14 9:6–7
All of the various promises that God made to Abraham are dependent upon the birth of Isaac. If Isaac is not born, then all of these other promises are meaningless. Abraham cannot be the father of a special people to God unless he had that first son.	All of God's promises to Israel mean nothing apart from the birth of Jesus Christ. There must be a Savior, or everything that God promised to Israel is meaningless. Similarly, all of the promises which God has made to us are meaningless without the birth of Jesus Christ.
When the announcement of the imminent birth was made, Sarah was incredulous, and thought it impossible. Gen. 18:9–12	When the announcement of the imminent birth was made, Mary was incredulous, and thought it impossible. Luke 1:34
Isaac was named before his birth. Gen. 17:19 21:3	Jesus was named before His birth. Matt. 1:21
His birth was a result of a visit from God. Gen. 21:1–2	His birth was a result of a visit from God. Matt. 1:18 Luke 1:35

The Parallels Between the Birth of Isaac and the Birth of Jesus	
Birth of Isaac	**Birth of Jesus**
The change required for Isaac to be born was brought on by a visit of Y^{e}howah to Sarah. Although a change had to be wrought in Abraham as well, that is never discussed. The focus has to be upon the woman in order to set up the parallel situation.[63] Gen. 21:1	This is to parallel the virgin birth of Jesus, where Jesus is born only of the woman without any contribution from Joseph. The reason for this is, the sin nature is passed down through the father, so the father has to be eliminated from the birth equation. Isa. 7:14
As far back as Gen. 3:15, the focus has been upon the Seed of the woman; this is simply continued through Sarah.	
The birth of Isaac occurred at God's appointed time. Gen. 21:2	The birth of Jesus occurred at God's appointed time. Gal. 4:4
The birth of Isaac brought great happiness to the household of Abraham. Gen. 21:6	The birth of Jesus is also a cause for great celebration and happiness. Luke 1:14, 58
Where there had been death (Abraham was no longer potent and Sarah could not conceive), God brought life. This is the meaning of circumcision; that which is dead, God brought to life.	Where we are born dead in our trespasses and sins, God regenerates us (makes us alive to Him). Out of death, God brings life. Eph. 2:1
All of the promises of God to Abraham are based upon the birth of Isaac. If Isaac is not born, then none of the promises that God made to Abraham can come to pass. This is the most fundamental event upon which every other promise is based.	All of God's promises to us are based upon the birth and then death of our Lord. If Jesus is not born, then none of God's promises can come to pass. That Jesus died for us sins is the fundamental event upon which all other promises are based.
Another way of putting this is, Isaac was the down payment of the many promises which God has made to Abraham. God cannot make Abraham's descendants like the sand of the sea without there being Isaac first.	Jesus Christ is the down payment of the many promises God has made to Israel over the years. There is no millennial kingdom apart from the King.
The greatest parallel of all comes in the next chapter (Gen. 22), where God asks Abraham to sacrifice his uniquely-born son.	

[63] Or, *parable,* if you will; the Bible is big on *parables* going way back. Parables are not something which Jesus invented at His incarnation. Parables, in many ways, are the foundation of Scripture. We often call them *shadow images,* but they are the same thing.

Some of these examples came from http://www.ovrlnd.com/Teaching/Typology.html accessed February 26, 2013.

Now let's look at the Abrahamic Timeline, with an emphasis upon on this items mentioned in this chapter: Abraham's circumcision, Isaac's birth and Isaac's circumcision.

All of the events listed below have already been covered in great detail, along with their meaning and application, in our study of Genesis.

Legend	
Birth or death	God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)	
Parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.	

The Timeline of Abraham

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
2164 B.C.	0	1967 B.C.	Gen. 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43rd generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
		1927 B.C.	Gen. 11:29–30	Marriage of Abram to Sarai
		1907 B.C. 1927 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 11:28, 31	Abram's family travel from **Ur** to **Haran**, although their original intention had been to go to the land of **Canaan**. Gen 11:28, 31 Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.
Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's.				
		1892 B.C.	Gen. 11:32	Death of Terah, Abram's father. Gen. 11:32 Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.

The Timeline of Abraham

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
2089 B.C.	75	1892 B.C.	Gen. 12:1–4	Abraham leaves for **Promised Land** from **Haran**, after being so instructed by God. Gen 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.
(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. Circumcision represents regeneration (the new birth).
(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?"
(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 But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at a set time next year."
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Gen. 17:23–27	Abraham obeys God and circumcises himself and the men with him, responding in faith to God's mandate. Gen 17:24 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.
(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 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."
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Gen. 18:16–33	The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is promised. Abraham intercedes on behalf of Sodom.

The Timeline of Abraham				
Brent MacDonald	**Age of Abraham**	**Reese's Chronology Bible**	**Scripture**	**Event/Description**
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Gen. 19:1–29	The angels visit Lot and warn him of the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela are destroyed by fire and sulfur and possibly by volcanic eruptions.
			Gen. 20:1–18	Abraham lies again about his wife to King Abimelech in **Gerar**, in southern Judah.
2064 B.C.	100		Gen. 21:1–7 1Chron. 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44th generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
		1834 B.C. 1829 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 22:1–19	Abraham is told by God to go to the **land of Moriah** to offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice. This was a 3-day journey away. They then go to **Beer-sheba**, which could simply indicate that they are returning home to **Beer-sheba**.

In the next lesson, we will study how Isaac's birth is referred to in the New Testament.

Lesson 233: Genesis 21:1–7 Rom. 4:13 Birth of Isaac in NT/Doctrine of Legalism

So far, we have studied the first 7 verses of Gen. 21, which are all about the birth of Isaac:

Gen 21:1–7 And יהוה [= Yᵉhowah] visited Sarah as He had said, and יהוה did for Sarah as He had spoken. So Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which Elohim had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Yitsḥaq [= *Isaac*]. And Abraham circumcised his son Yitsḥaq when he was eight days old, as Elohim had commanded him. And Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Yitsḥaq was born to him. And Sarah said, "Elohim has made me laugh, and everyone who hears of it laughs with me." And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age." (The Scriptures 1998+)

Finally, Isaac was born. God had made many promises to Abraham, in Person, and these promises essentially were based upon Abraham having a son of his own loins. Only on one recorded occasion did Abraham finally say, "Listen, God, I need to have a son and I don't have a son. Your promises are only fulfilled to me if I have a son. How can I be

assured that I will really have a son?" Which concern God answered with a covenant (that is, God drew up a contract between Himself and Abraham—Gen. 15).

But finally, at age 100, Isaac is born to Abraham; and Isaac is the down payment of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. This birth essentially gets the ball rolling. None of God's promises to Abraham make any sense apart from Isaac being born (as we discussed in the previous chapter, this is analogous to Jesus Christ being born (and dying for our sins). Nothing in the Bible makes sense apart from that fundamental truth. Without Jesus, God's other promises to us are meaningless.

Isaac's Birth in the New Testament:

Isaac's birth is spoken of in two New Testament passages. As usual, enough of the surrounding text will be incorporated, so that the full meaning might be understood. We begin in v. 13 of Rom. 4, although there is nothing about the birth of Abraham's son until v. 17. However, we need to get the context for what is being said.

Rom. 4 is all about justification by faith versus justification by works.

Rom 4:13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he [Abraham] would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

The Jews are the racial offspring of Abraham. However, Paul would shake this notion up somewhat in Rom. 4. What Paul will eventual speak of is the heirs of Abraham by *faith*.

Paul gets a lot of mileage from using Abraham as an illustration. All Jews recognize Abraham as their father, but there was no Mosaic Law in the time of Abraham. Therefore, Paul can point to things which are true about Abraham, and say, "And because you are Jews, these things are also true about you." Most importantly is, Abraham was not justified by the Law because there was no Mosaic Law during his time. Therefore, Abraham cannot be justified by any part of the Law.

It should be worth noting that this letter to the Romans is going to a church which is mostly gentiles, although there is a substantial Jewish population. Furthermore, there is always the challenge of legalism for any church, with or without the challenge of Judaism. Therefore, to understand all of this, we need to look at the **Doctrine of Legalism**. Because few Christians understand the life into which they have been born, because a lack of the knowledge of the Word of God, they do not understand what legalism is, and how pernicious it is.

This comes from the **Doctrine of Legalism** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). However, originally, that material comes primarily from the sources listed below.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Legalism

1. Fundamental to understanding legalism, is to understand the concept of *grace.*

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Legalism

Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind because of the work that has been done on our behalf by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. Grace means that man has received from God that which he has not earned or deserved. Nothing that we are, and nothing that we can do, is enough to qualify us for anything that the Lord has to give us. In fact, our human works are a matter of arrogance, which God will not tolerate. Isa. 64:6 describes how God views our works: All our righteousnesses are as filthy [lit., *menstruous*] rags in His sight.

2. The concept of legalism:
   1) Legalism is the belief that you can do something meritorious and thereby be rewarded in some way by God for doing good works or following some religious system of customs, laws and/or rituals.
   2) *Legalism* connotes any system of merit, by which a person tries to please God, or to assist God, or to glorify God by means of his own human power.
   3) Religious legalism promotes a system of works as man's approach to God. Religious legalism is whatever system that teaches that a person can do something to earn or merit salvation or blessing from God.
   4) Religious legalism also refers to any system of religious bondage imposed on someone by another individual, or by an organization, that attempts to make that person a practitioner of legalism. Often, bullying tactics or ostracism are used to keep people in line.
   5) Legalism includes the concept that God will bless, help, and prosper the one living according to whatever legalistic standards have been established. These standards may be the application of the norms and standards or society, some subgroup of society (a particular church or denomination), or from a misinterpretation of the Bible (e.g., Sabbath-keeping in the Church Age).
   6) Therefore, legalism is the belief in and the practice of human religious regulations and taboos because one believes *that* is the way to please God, to become spiritual, and to live the Christian life. Legalistic people, because they work for God's blessing, often confuse cause and result, and thereby misunderstand grace.
3. There are four principal spiritual transactions in which human works are not acceptable to God: salvation, spirituality, spiritual growth (resulting in spiritual maturity), and eternal rewards. Very briefly, legalism is against salvation by grace (Gal. 1:6–9 2:16), spirituality by grace (Gal. 3:2–5 5:5), and the freedom to live the Christian way of life by grace—which is the freedom to live apart from pressure imposed by a religious community or a taboo list (Gal. 4:8–11 5:1–5).
4. As an aside, Satan has two overall strategies with regards to people on this earth: (1) to keep them from the gospel; and (2) for those who have believed in Jesus Christ, to neutralize their spiritual lives. Huge numbers of believers have had their spiritual lives neutralized by legalism (which means, nearly nothing of what they do on this earth has any eternal consequence). Legalism is used by Satan to accomplish both of these objectives.
5. Legalism and salvation:

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Legalism

1) Legalism in salvation is the concept that you must do something more than have faith in Christ in order to gain God's approval (or you must do something other than or in addition to exercising faith in Christ). That is, even in some legalistic Christian faiths, there is the belief that there is a set of additional works that must be done or that there is some often poorly-defined set of minimal standards which must be adhered to in one's lfe. If you do not meet those standards, then you did not really believe in the first place; or you had a head belief, but not a heart belief. Let me emphasize that this is a false view of salvation.

2) There are many religious systems which teach salvation by works, or which try to mix works with faith, such as:
   (1) Believe + keep the Law of Moses.
   (2) Believe + be circumcised.
   (3) Believe + water baptism.
   (4) Believe + confess your sins.
   (5) Believe + give up your bad habits and fully surrender; make Jesus Lord of all.
   (6) Believe + make a public display or some sort (come forward or raise your hand); or have great sorrow or a show of tears.
   (7) Believe + join a church.
   (8) Believe + live some minimal sort of Christian life. This is what is found most often in today's Christianity. Those who promote this sort of legalism will never state is in this way, but they will carefully explain, "If you still do thus-and-so, maybe you did not really believe in Jesus in the first place." Or, "Maybe you have a head belief but not a heart belief." If there is no evidence of salvation, then, perhaps you were never really saved. "After all," they will tell you, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature;" (not understanding what they have just said). This is the most insidious attack upon salvation. The believer who is under attack for not acting like a Christian then has two ways to go: he can abandon his faith altogether because he did not have enough faith or he can enter into a life of legalism, adhering to whatever set of standards that quasi-Christian group has established.
   (9) What is added to faith is just a matter of the time and place; Christian converts in Paul's day were told they needed to believe and be circumcised; it is unlikely that any significant group of legalists today adds circumcision to faith in Christ.
   (10) However, the gospel of Jesus Christ is to have faith alone in Christ alone; it is believe + nothing. Placing your faith in Jesus Christ is a non-meritorious choice; and that is our only means to connect with God. We have no other means by which we can initially establish a relationship with God. Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by

Me." (John 14:6). God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It's not the result of anything you've done, so no one can brag about it (Eph. 2:8–9; God's Word™).

3) Legalism is diametrically opposed to salvation by grace. Gal. 1:6-9 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him Who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to the one we [originally] proclaimed to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is proclaiming to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (WEB, slightly modified). Gal. 2:16 Still we know that a person is not justified [i.e., made right with God] by [perfect obedience to] the law of Moses, but rather through faith in [the person and work of] Christ. [Knowing this] we have trusted in Christ Jesus [to save us], so that we might be made right with God by trusting in Him and not by [our compliance with] the requirements of the law of Moses. Because by such law-compliance no one can be made right with God. (AUV–NT)

4) Rom. 4:4–5 Now wages are not considered a gift if the person has to work for them, but [rather] an obligation [of his employer]. But to the person who believes in God, who makes ungodly people right with Himself apart from doing good deeds, that person's faith is considered by God [as the basis] for being righteous. (AUV–NT) Or, to state this in a different way, how can salvation be the *gift of God* if you have to work for it?

5) Legalism becomes a heavy yoke or load to live under. No man has the ability to impress, bribe, coerce, or trick God into giving him salvation. The attempt to work for your salvation is taking on an impossible burden. In Matt. 11.28–30, [Jesus said], "Come to Me, all of you who are overworked and overburdened and I will give you rest [i.e., spiritual refreshment]. Accept My reins [on your life], and learn about Me, because I am gentle and humble, and [in My service] you will experience rest in your spirits. For My reins [on your life] are easy [to respond to] and the burden I place [on you] is light." (AUV–NT; pronouns referring to Jesus are capitalized)

6. Legalism and fellowship with God:

1) Grace is the means by which our fellowship with God is restored. We name our sins to God and God forgives us these sins. 1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9

2) We are forgiven, not because we feel badly, we do penance, we promise never to commit that sin again; we are forgiven because Jesus Christ died for that sin on the cross. The means by which our fellowship is restored is based upon grace, and not upon legalism. Again, all we do is admit our sins.

3) This naming of our sins both restores our fellowship with God and

resumes the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Being led by the Spirit is not a 50-50 proposition; we are either led by the Spirit or we are not. 1John 3

4) Legalism in the Christian life is using some meritorious system in order to get back into fellowship (into God's good graces, so to speak). This could include penance, begging for forgiveness, promising never to commit a particular sin again, promising God an overall improvement in your life, working up a deep sorrow over your sins, confessing your sins to a priest, doing penance, etc.

5) Some adherence to certain norms and standards are not wrong—such as functioning under the laws of divine establishment, which is a divine code designed for all people in all nations. Adhering to the laws of divine establishment make you a better person socially, and this adherence makes for a better nation, but it does not make you spiritual. You can be a good person in society, and yet not filled with the Holy Spirit.

7. Legalism and the Christian life:

1) After salvation, legalism is abandoning grace as the basis of our spiritual lives.

2) If we are saved by grace, then it is logical that spirituality and spiritual growth are also by grace. Gal. 3.2–5 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? (ESV, mostly) Gal. 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (ESV)

3) As believers in Jesus Christ, we have the freedom to live the Christian way of life by grace—which includes the freedom to live apart from pressure imposed by a religious community or a list of taboos. Gal. 4.8–11 Previously, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and empty elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once again? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. See also Gal. 5.1–6.

4) Some forms of legalism are easy to define; e.g, Legalism is the belief in and the practice of human religious regulations and taboos because one believes that is the way to please God, become spiritual, and live the Christian life. This could include tithing, going to church, and not doing the things which some sub-group of Christians tell you not to do (don't misunderstand this to mean that the Christian can do anything).

5) Legalism is a set of do's or don't's, adherence to which mean that a person is spiritual or a good Christian. Here is the problem: with a list of do's and don't's, quite obviously, Charley might be better than Lucy who

might be better than Linus when it comes to adherence to this list. However, in the Christian life, there is no such thing as a 50 percenter. You are saved or you are not; you are spiritual or you are not. Now, there are different stages of growth, but this is completely different from imperfectly following a list of do's and don't's.

8. Legalism versus grace apparatus for perception:
   1) Grace apparatus for perception is terminology developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr., which means that all believers have the same ability to grow through knowledge of Bible doctrine and the same ability to be productive in the plan of God, no matter what their mental or physical deficiencies. If a person is able to understand the gospel and to believe in Jesus Christ, then he is able to execute the Christian way of life as a mature believer. We all reach spiritual maturity in the same way: God's grace system, which is the ability to understand with all the saints what the will of God is. Eph. 3:18–19
   2) Every believer has the same crack at the Christian way of life—including Christian maturity—whether they have an IQ of 70 or of 130.
   3) The full doctrine of the grace apparatus for perception is found here and here.
   4) Examples of legalism in the Christian Life, which are also examples of pseudo-spirituality and the pseudo Christian life. These are things that Christian churches, groups and believers do, instead of actually growing in grace and the knowledge of God's Word.
      (1) Taboos: thinking one is spiritual because he doesn't do certain things or follows a certain do's and don't's. I don't know that this is really much of a part of mainstream Christianity as it used to be.
      (2) Imitating Personalities: the idea that living the Christian life is conformity in dress, mannerisms, speech, etc. I have observed this, and it is quite entertaining, but unrelated to the spiritual life. This can occur in all kinds of churches. How many Sunday School teachers at Berachah Church attempted to imitate Bob's personality when teaching young children?
      (3) Relative Righteousness: "your sins are worse than mine, therefore I am more spiritual" or "I am spiritual and you are carnal." Spiritually is an absolute state—you are or you are not.
      (4) Ecstatics: spirituality by speaking in tongues, groaning, getting in a trance, fainting. This is a very big deal today (primarily the speaking in tongues and the trance-like states) and has been a corruption of the Christian life for over a century now.
      (5) Asceticism: spirituality by self-sacrifice or extreme self-denial; giving up normal activities or even necessities in the mistaken notion that God is impressed. This is not generally found in the U.S. anymore, where we tend to be very self-indulgent; but is more common outside of the U.S. This is a very big deal in monasteries.

(6) Ritualism: This is the idea that one is spiritual or growing because he goes through various forms of ceremony or ritual. Spiritual maturity is ascribed to those who do this and look really holy while doing it. In the Apostle's day, the Jews promoted circumcision as necessary to the Christian walk. These days, any sort of ritual may be used, including singing (I am not saying that singing is wrong, but it is mostly unrelated to spiritual growth, unless one concentrates on the words and the words are Biblically accurate).

(7) These examples often take the place of spiritual growth. That is, instead of being filled with the Spirit and learning Bible doctrine and growing, one or more of these other things are offered up instead.

(8) This describes most churches today. They practice various forms of legalism, rather than the filling of the Holy Spirit (by naming one's sins to God—1John 1:9) and growing in grace and *knowledge* of the Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18).

9. Legalism and false systems of production:

1) One of the biggest problems of legalism is, confusing means with results. Legalism posits the idea that you are spiritual if you are faithful in praying, giving, witnessing, attending church, and so forth. But these legitimate activities are a result of Christian growth and the filling of the Holy Spirit. When the emphasis is placed upon doing these things, that is putting the cart before the horse. These things are not the means for spirituality or growth in Christ.

2) The grace principle is this: when you are in fellowship, occupied with Christ, and controlled by the Holy Spirit, all of your activities bring eternal reward (gold, silver, precious stones—1Cor. 3:10–14). You are producing divine good, and the spiritual power for your efforts comes from God as a grace provision. The amount that you produce is, of course, limited or enhanced by your spiritual growth.

3) When you are out of fellowship (with unconfessed sin), you are occupied with yourself, you control yourself, everything is chaos. You therefore produce human good (wood, hay, and stubble—1Cor. 3:10–14). There is no spiritual power supporting your efforts, and there is no reward for them in heaven. This describes most believers today. Most believers today spend a majority of their time out of fellowship, and they only get back into fellowship by accident (they shock themselves so much with a series of sins, that they acknowledge these sins, and are restored to fellowship).

4) Obedience to God's Word is not legalism. Remember the definition. Everything you do has the potential for reward in heaven, under the right circumstances. The key is being in fellowship, and growing by grace and the Word of God.

5) The legalist thinks that the good works he does for God will not only keep him in fellowship and walking with the Lord but will also make him more spiritual and a great Christian. This is confusing means and results.

Much of this was originally taken from the following websites:
http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/legalism.html
http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=260
http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/study/Bible%20Doctrines/dictionary-bible-doctrine.htm

Lesson 234: Gen. 21 via Rom. 4:13–16 The Birth of Isaac in the New Testament

Isaac's birth in the New Testament continued:

So far, we studied one verse in the New Testament (which passage will reference Isaac's birth) and the doctrine of legalism:

Rom 4:13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he [Abraham] would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

God made promises to Abraham, and God did not do this because Abraham followed the law, but because Abraham exercised faith in the Revealed God.

In the apostle Paul's time, There were those trying to place believers under the Mosaic Law, and Paul told them to go back and examine Abraham, who received promises not based on the Law, as there was no Mosaic Law during the time of Abraham. The promises that God mad to Abraham were based upon the righteousness of faith.

Throughout most of the letter to the Romans, Paul makes use of the Old Testament. In fact, in the book of Romans alone, Paul quotes nearly 100 separate Old Testament verses. The books of the Old Testament are his Scriptures, and he uses them as authoritative, even though he is speaking mostly to non-Jews. Paul is writing in the pre-canon period of the New Testament era, so he is in the Church Age. Yet he makes his theological points quoting the Old Testament.

The Church Age is neatly divided into two time periods—there is the early church, at which time the apostles had authority over more than one church, there were sign gifts which gave God's authority to the apostles, and during which time they wrote the New Testament, which are the authoritative words of the apostles. Then there is the post-canon period, which began between A.D. 70–100, at which time, it is the apostles' writings which become authoritative, and at which time, all the apostles are martyred (save John). So we no longer have apostles traveling about from church to church, or to missionary fields, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ and teaching Bible doctrine. All that remains are their writings. Therefore, their writings are taken as authoritative and their writings take the place of the apostles. Their writings become the New Testament, the sum of which become the canon of the New Testament.

By the time of the canon of Scripture came about, the apostles have been recognized as being from God, as carrying the words of truth, and what they left behind were the authoritative Word of God, which we call the New Testament. Like the Old Testament,

these words came from a variety of authors (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude and possibly a 9th author of Hebrews); but, unlike the Old Testament, these writings were written and recognized as being authoritative over a relatively short period of time (less than 70 years).

Paul lived in the pre-canon period of the Church Age, where his teaching and writings were beginning to be understood as authoritative. Before his authority was fully recognized, Paul (and the other apostles) had sign gifts, which meant he could do healings, miracles, and speak in languages which he did not know (Acts 28:8–9 Rom. 15:19 1Cor. 14:18 2Cor. 12:12). However, these sign gifts necessarily faded as Paul's authority (and the authority of the other apostles) became established (Rom. 1:1 1Cor. 9:1–3 13:8–10 2Cor. 11:5 Philip. 2:26–27 2Tim. 4:20). If you look up these passages, they may seem to be a random collection of unrelated things, but Paul on many occasions has to establish his authority as an apostle, which is a man who can speak authoritatively on all matters of Bible doctrine. He had sign gifts which established his authority as an apostle (Acts 19:11–12 1Cor. 14:18). However, as time went on, his authority became established among the people of God, and therefore, Paul no longer needed to perform miracles to prove that his teaching was from God. As a result, he was unable to heal the sick after a time (Philip. 2:26–27 1Tim. 5:23 2Tim. 4:20). This was no longer necessary; his authority as an apostle was clearly established.

Paul could always refer to the Old Testament Scriptures as authoritative, as they were accepted as the Word of God by believers all over. However, Paul also taught doctrines which were outside of the realm of the Old Testament, and these are the doctrines of the Church Age—the mystery doctrines—doctrines which are only known to those within a certain fraternity (by application, these doctrines were not known in the Old Testament, but were known only to believers in the Church Age—Rom. 11:25 1Cor. 2:7 Eph. 1:7–10).

Much of the point that is being made here, Paul sums up in Eph. 3:1–7 This is the reason that I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, [pray for you. See 3:14-19]. [Note: Paul here digresses from his prayer, begun in 1:15-16, to explain the circumstances of his being a prisoner on behalf of these Gentiles]. [I assume] you have heard about my commission [to minister] to you, which was given to me by God's unearned favor [= grace of God]. [It is] that God's secret plan [= the mystery doctrine of the Church Age] [i.e., revealed in the Gospel preached to Gentiles. See verse 6] was made known to me by way of a revelation. [See Acts 9:15; 22:21]. I have already written to you [about this] briefly [i.e., probably a reference to 1:9ff]. So, when you read this you will be able to understand my insight into the secret plan of Christ, which was not told to people of previous generations as it has now been revealed to His [i.e., Christ's] holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. This secret plan is that the Gentiles [now] share in the inheritance along with us [Jews], and are fellow-members of the body [i.e., the church], and that they share, along with us [Jews], in the promise of the Gospel, in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. I was made a minister [of the Gospel] according to the gift of God's unearned favor, which was given to me according to the working of His power. (AUV–NT with two additional notes by me).

This mystery doctrine is Church Age doctrine; or doctrine which is peculiar to the Church Age; doctrine which is not taught in the Old Testament. This means that Paul will teach doctrines which are, from time to time, outside of the Age of Israel (such as, the gentiles would share in the inheritance of God).

However, there are principles which are true in all dispensations. Many of these principles Paul is able to glean from the Old Testament. Logically, Paul will show that God has a gracious relationship to all believers; and not a relationship based upon legalism (again, legalism is the system by which we do something in order to be saved, blessed or rewarded by God).

Paul uses Abraham as an illustration because nearly all Jews acknowledge Abraham as their father, and Jesus is the true heir of Abraham. Also, the gentile believers in Rome would have known about Abraham and that he is considered to be the father of the Jewish race. However, Abraham lived 500 years prior to the Law, so one cannot say that Abraham was blessed because he followed the Law. Therefore, when God promised blessing to Abraham and his offspring, this was based upon Abraham's righteousness of faith and not due to his adherence to the Mosaic Law. There was no Mosaic Law when these promises were given to Abraham. Therefore, Abraham was not blessed because he kept the Law.

Back to our passage in Romans:

Rom 4:14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs [to the promises of God], faith is null and the promise is void.

There is a clear contrast. If the promises of God are those who adhere to the Mosaic Law—and the true heirs of Abraham adhere to the Mosaic Law—then the faith of Abraham is meaningless and the promises that God made to Abraham, based upon faith, are void.

The first verb is kenoô (κενόω) [pronounced *kehn-OH-oh*], which means, *1) to empty, make empty; 1a) of Christ, He laid aside equality with or the form of God; 2) to make void; 2a) deprive of force, render vain, useless, of no effect; 3) to make void; 3b) cause a thing to be seen to be empty, hollow, false*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2758. Paul writes here that, if the inheritance promised by God comes through adherence to the law, then faith is *deprived of its force;* faith is *rendered vain, useless and of no effect;* faith is *empty, hollow, and false*. This is because the approach to God is either through the Law or through faith; if we approach God through the Law, then faith is made empty, hollow and false.

The second verb is katargéô (καταργέω) [pronounced *kaht-ahr-GEH-oh*], which means *to be idle, to render inactive, to be useless, ineffective*. Strong's #2673. God made promises to Abraham—that has been much of the focus of our study of Abraham in Genesis—but if our heirship of God's blessings is based upon the Mosaic Law, then the promise of God is useless and ineffective.

Rom 4:14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null [or, *empty, void, deprived of power, vain, useless, of no effect, empty, hollow, false*] and the promise is void [or, *ineffective, useless, idle*].

So, this indicates that there is no middle ground; there is no halfway point where people who have faith and adhere to the Law are also heirs to the promises of God. If Law is the basis of blessing, then their faith is vain, useless, empty and false; in fact, the promise which God made is void, ineffective and useless—if that promise is predicated upon keeping the Law. However, there was no Mosaic Law for Abraham to follow, so what meaning do God's promises to Abraham have, if one must adhere to the Mosaic Law in order to be heir to them? This makes no sense to require believers in the Church Age to adhere to the Mosaic Law in order to be considered true believers, when Abraham himself did not follow the Mosaic Law.

Abraham had to accept God's promises on the basis of faith because there was no Mosaic Law. And if he is an heir by faith, then the Jews are heirs by faith as well. If Abraham is the father of the Jews, then he sets the example—his life sets the pattern. Furthermore, if Abraham is our father by faith, then he sets the example for us—believers in the Church Age—as well.

Similarly, there is no mixture of works and faith, either for salvation or for spirituality.

Rom 4:15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

All people transgress the Mosaic Law. Therefore, from a righteous God, we can expect nothing from Him but wrath. That is, *if* our relationship to God defined by the Mosaic Law. The Law defines sin in many areas, and since all men sin, the best the Law can do is pronounce us sinners. If we are sinners, then we have no relationship with God. We can only be judged by God. The Ten Commandments themselves condemn all mankind. It is no good if you follow commandments 1–9 but not 10 (or whatever). That makes you a sinner. Unless we keep the Law perfectly, in all respects, we cannot depend upon the Law for our righteousness. Since no one keeps the Law perfectly, no one can depend upon the Law for righteousness.

Paul adds ...but where there is no law, there is no transgression. Is Paul saying that a person has a better chance of a relationship to God if he lives in Timbuktu or in outer Mongolia, where there is no Law of Moses being taught? Of course not! We are speaking of two different systems which are fundamental to our relationship to God: Law versus faith. So, we are speaking of two realms here, one of law and one of faith; in the realm of law, we are transgressors; in the realm of faith—where there is no law—there is no transgression. We have to be in one sphere or the other, in our relationship to God. Because we cannot keep the Law fully, the Law brings God's wrath upon us. Therefore, if we are in the realm of the law, then we have transgressed against God, and God can give us nothing but wrath. However, if we are in the realm of faith, where there is no law, then there is no transgression. In the realm of faith, we are outside of the Law, and therefore, not subject to the condemnation of the Law. Furthermore, if we are in the realm

of faith, then we are modeling Abraham, who is our mutual father (the father of Jews and gentiles alike who have exercised faith in Jesus Christ).

There is no overlap between those who stand upon faith and those who stand upon the Law. These are two separate and distinct realms.

Rom 4:14–15 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null [or, *empty, void, deprived of power, vain, useless, of no effect, empty, hollow, false*] and the promise is void [or, *ineffective, useless, idle*]. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law [which is in the realm of faith] there is no transgression.

There are two realms: the realm of faith and the realm of Law. When one adheres to (holds to) the Law, then their faith is empty, vain and of no effect. Furthermore, the promise of God is void and useless. This is because the Law brings forth wrath. God looks at us, measures us against His perfects standards, and then condemns us, as a matter of law. He cannot do anything else if only the Law of God is applied. But where there is no Law [that is, being in the realm of faith], there is no transgression. Faith has to be properly directed toward Jesus Christ; and then, after salvation, toward what is taught in the Bible. And in that realm of faith, there is no transgression.

Remember when Gen. 15:6 said, And Abraham believed in Jehovah, and He counted it unto him for righteousness? Transgressions were not a part of this equation. Here, Abraham is in the sphere of faith and all of the merit lies in the object of his faith. Therefore, there is no transgression.

Rom 4:16 That is why it [the promise] depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring--not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (ESV, which is used mostly in this lesson)

This verse can be a bit confusing, because it appears that Paul is saying it is okay for two types of people to receive salvation: those who adhere to the law and those of faith. When Paul speaks of those who are *adherents of the law,* he is referring to Jews who were under the Law of Moses and aware of God's Law. However, their relationship to God has to be based upon faith in Christ (in the Old Testament, faith in the Revealed God); not upon their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law.

Sharing the faith of Abraham means, Abraham believed in the Revealed Lord and this was credited to him as righteousness. Those who share this faith are those who also believe in the Revealed Lord, Who is Jesus Christ (Who is God revealed to us—John 14:8–12); and God has also credited them with righteousness.

Then Paul writes something which might have startled most of the Jews in Rome and some of the Romans: he writes that Abraham is the father of us all. Paul is not writing to an all Jewish church. We have no idea how many of those at the Roman church are Jews, but certainly just a percentage of them—say 10%. Jews have, at many times in history, seen

their father Abraham as being a defining factor in their lives; a separating factor from all that is impure. And yet, Paul is writing to a mostly gentile church calling Abraham the father of us all.

The key is *sharing the faith of Abraham*. When Paul writes this letter, Abraham has been dead for 2000 years. So, what does this mean?

Let's get a more accurate translation:

Rom 4:16 For this reason [it is] of **faith**, that [it should be] according to grace, for the promise to be secure to all the seed [fig., descendants], not to the [one] of the Law only, _but_ also to the [one] of [the] **faith** of Abraham, who is father of all of us... (ALT)

Rom. 4:16 For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through **faith** [in God], according to His unearned favor, so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by **faith**, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers],... (AUV–NT)

So, what is the promise of Abraham? *The promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world* (from v. 13). This promise, which comes through faith according to grace, is given to all of Abraham's descendants. These promises made to Abraham are not just for those subject to the Law of Moses (that is, the Jews) but to anyone who lives by faith, which, incidentally, includes Abraham (many times, Paul will make this point in his letter to the Romans, as well as elsewhere).

Lesson 235: Gen. 21 via Rom. 4:13–21 The Birth of Isaac in the New Testament

Isaac's birth in the New Testament continued:

We are in the early portion of Gen. 21, where we are studying the birth of Isaac. This birth is alluded to on several occasions in the New Testament, which includes the passage of Romans which is now before us (Rom. 4:13–24).

Gen 21:1–7 And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said, and Jehovah did for 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. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, God has made laughter for me, and all who hear will laugh with me. She also said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle a son? For I have borne him a son in his old age. (Voice in the Wilderness).

Like many narratives of the Old Testament, at first glance, there does not appear to be much to talk about. But there is.

This is what we have studied so far (in the AUN–NT version, with an additional note or two from me thrown in)

Rom 4:13–16 For it was not through [obedience to] law [See 3:31] that the promise to Abraham or his descendants of inheriting [the best of] the world [was made], but through their being considered righteous because of [their] faith [in God]. For if [only] those who are obedient to the law **deserve** an inheritance, [then their] faith [in God] is for nothing, and God's promise is nullified. For the law brings [God's] wrath [i.e., because of man's failure to obey it perfectly], but where there is no law [which is being in the sphere of faith instead], there is no [responsibility for] sin. For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through faith [in God], according to His unearned favor [= grace], so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by faith, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers],...

Abraham does not inherit the promises made to him by God through his obedience to the Law, because the law only brings God's wrath. The promise is based upon God's grace—His unmerited favor, which we attain by faith, a non-meritorious system of perception (everyone has faith; so it is the object of our faith which has all of the merit). These promises are for all of Abraham's descendants, which includes us who are Abraham's progeny through faith—we who have believed in the same Revealed Lord.

If we live by faith, Abraham is our father. Now, this is not some nebulous faith in something other than ourselves—faith in itself is not meritorious—but the object of faith has all of the merit (or lack of same). So, if you believe that Harry Potter is real, and you have great faith in that, you are not in the faith of Abraham.

That was a goofy example; so let's take a real example. One thing which has become the object of faith for many today is *science;* I have known many people who talk about how they have great faith in science. One person told me that she only believes in peer-reviewed studies (which was a very foolish for an educated woman to say, because she believed in lots of things that had not been scrutinized by scientists). Science is sometimes good and accurate; and science is sometimes quite foolish in its attempts to prove that everything in this world just came about apart from God. But there is no real merit in science; science cannot fix our sin nature; and, at best, science can modify our actions or provide useful technologies for us. But there is no spiritual merit in science and people who place their faith in science are lost (except as recognizing the science is a helpful tool in this life). There is no ultimate redemption to be had by having faith in science.

Furthermore, scientists and those who claim to be scientists have sin natures, and therefore, they have agendas which are related to their beliefs, which beliefs are established apart from scientific research and which beliefs interfere with their science.

So there are many so-called scientists with agendas: the global warming crowd, the evolution crowd, the God-does-not-exist crowd. These scientists will not discover or theorize anything which goes against that which they fundamentally believe, and will interpret their data in accordance with what it is that they believe. So many "scientists" begin with a philosophical point of view based upon faith, and they do not allow the science that they espouse to run counter to that faith.

As has been observed, science has become highly politicized in the past few decades (I write this in 2013)—at least in some areas. Therefore, every powerful hurricane or every harsh winter or any record temperature here or there becomes additional evidence of climate change, in the eyes of some scientists and by many of those who have placed their faith in science (which is not the view of all scientists). Furthermore, now it appears that news outlets like to exaggerate the claims of global warming and hurricanes (for instance), and act as if, for instance, the hurricane Sandy is unique in its size, path and destructiveness, when it is not.

The way that these things get twisted is amazing. One article explains how climate change is making hurricanes more destructive. The simple reason for increased destruction caused by hurricanes is, there are more people and property in more places than there were before. 50 years ago, a hurricane may follow a particular path and miss any populated areas. Today, that same hurricane can strike the same area with the same force, but it is much more destructive because now there are people and structures in that same path.

Let me be more specific about this particular faith—it is a faith often that mankind is at least partially to blame, and that by changing our light bulbs, or driving different cars, or by reducing our consumption of energy, that climate change will be averted or put off. In most cases, those who have faith in climate change believe that huge sums of money funneled to the government (or to climate change groups) for the purpose of changing climate change will ultimately have a ameliorative affect on the climate. Millions of people believe this, because *we all have faith* and we all believe in things. So Paul's sphere of faith includes the object of Jesus Christ when it comes to salvation and the Word of God when it comes to our life as Christians. Again, it is the object which is key, not the faith itself.

As an aside, how does the Christian view science? Like everything in this life, science can become corrupted. Science is no more pure than anything else in life. Science is a tool and has provided wonderful things for us in terms of conveniences, energy and medical care; but that does not mean that science is above corruption and dogma. Scientists have sin natures, and their nature not only affects their own personal lives, but it also affects their work. Therefore, it should not be a shock to anyone that science can be corrupted just like anything else.

Let's look at that final verse again:

Rom. 4:16 For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through **faith** [in God], according to His unearned favor [= grace], so that it may be

[given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by **faith**, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers],... (AUV–NT with one insertion)

Faith is the Greek word pistis (πίστις) [pronounced *PIHS-tihs*], which means, *1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it; 1a) relating to God; 1a1) the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ; 1b) relating to Christ; 1b1) a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God; 1c) the religious beliefs of Christians; 1d) belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same; 2) fidelity, faithfulness; 2a) the character of one who can be relied on*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #4102. So faith is used not just as a system of perception, but *what* is believed is incorporated by this word. We use this word in the same way. When we speak of the *Christian faith,* we are not just referring to the non-meritorious act of believing, but primarily to the Christian doctrines which we believe in.

So, faith both incorporates our trust, conviction and belief along with what is the object of our faith, which are the promises of God (and, more widely, Bible doctrine).

Rom 4:17 as it stands written, "I have made you the father of many nations" —in the presence of the God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

On the one hand, this particular reference in Gen. 17:5 means that Abraham would be the father of many Jewish and gentile nations. However, Paul puts a bit of a spin on this, stating that Abraham is the father of us all (referring to believers), suggesting perhaps that there would be many nations who are made up of predominantly believers. Abraham, in the realm of faith, is the father of these nations as well.

So Paul takes a promise which, in the context of Gen. 17, refers to both Jewish and Arabic nations (which Abraham is the father of), but then Paul applies this passage to Jewish and gentile nations which are predominantly made up of believers. This is fascinating, because Christianity was not a thriving all-encompassing faith adhered to by most of the world—not when Paul wrote. Tradition has it that all of the Apostles save John would be martyred for their faith. So Paul was looking out into the future, at a time when the faith of Abraham would define the population of even gentile nations. This is because God gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. This nations of Christians do not even exist, yet God will call things that do not exist into existence. Abraham is the father of such nations as are defined by the faith of most of the population in Jesus Christ (at one time, near the era of Paul, this was the Roman empire, and, as of late, this was Great Britain of a century ago; and today it is the United States and South Korea).

The statement that Paul is making here is quite amazing. At one time, just Israel, and then later Israel and Judah, were client nations to God, made up of mostly believers. However, here Paul looks down the corridors of time, and he sees a widespread faith in Jesus Christ as occurring in some gentile nations, which makes Abraham the father of those nations as well.

Paul's taking an Old Testament passage and putting a different spin on its interpretation is quite weird for some believers. Some believers expect that when a passage of the Old Testament is quoted in the New, that Paul is going to explain to us exactly what this passage means; or that Paul is going to show how this passage is fulfilled during his era. But Paul does not do that. Paul takes this Old Testament passage, which nearly everyone who reads it ought to understand that it refers to Jewish and Arabic nations, where Abraham is the genetic progenitor of such nations; and Paul gives this a completely new meaning, where Abraham will be the father of a number of nations which are based upon the fundamental faith in Jesus Christ. And this is based up Abraham being *our* father because of his faith in the Revealed Lord.

You see, I am not Jewish, and, chances are, most of you reading this are not Jewish. But Abraham is my father, because he exercised faith in the Revealed Lord; and you and I have similarly exercised faith in Jesus Christ, the Revealed Lord. He set the pattern for us, and we have followed his pattern of faith, making him our father.

Rom. 4:16–17 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the Law [that is, the Jews], but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham [anyone who believes in the Revealed Lord], who is the father of us all (as it stands written, I have made you a father of many nations) in the presence of Him whom he believed; God, who makes the dead alive and calls those things which do not exist as though they did. (Mostly the VW)

We are dead in trespasses and sins, and God makes the dead alive; and then God calls those things which do not exist—gentile nations who have faith in Him—into existence.

Rom 4:18 In **hope** he [Abraham] believed against **hope**, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."

Abraham's faith was remarkable, because he did not have a lot of reason to believe God. For 25 years, God had been making promises to Abraham, all of which hinged upon the birth of his son Isaac, and Abraham exercised faith in God's promises. Again, that is the key to this chapter, the theme, if you will: faith versus adherence to the Law of Moses.

The word translated *hope* here is elpís (ἐλπις) [pronounced *el-PIS*], which means, *hope, desire of some good with expectation of obtaining it;* that latter phrase means *confidence*. When the Bible speaks of the *hope of the resurrection* or *our hope of salvation;* the word is obviously *confidence, expectation*. It only means *hope* in the sense of being the opposite of the Gentiles *who have no hope* or *who are hopeless*. Zodhiates. Strong's #1680.

So, even though Abraham had no reason to have confidence in God and in the birth of Isaac, he was, nevertheless, strong in faith, and he trusted in God for the birth of his son through Sarah. Yet, Abraham had few reasons to have such a great trust.

Rom 4:19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

God told Abraham that he would father a child by Sarah, and that this would occur after their reproductive equipment quit. Abraham's faith continued. Remember when he was circumcised. I can guarantee you, as a male, whether you are sexually dead or not, the idea that you, as an adult, ought to be circumcised to indicate that you have faith in God's promises, is uniquely abhorrent if you lack that faith. When God said to Abraham, "You need to cut off a portion of the skin around your sexually dead phallus" Abraham responded with faith, not with, "Are you bleeping kidding me?" I can assure you that any male who allows any sharp object anywhere near that area has to be operating on a great deal of faith. Abraham was not weak in faith when he evaluated his own sexual impotence, as he was 100 years old; nor was he weak in faith when taking into consideration the fact that Sarah had been barren for all of her life (Abraham has probably known Sarah from age zero on up).

A normal male, a male who lacked faith in the promises of God, would have said, "Look, I am too old to be potent and Sarah has always been barren; so let's skip this whole circumcision thing. You want me to offer up a lamb on the altar? No problem. But if You want me to cut away the skin around my phallus, I'll pass on that one." Yet Abraham, who was not weak in faith, was circumcised, along with the other males of his compound (indicating that they too had great faith in the God of Abraham).

Now, Abraham was very successful and very rich; but not a single promise that God made to him had come to pass; and most of God's promises were such that Abraham would never see them come to pass—yet Abraham continued with great faith in the Revealed God.

Rom 4:20–21 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

The faith that Abraham had in God, at this point in his life, is quite astounding. Abraham was fully convinced that God would do exactly as He had promised him.

It is this great faith that *gives glory to God*. That phrase may cause some people problems. What is the deal? Is God this grand Egotist Who needs people to say, over and over again, "You are great, God; I really mean that" ? That is not how it is. Glorification of God is a matter of focus, and God wants us to focus upon Him, because it is in Him that we have our salvation. Don't look to Abraham, don't look to Sarah, and for goodness sakes, don't look to me. Abraham's faith in God glorifies God; it shifts the focus of man

and angels toward God. It forces us to examine God's grace, God's veracity, God's promises, and God's character. Can God be trusted? When God promises us something, can we depend upon Him to stand by His promises? When we read over and over again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved;" do we respond with skepticism or are we able to allow our focus and our faith to be on Him? When we near death—and we will all come near to death and experience it—to whom do you look for your life in eternity? Do you look toward your own self and your own puny works—many of which often were working in cross-purposes with God's plan? Do you look toward your sons or your daughters or to your spouse? Or do you look to God? Abraham's faith gives glory to God; Abraham's faith tells us where it is appropriate to adjust our focus and then to place our faith. Giving glory to God tells us where we should direct our own focus. It is in the Revealed God—in Jesus Christ—where we have our salvation.

And, so that there is no misunderstanding, this is not developing a set of holy sayings that irritate the people around you ("Give glory to God, brother"). It is a matter of soul-focus.

So there is no misunderstanding, we all have faith and we all choose where to place our faith. I recall talking to one very cute liberal and she told me she only placed her faith in peer-reviewed, scientific studies. Well, there are no peer reviewed studies on eternity; there are no peer-reviewed studies on death—other than the fact that it is inevitable. And if you are placing your faith in some man, or some man's opinion, then you had better be willing to take the responsibility for pointing your faith in that direction—because it is not your faith but the object of your faith which has the merit, or lack of same.

In the plan of God, the Bible is unequivocal: your eternal relationship with God is 100% dependent upon the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It depends not even 1% on what you have done or achieved.

So when you see the phrase, where this or that gives glory to God—that is because God is our proper focus—and Jesus Christ, His Son, is the only Way, the only Truth and the only Life—no man comes to the Father but through Him (John 14:6). "For it is by Him that we have life and we move and exist; so also some of the wise men among you have said: 'Our lineage is from Him.' " (Acts 17:28). God can be trusted; God's Word can be trusted.

Lesson 236: Gen. 21 via Rom. 4:13–24 The Birth of Isaac in the New Testament

This is what we have studied in Romans so far:

Rom 4:13–19 For it was not through [obedience to] law [See 3:31] that the promise to Abraham or his descendants of inheriting the [new] world [kingdom] [was made], but through their being considered righteous because of faith [in the Revealed God]. For if those who are obedient to the law deserve an inheritance, [then their] faith [in the Revealed God] is for nothing, and God's promise is nullified. For the law brings [God's] wrath [i.e., because of man's failure to obey it perfectly], but where there is no law [which is being in the sphere of faith], there is no [liability for] sin. For this reason, the promise

[i.e., of being made right with God] comes through faith [in the Revealed God], according to His unearned favor, so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by faith, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers],as it stands written, "I have made you the father of many nations" —in the presence of the God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he [Abraham] believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

There are two spheres: one of faith and one of law. In the sphere of law, we stand condemned; in the sphere of faith we are made righteous (our faith must be directed toward the Revealed God, Jesus Christ). Abraham, who exercised faith in the Revealed God and His promises, is our father, we who are of the faith. So Abraham is not just the father of the Jewish race, he is the father of all believers.

Furthermore, he had confidence in God when God promised him that he would be made the father of many nations, because God can call into existence that which does not exist. And Abraham had this confidence despite his own age, his sexual death, and the barrenness of his wife's womb.

Rom 4:20–21 No distrust made him [Abraham] waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised.

Abraham, despite having nothing but promises before him—no actual fulfillment for over 25 years—was strong in faith to God, and this faith gives glory to God, as Abraham was fully persuaded that God could and would do all that He promised.

Rom 4:22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."

One of the most quoted Old Testament passages in the New Testament is Gen. 15:6 (along with Psalm 110:1). Abraham's faith is his righteousness; because it is not the faith itself, which is a choice, but the object of the faith wherein is all the merit. The object of Abraham's faith is God, often known to him as the Angel of the Lord.

Here, Paul is not speaking of Abraham's faith giving him salvation righteousness; this is an experiential righteousness based upon his faith, which faith gives glory to God because Abraham was fully convinced that God could do that which He promised. This is faith built upon faith; this is faith in the experiential life of the believer.

Therefore, there is a salvation faith which Abraham exercised in the past, but his faith in God and in God's promises are another kind of faith, a faith which glorifies God. We know this as experiential righteousness or experiential sanctification.

Rom 4:23–24 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in Him Who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord.

That faith is important is well-known to those in the Old Testament so that Paul can teach it in the New. Changing dispensations does not mean that everything is turned upside down; there are some changes in the way that God administers His household on earth. However, faith is always presented as superior to works, throughout all dispensations. And the object of faith is the key. Old Testament Jews were *not* saved by keeping the Law; they were saved by exercising faith in the Revealed Lord, which is exactly the same way that we are saved (if Jews were saved by keeping the Law, then what about Abraham, who did not have the Mosaic Law?). We believe in the Revealed Lord (Jesus Christ), just as Abraham did, and we are saved forever.

There is also a faith, exercised by the mature or maturing believer, toward Bible doctrine, which is an experiential faith, which glorifies God.

So, just in case you blinked and missed it, Paul is teaching the primacy of faith and the importance of the object of faith; Abraham believed God when it came to having a son, and God brought that to pass. His faith was vindicated; and the importance of his faith stands even to this day. Because Abraham believed and this was counted to him as righteousness, Paul is able to take this passage to use it today, to teach the same thing to us in the Church Age.

Now let's take a look at Heb. 11, which is the *faith* chapter

Heb 11:11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she **considered** Him **faithful** Who had promised.

Sarah had never conceived in 88 years. Sarah had been barren her entire life. And now, not only did she continue to be barren, but she was also barren simply due to her age. But Sarah had faith herself—something which is not really spoken of in the Old Testament. But the writer of Hebrews, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, knows that she also had faith in what God had promised. Her trust was in the God Who has promised her a son.

The verb translated *considered* here is hêgeomai (ἡγέομαι) [pronounced *hayg-EH-ohm-ahee*], which means *1) to lead; 1a) to go before; 1b) to be a leader; 1b1) to rule, command; 1b2) to have authority over; 1b3) a prince, of regal power, governor, viceroy, chief, leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel, overseers or leaders of the churches; 1b4) used of any kind of leader, chief, commander; 1b5) the leader in speech, chief, spokesman; 2) to consider, deem, account, think*. Thayer Definitions only. Strong's #2233. It is the latter group of meanings which are pertinent. Whom does she **consider** faithful and trustworthy? The Revealed God. Towards Whom is her faith directed? Toward the

Revealed Lord. She may have laughed when she first heard that she was going to become pregnant, but she did believe at some point after that.

How did Sarah view God? She saw Him as pistos (πιστός) [pronounced *pis-TOSS*], which means *faithful, trustworthy, dependable, worthy of trust; exhibiting fidelity; believing, confiding, trusting; credible*. Thayer Definitions: *1) trusty, faithful; 1a) of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties; 1b) one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust; 1c) that can be relied on; 2) easily persuaded; 2a) believing, confiding, trusting; 2b) in the NT one who trusts in God's promises; 2b1) one who is convinced that Jesus has been raised from the dead; 2b2) one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and author of salvation*. Strong's #4103. You will note the similarities to the Greek word *pistis* (previously studied).

Both Sarah and Abraham were both made fully aware when they would have a child and who the participants would be (themselves, as opposed to a surrogate like Hagar). Both Sarah and Abraham had faith in God and in what He had promised to do. The emphasis in the Old Testament, prior to conception, was on Sarah, because the emphasis on the birth of our Lord is the virgin birth. Therefore, throughout the Old Testament, the emphasis was on the Seed of the Woman (with Eve) and upon Sarah and God visiting her (you will recall that the text only spoke of God *visiting* Sarah before the birth of her son).

There is also a great power here, which Paul in Romans and the writer of Hebrews do not go into: Abraham and Sarah, a married couple, exercised faith in the same direction, toward the same things—toward the Revealed Lord and His promises. This is a great corporate witness, and is one of the great strengths of a good marriage. Recall when Jesus said, "When 2 or 3 are gathered in My name, then there I am in the midst of them." This can be exploited (in a good way) by a married couple every time that they pray together or exercise their spiritual gifts together. A married couple going in the same direction, both maturing and exercising faith toward Bible doctrine, form a very powerful witness for God, and their shared prayers are powerful and effective.

Heb 11:12 Therefore from one man [Abraham], and him as good as [sexually] dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

Here we have one of the fundamental themes of Scripture—out of death, God brings life. Abraham was sexually dead, but from him, there were descendants born, as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the grains of sand by the seashore (these are hyperbole, by the way).

From the death of Jesus Christ—His dying for our sins—God brings life to all men who believe in Him. From our spiritual death (we are all born spiritually dead), God brings life; we are born again. What this new life entails is the regeneration of our human spirit, so that we are able to take in correct information about God and store it (just as our souls take in information about the world around us, and we process and store that information as

well). Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; former things passed away [e.g., the control of the sin nature], then suddenly new things [the human spirit; the divine operating assets] came into existence (2Cor. 5:17; Brodie).

Heb 11:12 Therefore from one man [Abraham], and him as good as [sexually] dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

That one man in v. 12 is Abraham; and Abraham is without a child by Sarah and he is too old to father a child by Sarah—he is as good as dead—and to him would be born descendants, as many as the stars of heaven and as many is the grains of sand at the seashore. The writer of Hebrews is not saying that Abraham is near to dying, he is saying that Abraham is sexually dead.

In order for this verse to be true, that first son had to be born to Abraham, and that was Isaac. Nothing that God promises Abraham can come to pass if there is no uniquely-born son.

There is something else which must be said at this juncture: when there is a New Testament passage which quotes or refers to an Old Testament, that is not all that can be said about that event in the Old Testament; nor is that the only way to understand or interpret that Old Testament event. We have already studied how the birth of Isaac parallels the birth of our Lord. This is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament. Paul does not spend a chapter explaining how the birth of Isaac foreshadows the birth of our Lord. God knows that believers long after the fact would be able to understand and explain such things. Furthermore, most of the work on that particular topic is quite recent. However, it is just as valid as Paul's teaching on the Old Testament (apart from the fact that, every word that Paul wrote was inspired by God the Holy Spirit).

Here is why Paul used the Old Testament as he did: there were not many who questioned the authority of the Old Testament in the time of Jesus. The pharisees and scribes tried on many occasions to distort the Old Testament teachings, but they recognized that the Old Testament was accurate and authoritative.

Today, this is no longer the case. Smarty-pants intellectuals have done everything in their power to lessen the authority and power of the Old Testament, including attacking the authorship of the Old Testament, and they have come up with the weirdest, most bizarre system to explain the various authors (the JEPD theories, which has been previously discussed). However, no matter how far out they go on these theological theories, which lead nowhere except away from the truth, they are stuck with the parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of our Lord; the parallels between of offering of Isaac and the crucifixion of our Lord (that will be found in a future lesson). This kind of information, insofar as I know, has been developed fairly recently, and is quite detailed and persuasive. And no amount of weird theories about Old Testament authorship can explain away these parallels. The same thing is true of the many times we find Jesus in the book of Genesis, and the same thing is true when we examine the remarkable things in the book of Genesis.

The end result for the believer today is, we have confidence that the Bible is not some random book; nor it is some really smart book—it is the Word of God. The things which are contained simply in the book of Genesis cannot be explained in any other way. So, just at the very time that mankind needs a few good reasons to have faith in the Bible as the Word of God, these reasons are provided by God (through His servants).

Most of these things have already been covered in one form or another in previous studies, but it is a good time to summarize them:

Reasons Why We Can Believe the Bible is the Word of God

1. The scientific evidence:
   1) The Big Bang theory is actually presented in the first sentence of the first chapter of Genesis.
   2) Man is made out of the chemicals of the ground—how did the author of Genesis know this?
   3) The Bible teaches that man can be cloned and this cloning can be modified.
2. The genetic evidence:
   1) There are a half-dozen linear genealogies found in the Bible that lead us directly from Adam to Jesus. These are the only linear genealogies found in the Bible and there are about a half-dozen different authors involved. How did they know? Most of them (with the exceptions of Matthew and Luke) recorded these genealogies long before the birth of Jesus. How did they know which lines to follow? And so there is no mistaking this, it is not just the important people of the Bible who are in this line. Moses is not in the line of Christ (but Joshua is).
   2) The first linear genealogy in the Bible contains the gospel message.
   3) Whether the Bible speaks of Eve through whom will come the Seed of the Woman or speaks of Sarah, and how God visits Sarah prior to the birth of Isaac, the emphasis is *always* upon the woman. Jesus is born of a virgin because, in this way, the sin nature is not passed down to Him (the sin nature is passed down through the man because Adam sinned knowingly; he was not deceived). How is it possible to have this aspect of Christian theology taught throughout the Bible when most Christians today do not even understand it?
3. The evidence of foreshadowing:
   1) Not only is the birth of Isaac one of the most important incidents of the book of Genesis, but all of the promises of God are based upon this birth. So it is with the birth and death on the cross of our Lord.
   2) There are multiple parallels between the births of Isaac and Jesus.
   3) There are multiple parallels between the offering of Isaac and the offering of our Lord on the cross for our sins. This will be covered when we get to Gen. 22.
   4) These are not the only instances of foreshadowing. I have never sat down to count them, but there must be at least 100 instances where Jesus

Christ is foreshadowed in the Old Testament. How does that happen in some ancient, random book?

4. The evidence of the consistency of Genesis with the thrust of the rest of the Word of God:
   1) When God credits Abraham with righteousness, this is based upon faith. This is fundamental to orthodox Christianity, and is not found in religion. In all religions, there is a quid pro quo. If you want to get into heaven, you had better do more than just believe in the doctrines of your faith.
   2) People argue about theology all the time. Even so-called Christian cults question the Trinity; and all cults require a mixture of faith and works for a person to stand justified before God. Yet, somehow, the authors of Genesis write that which is completely consistent with orthodox Christian theology.
   3) The idea that an innocent creature is killed to atone for sin is found in the 3rd and 4th chapters of Genesis.
   4) The concept of the Seed of the Woman is found in the 3rd chapter of Genesis.
   5) The Persons of Godhead and the essence of God—Genesis is consistent with everything found in the New Testament epistles.

This is merely a smattering of evidence. There are hundreds—and perhaps thousands—of books written on apologetics (reasoned arguments or writings in justification of the truth of the Bible or of the reality of Jesus Christ). The things listed above are simply a few things which we have already studied.

Lessons 237–238: Gen.21:1–10 Gal.4:21–31 The Free Son/the Slave Son

Because we will spend a great deal of time in the New Testament in this section, and that all of this fits together under the heading of, *The Son of the Slave-woman Persecutes the Son of the Free-woman,* we will keep this entire lesson together. These individual lessons tend to be 4 or 5 pages in length; and this lesson is about 9–10 pages—therefore, this counts as two lessons.

So far we have covered the first 7 verses of Gen. 21:

Gen 21:1–7 The LORD came to Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. Abraham named his son who was born to him--the one Sarah bore to him--Isaac. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me." She also said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." (HCSB)

When God told Abraham that he would have a son, Isaac was born. All of this was joyous to Sarah—it made her laugh—and all those who knew them laughed as well. This son was named Isaac, because that means laughter and that is the name God had designated for him. And Sarah kept telling everyone who would listen to her, "Who would have told Abraham that his wife would nurse a child [at her age]? [Who told them? God told them]. Therefore, I have given birth to Abraham's son in his advanced age."

However, there were two people who were not laughing with Sarah.

Genesis 21:8 And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned.

We go through various stages of growth in our lives, and one of those is the time that we stop taking mother's milk. Abraham celebrates this with a feast. One of the things which I have noticed, at least in the young life of those in the Jewish faith is, they mark off various stages of youth, one of them being the time in which a child is weaned. Today, Jewish tradition celebrates the circumcision and then the bar mitzvah(or bat mitzvah, for girls), which symbolizes a stage of young adulthood.

There is also the concept of the arc of a man's life, and there are events which are universal, or very nearly universal, in the life of every man (and woman). We all go through this stage as a child, completely dependent upon our parents—a dependence which continues for quite a long time. Isaac reaches that first stage, the first stage of a move from dependence to independence from his mother, the day he is weaned.

Genesis 21:9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian (whom she had borne to Abraham) mocking her son Isaac.

The last few words of this verse are not found in the Hebrew; they are, however, found in the Greek text, and appropriately added (there are several instances of phrases and even entire sentences which have been dropped out of the preserved Hebrew text which were preserved in the Greek text).[64]

Recall that Abraham, at the insistence of Sarah, had relations with her slave woman, Hagar, and Hagar bore Abraham a son, Ishmael (Gen. 16). This son would have been about 15 or 16 by this time—a particularly obnoxious time in any person's life—and he was being quite obnoxious here, mocking his recently weaned half-brother. The idea is, there was no familial love exhibited; Hagar and Ishmael did not share in this celebration; Ishmael mocked the recently-weaned son. Hagar, through her son, would have been the heir to all that was Abraham's, and Abraham was a very rich man (Gen. 13:2). She had, in her own mind, material stability with her son as the only heir of Abraham. However, this son Isaac changed everything. Hagar's 401k accounts were suddenly worthless. Hagar went from having a rather comfortable retirement to having nothing. No doubt that her attitude toward Isaac overflowed to her son.

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[64] The science of making such a determination is known as textual criticism.

Despite all of the promises that God made to Abraham, it is likely that Hagar and Ishmael doubted them; and Ishmael would have been Abraham's natural heir (and Abraham had a grand fortune). Although we read about Hagar and Ishmael in the New Testament, at no time do we hear about their great faith in God's promises to Abraham. Therefore, a son by Abraham's wife was not a welcome sight to Hagar or to Ishmael. This birth was no blessed event to them. Consequently, in their own minds, they had nothing about which to celebrate. This ended their financial security. It was as if they had gone to their well of savings, and found out that every company in which they had invested went broke, and all they had were baskets-full of worthless stock certificates.

For 13 years, as Abraham and Sarah got older and older, Hagar saw her position as heir through Ishmael grow more and more secure. And she would have been heir to great wealth. And then Isaac is born, and this meant that she would have been left with a pittance; therefore, her attitude toward Isaac was not one of shared happiness. No doubt that Ishmael, even as a young teen, heard about her true feelings about Isaac, which were anything but warm and joyous. So, like many teens, the opinion of his mother became his opinion.

We do not know what words were spoken. Perhaps Hagar said, "If not for this little boy, you, Ishmael, would be heir to all that is Abraham's." Whatever was said, Hagar's dislike of this new son became Ishmael's dislike as well. The birth of Isaac changed everything for them.

What Sarah does next may seem harsh, but, like any mother, she was going to protect her son.

Genesis 21:10 And she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman and her son. For the son of this slave woman will not be heir with my son, with Isaac."

Sarah is beside herself, and she calls for Hagar and her son to be cast out of their home. Sarah had been jealous of Hagar having a son by Abraham, which she could not (over a period of 25 years or more). She was no doubt jealous of the relationship that Abraham and Ishmael (and Hagar) had. It does not matter one whit that Sarah talked Abraham into impregnating her handmaid—after all, this is a woman that we are talking about here. At the very least, Abraham should have said *no* to her idea of Abraham having a child by Hagar in the first place.

However, Sarah's demand that Hagar and Ishmael be cast out is now based upon something else: she is concerned for her son's welfare. She can see real jealousy and real animosity in Ishmael, and he has become a real potential threat to Isaac. She can sense in Ishmael's voice as he made fun of Isaac animosity and jealousy, and she cannot have this attitude in a rival heir so close to them. So Ishmael and Hagar must go.

Genesis 21:8–10 And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing (at her son Isaac). So she said to Abraham, "Cast

out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac."

What the key here is: Hagar and her son would have inherited Abraham's wealth, or the greater part of it—before Isaac came along. Now they would inherit very little or nothing. This is, in great part, the source of their animus toward Isaac.

Sarah, on the other hand, would share none of Abraham's wealth with Hagar and her son. So she called for Abraham to cast Ishmael out. Furthermore, she was concerned for the safety of her young boy.

Interlude: the Son of the Free Woman versus the Son of the Slave Woman

Before we move forward in this narrative, we need to take a look at the illustration which Paul makes of this in Gal. 4:21–31. This is an excellent passage to study, because too often, people believe that, this or that quotation from the Old Testament in the New gives the proper interpretation of the OT passage. However, that is not always the case. We saw that recently when God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, which nations would be Jewish and Arabic nations (that is the proper interpretation of that Old Testament passage). However, Paul takes that fatherhood and applies it to Abraham as the father of nations of those who believe in Jesus Christ (that is, a substantial percentage believe in Jesus Christ). Because Abraham believed and righteousness was credited to him, he becomes the father of all those with faith in Jesus. That was *not* what God promised Abraham; however, Paul used God's promise and made a different application of it.

Therefore, when a passage is quoted from the Old Testament, that does not mean that the passage is being fulfilled in the New Testament. It does not even mean that the passage from the Old Testament is being properly interpreted in its context. The Apostles used the Old Testament Scripture in a number of different ways. Many times, an incident in the Old Testament provided an application or a parallel situation of an important doctrine.

The book of Galatians is all about a church where they have heard the gospel and they believed in Jesus Christ, and they have been saved. However, these Galatians have been bewitched by another gospel, a gospel of legalism and Jewish works (Gal. 1:6–9). Paul is going to use this narrative, of Isaac being born and of Sarah's demand that her handmaid and her son be banished, *to illustrate* grace versus legalism.

So there is no misunderstanding—what Paul teaches in Galatians is not the meaning that anyone had taken from this passage in Genesis before. At best, a few commentators may have understood *why* Sarah demanded that Ishmael and Hagar be banished from Abraham's compound. Most do not even understand that basic notion. But Paul is the first person to take this passage and use it to illustrate grace versus legalism. That was *not* the original intent of Gen. 21:10.

Gal 4:21 Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, don't you listen to the law? Most, but not all of these readings, come from the WEB Bible. Paul here is speaking to the Galatians, asking them a question.

Paul had gone to Galatia, had proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ, and many people had believed. However, there was a problem there: Paul wrote to them: I marvel that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel; but there isn't another gospel. Only there are some who trouble you, and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should proclaim to you any gospel other than that which we proclaimed to you, let him be cursed (Gal. 1:6–8; modified WEB). Those in Galatia originally responded to the gospel [= good news] of Jesus Christ and they believed in Him. However, they were beginning to desert this gospel and hold to the teachings of the Judaizers, who were teaching a **religion of merit** (recall our recent study of legalism). They were teaching believers that they needed to place themselves under the Law of Moses. Paul is asking them, *You want to be subject to the Law; do you even hear what the Law actually says?* Essentially, Paul is asking them, *Do you have any idea as to what it means to place yourselves under the Law of Moses?*

Then Paul launches into an illustration, in which he appropriates from the passage that we are studying in Genesis:

Gal 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the free woman.

Hagar was a slave woman—the handmaid; she was Sarah's personal servant. Hagar bore Abraham a son; and Sarah bore Abraham a son. Hagar's son therefore represents being born into slavery and Sarah's son illustrates being born into freedom. Children born to slave women automatically became the property of the family who own the slave woman; children born to a free woman are born free.

Gal 4:23 However, the son by the handmaid was born according to the flesh, but the son by the free woman was born through promise.

The son of Hagar came about by natural events (= according to the flesh). Abraham and Hagar had sex, and this resulted in a son—Ishmael—being born. However, the son of *promise* is Isaac, who is born to Sarah and Abraham. This is the son whom God had promised Abraham—Ishmael was not the son that God promised Abraham. Therefore, it was through Isaac that God's promises to Abraham would be fulfilled. Isaac is the son who should not have been born; as neither Abraham nor Sarah should have been capable of producing a child the a few years previous. They were too old and their equipment was no longer working—but God promised them and God regenerated their reproductive organs. God brought life out of death.

Gal 4:24 These things contain an **allegory**, for these are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children to bondage, which is Hagar.

When Paul writes *these things,* he is referring back to the births of Isaac and Ishmael.

Although the word *allegory* above appears to be a noun, it is actually the verb allêgoreo (ἀλληγορέω) [pronounced *al-lay-gohr-EH-oh*], which means, *to speak allegorically or in a figure, where the thing spoken of is an emblem or representative of something else; to speak differently from what thinks or actually means*. Thayer and Zodhiates definitions. Strong's #238. The ACV renders this *Which things are allegorized,...* The ALT translates this: *...which [things] speak allegorically*.

You have noticed that, from time to time, I take an historical incident and give it a spiritual interpretation. These historical incidents in the Bible are all real, but they are often recorded in order to teach certain spiritual truths.

Apparently the Apostle Paul noticed that I was doing that, thought it was a good idea, and so he does the exact same thing here. Paul is going to use this real-life incident in order to teach grace (which is freedom) versus works (which is bondage). Hagar is a slave-woman, so children born to her are children of bondage. A slave woman bears slave children. Her children are not born free. They are subject to the same master who rules over her. This has been historically the way that children of slaves have been considered, for thousands of years, in many different cultures.

As an aside, this is key in understanding our 14th amendment, passed in 1868. Because sons of slaves were considered to be slaves, the 14th amendment stated that, if a person was born in the United States, they were a citizen of the United States. This was so that no slaveholder could make a claim on owning a child of a slave. This amendment was not written to make citizens of anchor babies. That application took the words but not the intent of the 14th amendment to justify such an approach.

Back to our passage: Paul also mentions Mount Sinai, which is where God gave the Law of God to Moses.

Gal 4:25 For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and she corresponds to the Jerusalem that exists now, for she is in bondage with her children.

Here is the parallel: Hagar represents Mount Sinai, from whence the Law of God was given; she is in bondage to that law, as are her children. This is the current Jerusalem (the Jerusalem of Paul's day), from whence come these Judiazers who are teaching that keeping the law of Moses is the proper spiritual life for believers in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, these things are all related: Hagar, the slave woman; Ishmael, the son born to the slave-woman (who is born into slavery); Mount Sinai, where the Law was given to Moses (which Law we cannot fully obey); and the Jerusalem of Paul's day, which was filled with legalism. All of these things represent some kind of bondage; none of these things give freedom.

Gal 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

However, the Jerusalem *from above* represents grace and freedom, and *that* Jerusalem is the mother of all believers, Jews and gentiles. There will be a new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2 (ESV)—And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.) to replace the Jerusalem of Paul's day, which was still subject to Judaism, and that Jerusalem of the earth was in legalistic reversionism. That Jerusalem, from above, represents our freedom. Because that which comes from above, is from God; and that which is earthly represents our slavery to sin. [Jesus] said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world." (John 8:23; ESV). Therefore, we should set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth (Col. 1:2).

Prior to this, Paul has not spoken of a Jerusalem from above; nor do we have any other authors of Scripture speaking of a Jerusalem from above. However, much of what we see around us is a copy or an illustration of God's design. The writer of Hebrews explains the priesthood in that way: Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. **They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things**. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. (Heb. 8:1–6; Ex. 25:40; ESV). Therefore, one of the things which was taught to the nascent church is typology; how the things of this world—particularly those things which God required—are illustrations of that which is true and real. Using the illustration in Hebrews, we do not put our hope and faith in the Aaronic priesthood but in the true High Priest, Who is both represented and illustrated by the high priests of the Aaronic priesthood who offer up gifts and sacrifices.

So, these things are closely aligned: Hagar, the slave woman, who has given birth to a child of slavery; Mount Sinai, from whence the law of God came; and the city of Jerusalem in Paul's time, which was filled with legalism and the religion of merit. All of these things represent slavery to something. Hagar is Sarah's personal servant; Hagar's son was both the son and slave of Abraham; and Mount Sinai represents the Law of God, which places man under a bondage from which he cannot free himself. The Mosaic Law does not lead to ultimate freedom. The Jerusalem of Paul's day represented an attempt by the Judaizers to place Christians under the Mosaic Law.

In opposition to these, there is freedom: the son of the free woman and the Jerusalem from above. In fact, Paul will bring these things to a conclusion, when he writes, Stand fast in the freedom in which Christ has made you free (Gal. 5:1). And as Jesus said, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be indeed free." (John 8:36).

Paul continues his thought:

Gal 4:27 For it stands written, "Rejoice, you barren who don't bear. Break forth and shout, you that don't travail. For more are the children of the desolate than of her who has a husband."

You may read this and both wonder, “What the heck does that mean?” and “How does this relate to the context?”

Paul is quoting Isa. 54:1 “Sing out, barren woman who have never borne children; break out a song and shout, you who have never experienced going into labor. For the sons of the desolate one are more than the sons of the married woman,” says Jehovah. This goes back to God warning Israel (specifically, Judah, the southern kingdom), through Isaiah of the coming 5th stage of national discipline (in Isaiah’s day, Judah, the southern kingdom, could have been conquered and taken away into captivity). The sons of the desolate woman refer to the children of Judah; and the sons of the married woman refer to Assyria, which had administered the 5th stage of national discipline to the northern kingdom and was about to do the same to the southern kingdom (Judah). See A Brief History of Israel for the outline of Israel’s history.

The end result of this was, Assyria was destroyed and removed from history by God and by the Babylonians. Their children cannot be found. You do not know any Assyrians, although this was one of the greatest kingdoms in ancient history. Do you know any Jews, who are sons of the desolate one? Of course you do. That is because the sons of the desolate one [= Judah] are more than the sons of the married woman [= Assyria].

God made promises to Israel; God made no such promises to Assyria. Therefore, the nation which seemed desolate and about ready to fall into ruin—Judah (southern Israel)—would have a lasting line of sons, and Assyria would not. That is because the children of Judah are the children of promise.

Gal 4:28 Now we, brothers, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

Isaac was born as a result of the promise of God. Sarah was desolate; she had no children, and, at age 90, had no prospect of having children. Before there was the Law of Moses, there was Abraham and God gave him many promises. At no time did God say, “You must do this, or I will not fulfill these promises to you.” God gave Abraham a promise, and fundamental to that promise was Isaac, the son of Abraham. Paul is explaining here that, we, like Isaac, are children of promise. Isaac would inherit the riches of Abraham and be heir to the promises of God (Gen. 17:7–9 25:5 Gal. 4:28). This was all based upon faith, because Abraham had faith in God and in His promises. There were no works involved in order to attain God’s promises. Even Abraham’s righteousness was based upon faith in the Reveal Lord (Gen. 15:6).

We, as believers in Jesus Christ, have also been promised great riches. Furthermore, these riches do not depend upon anything that is meritorious. Every person who believes in Jesus Christ will receive riches, even if his spiritual life is an absolute train wreck.

Gal 4:29 But as then, he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.

The child of the slave-woman persecutes the child born according to the Spirit, refers to Ishmael who made fun of his new half-sibling Isaac (Gen. 21:9). Although Paul does not discuss this, Isaac was in actual danger from Ishmael, which is why Sarah wanted Ishmael gone. Hagar had filled Ishmael's soul with anger, and that can have dire consequences in the soul of a teenaged boy. The child of the slave woman persecutes the child of the free woman. So it is in Paul's day. The sons of bondage, the Judaizers, were persecuting the sons of freedom, those whom Christ made free indeed—in the context of Paul's letter, these are those in Galatia who have been made free by their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul is encouraging them to remain in freedom and not to place themselves in bondage after being made free. The Judaizers were looking to take away the freedom of those who believed in Jesus Christ. In this way, they were persecuting those reborn according to the Spirit.

We see this played out to this very day. We have Muslims from many countries teaching their children, from the youngest ages (start at ages 3 and 4), about how terrible the Jews are, and how they are descended from pigs and apes; and how they ought to be slaughtered like animals (these videos on Youtube are often deleted, so they may not still be there). Their children are born into slavery, their children are taught to hate, and they persecute the Jews. Although this is not a perfect analogy, this illustrates how even today, the son of the bond woman persecutes the son of the free woman.

Paul is now going to justify his dissertation on slavery versus freedom, using an illustration from the Old Testament.

Gal 4:30 However what does the Scripture say? "Throw out the handmaid and her son, for the son of the handmaid will not inherit with the son of the free woman."

Now Paul quotes the passage which we have been studying. The child of the slave woman (which represents adherence to a religion of merit) must be thrown out. The child of the slave woman cannot coexist with the child of promise. There is no compromise which can be made between a religion of slavery and a relationship of grace. These are, by their very nature, completely separate; just as the son of the slave woman cannot inherit what is promised to the son of the free woman.

Now, is Sarah thinking about law and grace? Has it entered into her thinking to make sure that we forever more will see a distinction of being born free or being born a slave? Not at all. She is looking to preserve her recently-weaned son. She senses animosity from Hagar and Ishmael, understands why Hagar has this animus, and she knows how this endangers Isaac. So, in Sarah's opinion, Hagar and Ishmael must go. However, none of this enters into Paul's application of this passage. Paul uses this passage to illustrate something entirely different; he uses this real historical incident and makes it an allegory of grace versus legalism, even though that was *not* the original intent of the passage.

Gal 4:31 So then, brothers, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the free woman.

Paul's first conclusion is, we, as believers in Jesus Christ (contextually, this refers to Paul and the Galatian believers), are not children of the slave woman; we are the children of freedom. And then he writes, So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law (Gal. 5:1; NLT).

So, we are born-again like Isaac was born. We are born into freedom. Therefore, it makes little sense for us to put ourselves under slavery. Now, Paul's specific application is to the Galatians and the Mosaic Law. They were not to place themselves under the law; they were not to seek circumcision; they were not to pursue any system of merit-based religion, because they are born free, just as Isaac was born free. Believers in Jesus Christ are born free; what sense does it make for that free-born believer to search out a slave-master to whom he can subjugate himself?

We can take this concept, which is taught by analogy, and expand it to include any sort of works-based religion (which is *all* religion). We may be saved by faith in Christ, and He has made us free—and yet, we can, out of our own lack of doctrine, attempt to place ourselves under a works-based religion rather than under a grace-based relationship. We recently studied **legalism** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)—a legalistic Christian way of life was therein described—and that is what many Christians do, after being saved by grace. They might become involved in political activism (I recall a church that I used to be a janitor for, and their foyer was filled with misguided political literature, none of which would have advanced the spiritual lives of anyone in that congregation[65]). A few today make the Mosaic Law their spiritual life (some even *keep the Sabbath*). Some fall into Christian cults of ritual or emotionalism, where they are guided in their lives based upon how they feel. Such churches can appear to be on opposite sides of the spectrum—one dependent upon quiet adherence to a set of ritual actions while another seems to be a series of emotional explosions going off in all parts of the church—but they are very similar inasmuch as, how the participants *feel* is what is of utmost importance. They are enslaved to their feelings, something which Paul warns against in Rom. 16:17–18.

What is most common today are churches that simply do not correctly teach the spiritual life after salvation. They do not teach about the restoration of fellowship through the naming of one's sins to God; they do not teach about growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. They may actually teach the gospel correctly (except for the misapplication of Rev. 3:20)—but then they do absolutely nothing from that point forward to advance the plan of God. They might inspire and motivate, but without teaching the mechanics of the spiritual life. Without the mechanics of the spiritual life, no believer advances in the plan of God, and no believer advances the plan of God.

At best, such a church teaches believers how to be patriots and good citizens. At worst, believers are taught political activism which is contrary to their own country; and it engages

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[65] In fact, the material in their foyer was anti-establishment as well—so it was not even good information for unbelievers or for believers who wanted to be good citizens of the United States.

them in the plan of Satan for believers. However, even in the best of these churches, rarely is the spiritual life taught; rarely are accurate mechanics taught.

Just in case you have forgotten, we covered the mechanics of the spiritual life in the first few lessons of the introduction to these lessons on Genesis.

This has been formalized in several studies:

The **Spiritual Life in the Church Age** (HTML) (PDF).

The **Basic Mechanics of the Christian Life** (aka, **The Christian Life for Dummies**) (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Along these same lines, may I suggest **The Christian Basics**, **The Fundamental Themes of Scripture**, **Dispensations**, and **Rebound**, the links to which can be found here.

This is the passage that we have been studying: Gal. 4:21–31 Tell me then, you are so eager to be subject to the Law, have you listened to what the Law says? Scripture says that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave girl and one by the freewoman. The son of the slave girl came to be born in the way of human nature; but the son of the freewoman came to be born through a promise. There is an **allegory**[66] here: these women stand for the two covenants. The one given on Mount Sinai -- that is Hagar, whose children are born into slavery; now Sinai is a mountain in Arabia and represents Jerusalem in its present state, for she is in slavery together with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and that is the one that is our mother; as scripture says: Shout for joy, you barren woman who has borne no children! Break into shouts of joy, you who were never in labour. For the sons of the forsaken one are more in number than the sons of the wedded wife. Now you, brothers, are like Isaac, children of the promise; just as at that time, the child born in the way of human nature persecuted the child born through the Spirit, so now. But what is it that scripture says? Drive away that slave girl and her son; the slave girl's son is not to share the inheritance with the son of the freewoman. So, brothers, we are the children not of the slave girl but of the freewoman. (NJB)

A Summary of Galatians 4:21–31

Slavery	Freedom
Ishmael, the son of the slave woman.	Isaac, the son of the free woman.
The children of slavery; or those who want to put themselves into slavery.	We, like Isaac, are children of promise.
Mount Sinai, in Arabia, where the Mosaic Law was given.	The Jerusalem from above.

[66] That is, Paul uses this historical incident to illustrate a spiritual truth.

A Summary of Galatians 4:21–31	
Slavery	**Freedom**
The Law of Moses puts us into bondage.	The spiritual life gives us freedom.
Judaism (actually, a mixture of Judaism and Christianity).	The Christian life.
The Jerusalem of Paul's day, from whence the teachers of Judaism came.	The Jerusalem from above, from whence comes all the blessings from God.
A religion of merit; we are taken in by God because we are so good.	A relationship of grace; God takes us because we have believed in Jesus Christ.
Spirituality by merit: in the book of Galatians, this is following the tenets of Judaism, which was a mixture of grace and legalism (which makes it all legalism). Today, this is any Christian life apart from the design of God.	Spiritually by grace. Since Jesus Christ has died for our sins, we are restored to fellowship by naming our sins to God (those sins that we commit as believers). Then we grow spiritually based upon the grace system provided for us by Jesus Christ (which grace system He test drove).
As an application of this, we have spiritual growth by means of merit. This may involve emotionalism, church attendance, doing things around the church, becoming involved in some spiritual function, etc.	Spiritual growth by means of grace. This means we learn the Word of God under God's grace system, and works are a natural outgrowth of spiritual maturity.
Paul takes a real historical incident and uses it to illustrate to the Galatians the constant struggle between legalism and grace.	

This concludes our foray into the New Testament, and we will return to the verse-by-verse exegesis of Gen. 21 in the next lesson.

Lesson 239: Genesis 21:1–16 — The Banishment of Ishmael

We have spent the better part of the past two lessons in the New Testament; now let's go back to our passage:

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 21:1–4 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. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him (whom Sarah bore to him) Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. (MKJV)

The circumcision represents the new birth (which is regeneration). From this point on, it will represent the identification of the Jews with God—they are so identified because they are reborn. This rebirth is by principle, but it is not always true in reality; that is, not all Jews believe in their God, the Revealed Lord, Y^{e}howah. Some believe in a merit-based religion and they offer their works to God, just as Cain offered the best of his produce to God. God had no interest in the works of Cain's hand; nor did he have any interest in a racial Jew who offers Him human works.

You may have dedicated your life to some cult, and they had you doing stuff every day. That will not get you saved; that will not get God's attention. You can dedicate your life to doing your part to slow down global warming, but that will not get you saved; that will not get God's attention. You can spend the final years of your life volunteering to do good things; but that will not get you saved; that will not get God's attention.

Abel had the respect of God; Abel offered God a animal whose throat had been cut. Abraham had the respect of God; he exercised faith in Y^{e}howah. God the Holy Spirit regenerates such a person, and that is represented by circumcision. Circumcision is not the new birth; circumcision represents the new birth.

Gen 21:5–7 And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac [= laughter] was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who could have said to Abraham, will Sarah suckle children? For I have borne a son to him in his old age." (MKJV mostly)

It was amazing that Isaac was born—his birth is unique in the Old Testament. It was a real historic birth—Isaac was a real historical person who was born in the manner previously described, but his birth also pointed ahead to Jesus Christ. As we have studied, his birth foreshadows the birth of Jesus Christ.

Gen 21:8–10 And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian (whom she had borne to Abraham) mocking [her son]. And she said to Abraham, Cast out this slave woman and her son. "For the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac." (MKJV mostly)

Hagar had poisoned the thinking of her own son against Isaac because the birth of Isaac suddenly meant that neither her nor her son had a guaranteed inheritance (poisoning the thinking of youth is something which is done often today in Islamic nations and in communist countries). Abraham was quite wealthy, and Ishmael was his only natural son at this time. Therefore, he would have inherited all of Abraham's wealth (this was Hagar's retirement plan). There was a great deal of anger revealed in Ishmael's treatment of Isaac, which animus he had no doubt gotten from his mother (who would have been in on this inheritance). The viciousness of Ishmael's behavior caused Sarah to demand that Hagar and Ishmael be given the boot. She wanted to protect her son and his inheritance.

Genesis 21:11 And the thing was quite displeasing to Abraham, because of his son.

The verb here is râʿaʿ (עָרַע) [pronounced *raw-ĢAHĢ*], which means, *to be evil; to be bad, to displease;* possibly *to be unpleasant and embittering; to break, to shatter*. Strong's #7489 BDB #949. More literally, this reads, And so the word is evil in [two] eyes of Abraham because of his son.

> However, the NET Bible gives a good explanation here: *The verb râʿaʿ (עָרַע) [pronounced raw-ĢAHĢ] often refers to what is morally or ethically "evil." It usage here suggests that Abraham thought Sarah's demand was ethically (and perhaps legally) wrong*.[67]

Abraham was quite unhappy about Sarah demanding that her slave-woman and her son be cast out, because he loved Ishmael. Obviously, Sarah did not feel the same way about him. She was apparently concerned for the safety of her own child, and this concern appears to be warranted (this danger to Isaac is not stated outright, but it is certainly implied). Furthermore, by this time, both Hagar and Ishmael were capable of taking care of themselves (which was not true when Hagar was pregnant with Ishmael when she left Abraham's compound before and God brought her back).

As slaves, their ability to act in their own interest for their own survival will be somewhat limited. Slaves have many of their basic needs taken care of; therefore, they are not used to attending to their basic needs. Abraham provided Ishmael and Hagar food and shelter and clothing. That is what a master does for a slave. These slaves were not used to providing these basic things for themselves. It takes some planning and forethought and even some self-discipline to take care of oneself, and Hagar and Ishmael will have to learn this on their own.

We have several generations of people in the United States who are enslaved to our massive welfare system (which is spread across several different state and federal departments); so that they would have a very difficult time fending for themselves in today's world. Such people are sheltered from the notion of hard work, self-discipline, self-reliance, and the concept of saving for the future (or even thinking about the future). They are being taught that, if you need food, shelter and your electric bill paid, then you go to the government to get it. Some even go to the government in order to get a cellphone. They are slaves to the government just as Hagar and her son are slaves.

Genesis 21:12 And God said to Abraham, "Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the boy and because of your slave woman. In all that Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice. For in Isaac your Seed will be called."

As usual, we are not told the circumstances of this communication. Did God speak to Abraham in a dream? Did he come to Abraham face to face? In any case, Abraham is now to listen to and go along with Sarah's demands.

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[67] *The Net Bible®;* © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm; Gen. 21:11.

There is a natural separation which must take place between the child of the slave woman and the child of the free woman. Therefore, this time, when Sarah puts her foot down and says, "Hagar and Ishmael need to leave;" God tells Abraham to go with it. It will be through Isaac and not through Ishmael that Abraham's Seed (Jesus Christ) will be called.

When we studied this, Paul used this to illustrate the complete separation which must exist between legalism and grace. The believer is either on the grace side of things or the works side of things. The believer either continues in a grace-relationship with God or he returns (reverts) to a works-based religion—a religion based upon merit. As pointed out, that is not the thrust of this narrative in our context; Paul appropriated it for that cause.

Genesis 21:13 And also, I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman, because he is your seed.

God promises to Abraham to bless the boy Ishmael, and to make a great nation of him. This is again, **blessing by association** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Ishmael will be blessed because he is related to Abraham. Ishmael will be preserved by God, much as Lot was preserved; and Ishmael will blessed as well. There is a difference: when Lot *chose* to separate from Abraham, this blessing by association went by the wayside; Ishmael is being required to separate from Abraham. For this reason, the blessing to Ishmael is greater than the blessing to Lot.

How many people are preserved and blessed because of their relationship to a mature or maturing believer? This is a very real thing. Families, friends, loved ones; schools, businesses, military units, corporations; churches and various organizations are all blessed through their association with mature and maturing believers. If you are a mature or maturing believer, everything that you are associated with should receive some measure of blessing. You ought to be able to recognize it. If you are a mature or maturing believer, you ought to be able to look at your family, your business, your various associations (neighborhood, city, state; schools, military unit), etc. and be able to see that these things are being blessed and/or protected by God.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. often gave the example of a business which has had a wonderfully successful year; and they are having an end-of-the-year party, and the CEO and the vice presidents are sipping champagne and toasting each other for their great financial wizardry and business insight; but down in the basement, in his own little office of janitorial supplies, is the janitor, who by himself or with a crew, starts at the bottom floor and works his way up to the top, night after night, sweeping, cleaning and collecting trash. And it is this janitor who has advanced from salvation to becoming a mature believer in Jesus Christ; and God has given great blessing to this huge organization because of this janitor—whose name most of these executives do not even know.[68]

Several times, we are reminded in Genesis, about Abraham's wealth (and later, about Isaac's great wealth); and everyone associated with Abraham was therefore blessed. And

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[68] This was not any specific company to which Bob was referring. It is an illustration.

when Lot, by mutual agreement, struck out on his own, taking with him approximately one-half of a very successful business, ended up with very nearly nothing, eking out an existence in some cave several miles from a destroyed Sodom, still alive and still preserved by God, but with very little else to show for it. Lot became associated with the degeneracy of Sodom rather than with the spiritual maturity of Abraham, and therefore, his personal wealth was a reflection of this change of association. This is what Lot chose for himself. At no time did he say, "I am surrounded by degeneracy and difficulties; I need to go back and work for my Uncle Abraham." His daughters at no time said, "We live in a cave with our father, Lot; and there are no prospects here. We are better off working for Abraham as slaves than we are in this cave." This would have been true and the daughters, had they come to that conclusion, would have been greatly blessed. However, Lot and his daughters choose continued separation from Abraham.

On the other hand, Ishmael is not moving away from Abraham because this is what he wants to do. This is a separation that must take place; this is a separation which is of God. Therefore, God will remain with Ishmael and Hagar.

Genesis 21:14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a skin container of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder. And he gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Beersheba is in the southern portion of Judah (the most southern territory of Israel), which puts Hagar and Ishmael near the Sinai desert. At that time, this was mostly an unpopulated area. The name of this place—Beersheba—will be given to this area later in this chapter; and then the same name is given again to this place several decades later by Isaac—both, in fact, under very similar circumstances.

The Dismissal of Hagar by Dutch painter Adriaen van der Werff.

This suggests that, whoever recorded this narrative (probably Abraham, but it could have been Isaac), it was likely *after* Abraham's meeting at the end of this chapter; or after Isaac's meeting several chapters from now. That, or this is a gloss, which means a change of text after the fact, to give a more well-known name to a specific area.

Hagar by VanderWerfft from the University of Virginia website.

Hagar and Ishmael do not carefully note their supplies; they do not think ahead; they do not plan days in advance for when their water runs out.

Genesis 21:15 And the water was gone in the skin flask, and she cast the boy under one of the shrubs.

She and the boy have walked a great distance, and they are out of provisions. It is to the point where, it appears as though the boy has fainted or is very weak. She places him under a shrub, for shade, and walks a good distance away from him.

Here is the problem: Hagar and Ishmael have been slaves all of this time. This means that all of their needs had been seen to. At no point in time did they have to worry about food and water; or a place to sleep. As slaves, these things were provided for them. So now, here they find themselves, free, but in a world where they must do for themselves, and they are not quite ready to do that.

To be fair, nearly everyone in America, if they are suddenly thrust out into some wild area, could not take care of themselves. We are very dependent today upon the infrastructure of society. If the grocery store around the corner suddenly closed down, along with all of the others, that would change everything. If our electricity went off or we no longer had easy access to clean, fresh water, our lives would change dramatically, and many of us could not survive these changes.

Yet, even with all of this infrastructure, we have many in our society who, if their checks from the government stopped coming in the mail, and if their food card stopped being replenished, would have no idea what to do either—even with all the infrastructure. Many of them are generational welfare recipients and they have become accustomed to not working or to only working 20–30 hours a week at low paying jobs. If, for any reason, they suddenly find themselves having to work 40 hours a week or perhaps 2 jobs just to make ends meet—this would be a great challenge to them, as they have been enslaved by their government through a bevy of welfare benefits. They have come to expect this level of care from the government, as something that they believe ought to be provided for them. Two generations ago, nearly no one would have thought that it was the government's job to feed our children. But today, there are significant portions of the United States where they simply expect government to do this.

So Hagar and Ishmael, who should have taken stock of their supplies and determined their next move days before these supplies ran out, came to a point where they needed food and water, and there was none to be found.

Genesis 21:16 And Hagar went and sat down across from Ishmael, a good ways off, about a bowshot. For she said, Let me not see the death of the boy. And she sat across from him, and lifted up her voice, and cried.

Hagar is off several hundred yards away, not wanting to see her boy suffer and die from privation. They have not gotten to the point where, self-preservation kicks in, and they

know they have to stop and provide food and water for themselves. That water flask and whatever other provisions that they had only takes them so far. They did not determine, at some point, that they needed to stop, and find water and a source of food, before moving on. This should have been done long before they used up their resources.

If I was to make a guess, I believe that Hagar had the intention of going to Egypt, even though Egypt was too far away for them to get to, given their limited supplies. Thought should have been given to what they had, and since this would not take them to Egypt, an alternate plan needed to be formed. However, they developed no alternate plan. They were not used to planning ahead or planning on how to get their basic sustenance. They went until their supplies had been used up, and then stopped, expecting to die.

However, this is where God wanted them to be. God did not want Hagar and Ishmael to live in Egypt. God has a plan for their lives because they are associated with Abraham (Ishmael is his son by Hagar). Therefore, God is not going to cast these two aside.

Furthermore, Hagar believes in the Revealed God. God has appeared to her before. Therefore, God will not simply cast aside those who are His.

Lesson 240: Genesis 21:9–18 Ishmael and Hagar in the Desert-Wilderness

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 21:9–16 But Sarah saw Ishmael mocking [the recently-weaned Isaac]. [Ishmael is] the one Hagar the Egyptian bore to Abraham. So Sarah said to Abraham, "Drive out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a co-heir with my son Isaac!" Now this was a very difficult thing for Abraham because Ishmael was his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be concerned about the boy and your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced through Isaac. But I will also make a nation of the slave's son because he is your offspring." [= blessing by association] Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put them on Hagar's shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she said, "I can't bear to watch the boy die!" Therefore, as she sat nearby, she wept loudly.

As we studied previously, slaves are not good at providing their own basic needs. They have had food, clothing and shelter provided for them for most of their lives (Hagar was probably a teen when taken as a slave by Abraham and Sarah). Ishmael was still a young man, in his mid-teens (Abraham was 86 when Ishmael was born; Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born; and at this point, Isaac is being weaned from his mother).

It is likely that they needed to be separated from Sarah and her son Isaac, because Ishmael would have posed a real threat to his much younger half-brother, being poisoned with the hatred of his mother (which would have grown).

Genesis 21:17 And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar out of the heavens, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.

The boy is calling out, at this point, possibly for his mother and possibly for God; and the Angel of God speaks to Hagar. The Angel of God = Revealed Lord = the preincarnate Jesus Christ. See the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** (HTML) (PDF).

It is curious that nearly every encounter with God has God beginning the conversation with a question. What appears to be the case is, when God speaks to an unbeliever or to a believer out of fellowship, then He initiates the conversation with a question—which requires an answer. When speaking to a believer in fellowship, God does not need to begin the conversation with a question.

It is also worth noting that Ishmael may not even have an actual voice at this time, being parched to the point of death; but his thoughts have apparently gone to God, as he looks to God—in his own thinking—and calls out to the God of Abraham—again, in his own mind. He does not speak through an audible voice that your or I would have heard. But God heard his voice.

God hearing the voice of Ishmael *where he is* does not refer to geographical location only; but to his youth, his psyche and his inability to provide for himself and for his mother. This all has to change. All of a sudden, Ishmael will have to go from being a snotty and angry teenager—sharing his mother's anger for being cut out of a great inheritance—to providing for himself and for his mother, which set of circumstances causes him to grow up rather quickly. Up until now, he has led a rather idyllic existence, as the son of Abraham.

As an aside, slavery under Abraham, would have been an idyllic existence. The basic needs of Ishmael and his mother Hagar were always seen to by Abraham. They had water, they had food and they a place to sleep. Abraham clothed them. Furthermore, Abraham loved Ishmael. So, after years of this, it was not easy for Hagar and Ishmael to suddenly begin taking care of themselves, working to take care of themselves and planning ahead.

Freedom and self-determination does not mean that everything is easy. Ishmael and his mother have to think; they have to plan; they have to determine day-by-day how to provide for themselves—something that they have never had to do before.

God continues to speak to Hagar:

Genesis 21:18 Rise up, lift up the boy and hold him up with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

God sends her back to her boy, to hold up his head (I assume) with her hand. God makes the same promise to Hagar as He did to Abraham. Even though the line of promise goes through both Abraham and Isaac, that does not mean that God simply discards Hagar and

her son. They are both related to Abraham, and therefore blessed because for that. Blessing by association. Furthermore, God's appearance to Hagar indicates that she is a believer in the Revealed Lord (which fact should have been clear in a previous passage where God had appeared to her—Gen. 16:7–12). So, even though Hagar and Ishmael are not a part of the promises God made to Abraham, that does not mean that they have fallen outside of the plan of God.

Genesis 21:19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave drink to the boy.

In the midst of this desert, she sees a well, which had eluded her before. This provides them enough water to survive. This provision by God suggests that both Hagar and Ishmael are believers; that they believe in Jehovah Elohim (which would make sense, working so closely with Abraham and Sarah; her son being raised by Abraham). For all we know, Ishmael's prayers while dying of thirst may have been his salvation prayer (you do not have to pray in order to be saved, but a prayer would have indicated faith in the Revealed God).

It says that God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. I am sure you have had this experience—you take the same route to work each and every day, and on the 1000th time, you look over to the left and you see a business, a house, a park, a church, or some prominent structure that you have never seen before. It just never entered into your field of vision before, even though you have driven by that structure a thousand times before. This is what happened to Hagar. The well has been there all of this time, but she just did not see it until *God opened her eyes*.

Hagar and Ishmael (painted by Carl Bauerle; engraved by W. Roffe). From Ancestry Images.

Hagar and Ishmael painted by Carl Bauerle and engraved by W. Roffe from Ancestry Images.

Now, why doesn't God the Holy Spirit say, instead, "Then God caused her to look over to the left, and there was the well of water"? This narrative is analogous to the gospel; this is analogous to our Lord offering springs of eternal waters to us. When we believe in Christ, at that point, God has *opened our eyes* to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We may have heard the gospel a 1000 times, but suddenly, we hear it and it makes sense and we understand that there is a decision to be made. The mechanics are, God the Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit (as an unbeliever, we are spiritually dead, which means our human spirit is not functioning) and thereby the Holy Spirit makes spiritual information understandable to us

(spiritual information is not something the unbeliever can fully understand—1Cor. 2:14). The Holy Spirit takes the gospel of Jesus Christ so that it suddenly make sense. We have heard "Christ died for your sins" a thousand times; but then, one day we hear it, and we understand this applies to us, and that all we need to do is believe in Him. This becomes a decision that we must make.

As a child, I learned all of the Christmas hymns and sang them at school, but I did not really know what they meant. I sing them today in church, and they are filled with profound spiritual meaning; but as a child, I only knew them as relating to Jesus being born. All of the other doctrinal information found in many of these songs was completely lost on me. I had only the most basic understanding of Jesus at the time—therefore, since I had not believed in Him, there was no foundation upon which to build spiritual understanding.

Genesis 21:19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin-canteen with water, and gave drink to the boy.

Here, God the Holy Spirit chooses language intentionally so that we can take this real life narrative and derive a spiritual application from it. A few verses back, Paul took a passage from this narrative and gave it a whole new twist. Ishmael makes fun of his new half-brother, and Hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the household of Abraham. Then Paul sets up the analogy of grace believers and legalists, or law versus grace. Just like Paul, we can take an historical narrative and give it a doctrinal application. However, to be clear, you cannot make a brand new doctrine up based upon a parallel to an historical narrative. You must take a truth which is clearly taught, and then certain historical narratives will, by analogy, teach that same truth. That is what Paul did. He used the existing Scriptures as his authority, even though this is just an analogy that he presented.

Hence, taking this passage and showing parallels to hearing and understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ is valid, because the principles related in the gospel are true and real. In this way, the passage can be illustrative of an established truth.

Genesis 21:20 And God was with the boy, and he grew, and lived in the wilderness, and became an archer.

The water from the well is gives them enough to survive. What is implied here is, Ishmael becomes an archer in order to kill food with a bow and arrow. He may have even learned this from his father, Abraham. Again, Ishmael is in his early or mid-teens, which is a reasonable time for him to take responsibility for himself and for his mother. It was quite a shock—a reversal of fortune, if you will—to go from being heir to one of the greatest private fortunes in the ancient world to dying of privation out in the desert. However, with God's help and guidance, Ishmael and his mother adjust to their new life. Ishmael learns how to develop a skill which will provide them with food. It is even possible that Abraham had given Ishmael a bow at some point—perhaps as a part of their provisions.

Ishmael will enjoy another reversal of fortune and become the father of 12 great Arab tribes in that region south of Canaan, which we will study in Gen. 25:12–18.

Genesis 21:21 And he lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him out of the land of Egypt.

The wilderness of Paran is below Edom, which is just south of the Dead Sea. It is just north of the Sinai Peninsula. At this time, they would be right in the middle of a desert-wilderness area. It is less barren in our narrative than it is today; but it was sparsely populated. Hagar and Ishmael apparently became established there, and afterward, Hagar, an Egyptian by birth, went down to Egypt and found a woman to bring back to Ishmael.

From Map 24 of the Bible Atlas from e–sword. Egypt is to the far left of the map.

Map of the Wilderness of Paran.

In order to become established, Ishmael and his mother needed a home and they needed a regular supply of food. They never had to do this before; and now they find themselves forced to take care of themselves, and they do it. Becoming established is the first step. Hagar cannot simply go to Egypt and say, “My son and I are camping out in the desert, next to a well; do you want to marry him?” She also needs to show a prospective bride pictures on her iphone of their home and of the family bbq’s in order to entice her. Hagar must sell her son as someone who is self-sufficient, self-reliant; and who has made a life for himself in the wilderness. Hagar can certainly do this, as long as it is accomplished beforehand.

Therefore, we may reasonably assume that, after a few years, they established some sort of residence—probably living in tents—and they established a regular resource of food and water. And with this, made a life reasonable enough to where Hagar can return to her home country and find a woman willing to marry her son Ishmael (which we will examine in greater detail in Gen. 25:12–18).

In fact, very likely, Hagar did not simply make this trek alone, but, Ishmael may have even purchased some slaves from caravans which passed through there. He may have raised donkeys or camels and other animals. It is still a long trek from where they are to Egypt, so it is unlikely that Hagar set out one day on foot to take care of this.

You will notice what God did not do. God did not provide them with food—or if He did, it was not on a continual basis. God expects us to take care of ourselves. Work is fundamental to humankind. God did not expect Hagar and Ishmael to find a park bench, sit on it, and wait for wild game to wander up to them—that is a perversion of the faith we are to have in God. Ishmael used his time to develop skill as an archer, and he was able to provide food her himself and his mother in this way.

As we have seen in the United States; and as we will study the Exodus generation, if food is simply provided, then dependence is formed in the souls of those who simple take what is given them. After that, a sense of entitlement develops—all of which is taught in the book of Exodus. In fact, one generation became so entitled and yet so lacking in faith, that God killed them in the desert before taking their sons and daughters into the Land of Promise (Num. 14:28–30 Psalm 95:7–11 Heb. 3:10–11, 17–19).

Work is fundamental to the human race. For some reason, we have this vision of dying and then going up to heaven and sitting around on clouds with angels playing harps. This is silly. God had work for Adam in the garden before he sinned; God had work for Adam that was even more difficult after he sinned. Therefore, it is not hard to imagine that, after we have died and are face to face with Jesus Christ that we will have responsibilities related to work at that time as well. If you understand work as being important and fulfilling, then you will understand this.

Work is a part of the laws of divine establishment. It is, in fact, one of the divine institutions, something that we studied back in lesson #90. Man (I am using *man* in the generic sense, to stand for *men and women*) was designed to work. For most men, there is a satisfaction of accomplishment that comes with work. Without it, men become less focused and more prone errant behavior.

I have personally known several people on various forms of welfare, and, in nearly all cases, this was not a temporary subsistence but a lifelong lifestyle; and for most of them, it led to their being involved in personally destructive behavior—because they had the time and money to mess up their own lives. When a person works one or two jobs, then it is more difficult for them screw up their own lives—they don't have time to do that.

By way of application, God did not design us to sit around and receive a check from the government. Nor will Ishmael and Hagar sit around in their tents and wait for God to provide them with food.

Making a second application; God did not design us to retire. As we get older, it makes more sense for us to slow down; and, if we have been doing things as we should, we are able to reduce our work load; but we are not designed to spend the last 20–30 years of our lives on vacation.

I had a grandfather who worked until around age 90. My mother, who is in her mid-80's, only recently retired from her own business but continues to work at another. This is a good thing. This is healthy. And this is God's plan.

Lesson 241: Genesis 21:22–31 The Covenant between Abraham and Abimelech

In previous lessons, we have studied the separation of Ishmael from his father Abraham; and we looked at Paul using that as a springboard for teaching grace versus legalism. Then we followed Ishmael and his mother Hagar in the area of Beersheba.

Now we have a switch of scenery. This is a *meanwhile, back on the ranch* change. We leave Hagar and Ishmael, and return to Abraham and his life. However, what may have been the case is, the writer of this portion of Scripture mentions Beersheba, and then thinks, *perhaps I should say why is it named "Beersheba."*

Genesis 21:22 And it happened at that time, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do.

The translation *it happened at that time* is fairly accurate. There are ways to indicate, in the Hebrew, this one incident follows another incident. Often this is done with, *and so it is;* but it can be even more specific with *and so it is after these things*. But that is not what we have here.

We do not know who recorded this portion of Genesis, although I would say that this was probably Abraham; and possibly Isaac who did. Again, I believe that this is passed along verbally, from one generation to the next (I believe that this was the case for the books of Genesis and Job); and these were actually committed to writing around the time of Moses or earlier when the Jews were enslaved to Egypt.

The way this verse begins suggests that this took place somewhere around this time, but whether it is before or after the birth of Isaac, is not indicated. Therefore, this short section is not placed here chronologically.

Why is this not placed chronologically? Let me give you the viewpoint of the human author. Whether this is Abraham or Isaac writing this, they spoke of Ishmael and Hagar traveling down by Beersheba. This reminds the author of why that area had the name of Beersheba, so that is what is covered here, at the end of Gen. 21.

You will recall Abimelech king of Gerar from the previous chapter, where Abraham convinced him that his wife, Sarah, was not his wife; and, as a result, Abimelech took Sarah into his harem. However, that has all been since straightened out. Abraham came clean and Abimelech released Sarah back to Abraham's care.

Despite the fact that Abraham was wrong in his behavior, Abimelech also recognized that God was with him. This notion was helped along by God appearing to Abimelech in a dream, warming that He would kill Abimelech if he kept Sarah. This was a very powerful dream, and Abimelech was strongly affected by it, as was his state department (Gen. 20:2). Therefore, we may reasonably conclude that Abimelech is a believer in the Revealed Lord—in the God of Abraham. Phicol, who leads Abimelech's army, is also a

believer in the Revealed Lord. That is why Abimelech brings him along. The Greek includes the name of a third man, *Ahuzzath* (also spelled *Ochozath*), who is called Abimelech's friend (or associate).

This is a marvelous vignette because we will find a similar occurrence in the life of Isaac several decades off into the future (at the end of Gen. 26).

Genesis 21:22 And it happened at that time, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do.

Abraham and his compound live in Beersheba (not called by that name yet), and this is an area controlled by Abimelech from Gerar, but an area that is sparsely populated. Abimelech and Phicol have to travel a bit of distance to get to Abraham. However, they obviously know where Abraham is and they have no problem with him living on Philistine-controlled territory.

They recognize that Abraham has a close association with God, and this is the reason why these men come to see Abraham.

Genesis 21:23 Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son. Do to me according to the kindness that I have sworn to you, and to the land in which you have lived."

Abimelech believes that Abraham has a true relationship with the God of the universe; but he also distrusts Abraham, since he lied to him in the previous chapter. Therefore, he asks for Abraham to swear by Y^{e}howah in their dealings, with him, his son and his grandson. Abimelech is certain that, if Abraham swears by his God, then Abimelech will get the straight dope from him.

This is an unfortunate fact that, no believer lives up to Jesus Christ. This is often the complaint lodged against Christians in the outside world: "You're nothing but a hypocrite!" Which is true of everyone, if you dig down deep enough (unless they claim to have no standards whatsoever—which is true of very few people). In any case, because Jesus is perfect, our shortcomings as believers are much more apparent by comparison. This is not to be touted or excused, but simply recognized; and we have the means by which to deal with this (rebound, or naming our sins to God; followed by the intake of Bible doctrine).

Abimelech seems to accept that Abraham has been dishonest with him, but that Abraham is also closely related to God. Abimelech insures that this agreement will be upheld, as he requires Abraham to swear by Elohim (= God).

Abimelech has control over the area where Abraham is grazing his sheep and cattle. However, Abimelech is not looking to restrict Abraham or to cause him any sort of grief, but to secure a covenantal relationship with him.

So, what is Abimelech's motivation? Why does he grab his top general and go find Abraham, and try to make a pact with him? Abimelech knows that Abraham is related to God, so he understands clearly that a pact with Abraham secures blessing for himself and for his nation. Abimelech says it straight out: "God is with you, Abraham, in all that you do." **Blessing by association** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)—is a concept which many of those in the ancient world understood, but which we do not appear to understand today. In fact, most believers and unbelievers do not understand this concept today (which is not a surprise as believers today understand very little Bible doctrine). For most believers, all they can understand is a 5-page Bible, at most (that is, if they were to write down everything that they know about the spiritual life and their relationship to God through Jesus Christ, they might fill up 5 pages). Abimelech, a gentile, recognizes Abraham's relationship to God and he wants a piece of it, even if only by means of a contract.

Genesis 21:24 And Abraham said, "I will swear."

Abraham readily swears to deal honestly with Abimelech.

Genesis 21:25 Then Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

Abraham did have a beef with Abimelech. There was a water well that Abraham had used for awhile and Abimelech's servants (probably members of his army) took this well away from Abraham's men, using violence.

Genesis 21:26 And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing, neither did you tell me, neither have I even heard of it, except today."

Abimelech says that this is the first time he is hearing about this matter. In other words, he did not send out his own men to take the well—or, to appropriate the use of this well—from Abraham. Abimelech would not have done this. We know this why? Because of Abraham's relationship to God. Abimelech is not going to cause Abraham grief for that reason.

Genesis 21:27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and both of them made a covenant [= a contract, a pact].

Apparently, for the use of the well, Abraham has set aside some sheep and oxen for Abimelech. Or, Abraham is paying court costs or putting up some kind of a financial guarantee. In any case, they come to a mutual agreement concerning their relationship, the land where Abraham lives, and this well.

Abraham was essentially entering into a lease agreement with the king of that land. This was the way things were done in that day. Abimelech controlled the land, and Phicol, his top general, patrolled it. This was a land-lease that was being enacted between these two parties.

Genesis 21:28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

Then Abraham does an unusual thing—he takes 7 ewe lambs and sets them off by themselves. Apparently, they are not mentioned in the lease agreement.

Genesis 21:29 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What are these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?"

Abimelech asks, "Why have you done this? What are these ewe lambs all about? They are not named in our contract."

Genesis 21:30 And he said, "For you will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, so that they may be a witness to me that I have dug this well."

Abimelech is to take these ewe lambs, so that, every time he looks at them, he realizes that there is a portion of land which belongs to Abraham, and that he actually dug the well in question. Furthermore, he is acknowledging that this well had been taken from Abraham.

What Abraham wants is full rights to the well which he has dug; and these ewe lambs are either a present or a payment for these rights.

> Keil and Delitzsch: *[Abraham] selected seven lambs and set them by themselves; and when Abimelech inquired what they were, he told him to take them from his hand, that they might be to him (Abraham) for a witness that he had dug the well. It was not to redeem the well, but to secure the well as his property against any fresh claims on the part of the Philistines, that the present was given; and by the acceptance of it, Abraham's right of possession was practically and solemnly acknowledged*.[69]

Now, let's stop for a moment and ask, *just why is this narrative here?* There are two very important things which are associated with Isaac: his birth and his being sacrificed by his father. These are foremost in the plan of God. His unique birth tells us about the birth of Jesus to come; and Abraham offering up Isaac as a sacrifice speaks of Jesus dying for our sins. But in between, we have Hagar and Ishmael being separated from the Abraham household, and then we have this treaty between Abraham and these gentiles. Why are these things here?

God the Holy Spirit knows the end from the beginning; He inserts narratives and tells narratives in such a way with purpose. Nothing in the Bible is just random.

Jesus, through the first half of His ministry, went to the Jews and offered them the kingdom. Although many believed in Him, many Jews rejected Him, including those of the pharisees and sadducees, who actually knew some Scripture. During this first half, Jesus

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[69] Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament;* from e-Sword; Job 21:22–30.

also did many miracles and signs and wonders, but these men still rejected Him, finally saying that He was doing these things in the power of Beelzebub (a reference to Satan). At that point, the was a separation and a limitation of His gracious works. Jesus no longer went to the Jews in general—they had been given enough time to know about Him and to either accept Him or reject Him.

At that point, Jesus began to perform fewer healings, they were often done before a very private audience, and those who witnessed it (or were cured) were told *not* to tell others about it (see Luke 8:37, 51, 54–56 11:29 Matt. 9:30). At that point, Jesus began to speak of gentiles (He mentions Jonah, who was a prophet to gentiles in Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba, who comes to Solomon for His wisdom—Luke 11:29–31). What Jesus is talking about is the response of gentiles to Him, to His disciples, and to His ministry.

Then Jesus excoriates the pharisees, who ought to know Who Jesus is, who ought to be rejoicing at His presence, but who have soundly rejected Him (Luke 11:37–54). Then Jesus warns that he will bring division within a family (Luke 12:51–53). Then He mourns Jerusalem, that kills the prophets (Luke 13:34–35). Then Jesus tells a parable, about a man who has a supper, and he invites his friends, all of whom reject this invitation (these are the Jews rejecting Jesus), so then this man opens up this dinner to anyone who will come (and those who come represent the gentiles who will accept Jesus' invitation). Luke 14:16–24. Then He makes this remarkable statement: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26; MKJV) In Luke 16, Jesus spoke of this Jew who was in torments while a beggar, Lazarus, was in Abraham's bosom. The Jew in torments knew Abraham, and invoked Abraham's name, but he remained in torments. Then he asked for word to be sent to his family's house, that his brothers might avoid torments. And Jesus said, "And he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31)

Jesus would, at this point, also go to the gentiles, beginning with the Samaritans who are half Jewish (Luke 17:11–19). In the first half of Luke 18, Jesus teaches the fallacious thinking of the Jews at that time. He teaches about his being rejected by the Jews in Luke 20:1–18. Isaiah warns the Jews that they would do this: Behold, You shall call a nation that You do not know; a nation that did not know You shall run to You because of Jehovah Your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified You. Seek Jehovah while He may be found; call on Him while He is near (Isa. 55:5–6).

Let's sum this up. There is a separation which is taking place in the ministry of Jesus Christ, from those who have rejected Him and His offer of the kingdom, which is many Jews, who should have believed in Him. This is the people (the family) which should have accepted Him but did not. Hagar and Ishmael represent those who have rejected Jesus, who should have accepted Him. They rejected Isaac, the promised one of God, and so they were separated from the household of Abraham. Just as all the Jews should have accepted and recognized Jesus Christ, so Hagar and Ishmael should have accepted and recognized the importance of Isaac. A separation will take place because they did not accept Isaac for whom he was.

In the second narrative, there are gentiles who went out of their way to establish an association with Abraham (Abimelech and Phicol), just as there would be a great ministry to the gentiles, both during the public ministry of Jesus and the ministries of His disciples (Paul is particularly well-known for going to the gentiles with the gospel—Acts 13:46 18:6 28:28).

There is one more thing that is important in these narratives: *water,* which often represents the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus stood up and loudly proclaimed, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' " (John 7:37b–38; Isa. 58:11; see also John 3:5). Water is the key to the survival of Hagar and Ishmael. Without that well of water, they would have died right there, within 24 hours. They did believe in the God of Abraham, although they did not take their faith any further, as did Abraham and Sarah (Rom. 4:20–21 Heb. 11:11–12).

Water also represents Bible doctrine (Eph. 5:26 1John 5:6). Once we are saved, then we are nourished daily by the water of the Word of God. This is what Abraham secured for himself when in the land of Abimelech. He got complete and total access to the well of water, which sustained him and his family.

Therefore, the water of the Word of God saves us and that same water sustains us.

Now that we know what these narratives represent, we can return to them.

Genesis 21:31 This is why he called that place Beer-sheba, because they swore, both of them, there.

Beer-sheba means *well of the seven-fold oath*. *Sheba* means *to take an oath; to seven oneself*. What appears to have happened is, Abraham will give this area the name *Beersheba;* but this name will not be retained by the local population. However, Abraham's son, Isaac, will later make a similar covenant with the next generation of Philistines, and he will give this well the very same name, and, when he does that, that name will stick. Forever after, this area would be known as Beersheba.

Lesson 242: Genesis 21:22–33 The Covenant between Abraham and Abimelech

Genesis 21:22–23 And it came to pass, during this same time period, that Abimelech, Ochozath his friend, and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in all the you do. Now, therefore, you will swear to me by your God, right here that you will not lie to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. Instead, you will act toward me as graciously as I have acted with you and with regards to the land where you now temporarily reside."

Abimelech, the king of Gerar, recognized that Abraham had a relationship with God, and that he desired blessing by association for himself, his family and his kingdom. They had

met before when Abraham had lied to him about his wife Sarah, claiming that she was his sister (making it appear as if she was fair game). Abimelech took her as his wife and God came to Abimelech and warned him that, she was Abraham's wife and that if he did not release her to Abraham, God would kill him and his family. This put the fear of God into Abimelech and to his state cabinet, and he straightened out things right away.

At the same time, he developed a relationship with Abraham and allowed Abraham to live on his land.

Here he comes to Abraham to make a treaty, where Abraham would mutually agree to treat one another honestly and graciously, and for that to continue. Abraham would be allowed, therefore, to continue to live on this land.

This is one of the many times that the promise of Gen. 12:1–3 was fulfilled: Jehovah said to Abram, "Leave your land and your family and your father's home, and go to the land I will show you. Then I will make you into a great people and I will bless you; and I could make your reputation in that land great. Therefore, be a blessing to all you meet. Consequently, I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. Furthermore, all mankind will be blessed because of you."

Abraham bound himself to an oath with Abimelech—an oath of mutual allegiance.

Genesis 21:24–25 And Abraham said, "I bind myself with this oath." Then Abraham complained to Abraham about the water well which army personnel of Abimelech's army had taken violently from Abraham.

Abraham agreed, but then complained about the disagreement that he had had with men from Abimelech's army.

Genesis 21:26 Then Abimelech said, "I did not know until today who had done this thing; and, you know, you have not informed me of this until today."

From all we have seen, Abimelech appears to be an honorable man, so claiming ignorance here was likely the truth.

Genesis 21:27–29 Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and he gave them to Abimelech. Then the two of them entered into a pact. Then Abraham set apart seven ewe-lambs by themselves. So Abimelech said to Abraham, "Why did you set these seven ewe lambs by themselves?"

Abraham sets aside sheep and oxen as a part of this contract, but then sets aside 7 ewe lambs as well. Abimelech is confused by this. That is because they were not a part of the contract that they had agreed upon.

Genesis 21:30–31 And he replied, “Here’s why: you will take these seven lambs from me in order to establish that I dug this well.” For this reason, Abraham named that place Beer-sheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

Abraham wants these lambs to be a witness to his complete control of the well that his men dug.

Recall that Abimelech is the political leader of his city—one of the great Philistine cities of that era; and Phicol is his general. And yet, they come to Abraham, who lives on the land, but does not own any of it (apart from a burial plot which he will purchase in Gen. 23)—a man whom God has greatly blessed. These Philistines recognize the spiritual power of Abraham. They recognize that he is related to God. These are two (or three[70]) very powerful men of that era; great celebrities of that era. Yet they go to Abraham, not because they are afraid of him or because they think Abraham might rise up against them, but they go to Abraham in order to further bind themselves to the God of Abraham by association with Abraham; by a treaty with Abraham. Blessing by association.

How did Abimelech know this? He was able to view with his own eyes the prosperity of Abraham. But also, because of Gen. 20:6–7 And God said to Abimelech in a dream, "I too know that you did this with the innocence of your heart, and I too have withheld you from sinning to Me; therefore, I did not let you touch Abraham’s wife [whom Abimelech had taken to himself]. And now, return the man's wife, because he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live; but if you do not return her, know that you will surely die, you and all that is yours." And you will recall that had a very powerful effect, not only upon Abimelech, but upon his state department as well. And Abimelech arose early in the morning, and he summoned all his servants, and he spoke all these words in their ears; and the men were very frightened (Gen. 20:8; JPCT). So Abimelech understood that Abraham was God’s man; and that Abimelech preserved and even prospered his own people based upon his relationship with Abraham.

So far, all of this is review, but let’s tie these narratives together.

Let’s go back to Hagar and Ishmael. They would have moved about with Abraham’s compound for a period of perhaps 20 years (Ishmael for his entire life, which was probably around 15 years at this time). Therefore, they knew Beersheba. Abraham had taken his flock to Beersheba, which meant his entire compound would have moved there. He is not living there at the same time that Hagar goes there—that is, these are not incidents which occur within a month or two of each other. The one we are studying probably precedes the narrative about Hagar. However, the human author speaks of Hagar and Ishmael going to Beersheba, so this human author explains why they took that route (they were familiar with the area); and how this place got its name (which is the narrative we are studying now). For all we know, we could even be talking about the same well.

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[70] The third name is in the Greek text, but not in the Hebrew.

However, these narratives that we are studying are not in chronological order. Yet, there is a certain logic to the order of these narratives (the birth of Isaac, the separation of Hagar and Ishmael, the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech).

Why aren't these narratives in chronological order? That would be because God the Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of this passage. First, we must have Hagar and Ishmael reject Isaac; and then God turns toward the gentiles with positive volition. So, what these two narratives represent come in the order that this passage is written; however, the way that this passage is written is not chronological. The second narrative explains (1) why Hagar chose that route (she was familiar with it) and (2) where the name Beersheba came from. So the second narrative is added by the human author in order to explain the first.

However, the 4 narratives of Gen. 21–22 do find their parallels in the New Testament; and in the New Testament, the incidents they parallel are in chronological order.

Let's sum up these parallels:

The Parallels from Genesis 21–22

Gen. 21–22	The Ministry of Jesus
Isaac's unique birth.	Our Lord's unique birth.
Those with a relationship to Abraham reject the uniquely-born son.	Those descended from Abraham reject the uniquely-born Son. Matt. 8:34 12:22–28 Luke 11:15
Those who reject Abraham uniquely-born son are cast out into the desert. Gen. 21:8–16	Those who reject God's uniquely-born Son are cast out of the Kingdom of God because they reject the offer of the King. Matt. 10:14–15 11:20–24 Luke 10:13–15
Those who are not related to Abraham who desire a relationship with God through Abraham are granted this request. Gen. 21:22–32 The planting of the tamarisk tree suggests that Abraham would spend some time among the gentiles with whom he had developed a relationship. Gen. 21:33	Those who are not related to Abraham who desire a relationship with God through Jesus are granted this request. When Jesus first sent out His disciples, they were only to go to the lost sheep of Israel and not to the Gentiles or to the Samaritans (Matt. 10:5–8). However, this changed after Jesus was soundly rejected by the Jews. Then Jesus went among the gentiles and sent his disciples to them as well. Matt. 12:14–24 Luke 9:52 10:33 17:16 John 4:39–40 Acts 9:15
Abraham the father offers as a sacrifice Isaac, his uniquely-born son. Gen. 22	God the Father offers as a sacrifice His uniquely-born Son.

The rejection of Jesus by His Own people is quite significant in the gospels and results with a new approach by our Lord. This was later echoed in the ministry of the apostle Paul in Acts 18:5–6 13:46–47.

Genesis 21:32 So they made a legal alliance at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, rose up. And they returned to the land of the Philistines.

Abraham, Abimelech and the Abimelech's 4-star general, Phicol, all come to an agreement here. This means, they would have gone westward toward the Mediterranean Sea.

What has happened is, Abraham was treated unjustly by some high-ranking official Philistines. They essentially stole a well from him and are using it themselves. Abraham does not even go to Gerar and track down Abimelech to lodge a complain; Abimelech comes to him. God, for all intents and purposes, brings Abimelech to Abraham, to settle this problem, even though Abimelech does not realize that is, in part, why he is going to see Abraham. He has a completely different agenda. But God uses all of this to Abraham's advantage to gain some lawful justice for Abraham.

As discussed in a previous lesson, Abimelech is a believer. This is why God has appeared to him. Furthermore, many of those in his cabinet are believers. He goes to Abraham, knowing that Abraham has a special relationship with the True God. His covenant with Abraham will insure a proper relationship with God, as well as peace through Abraham with God.

This sets up a pattern. The Jews become priests for the world; and Israel will become a priest nation to the world. Abimelech, by establishing a relationship with Abraham, a priest to the Most High God, Abimelech has representation before God; and consideration from God. A priest represents man to God; a prophet represents God to man. So, by his relationship with Abraham, Abimelech has representation before the God of the Universe. For the next 2000 years, Israel will become the way that individuals establish a relationship with God by going through either individuals or through the nation Israel. There will be many times when individuals from Israel will go out and evangelize on behalf of their God as well.

Genesis 21:33a And Abraham planted a tree in Beersheba,...

People plant trees because they intend on staying there for a long time. When someone rents a property and plans to stay there for 1 or 2 years, they rarely plant trees. They will never see the tree grow to any height; and, therefore, planting a tree seems unimportant to them (as a tenant, I often planted trees where I lived). However, Abraham plans on staying in this spot for a great deal of time.

Where Abraham was before, he was near Sodom and Gomorrah; and Abraham was a witness for God before these people. However, their degeneracy became such a problem that God destroyed these cities. Therefore, there would be little done in the way of trading in that area, because one of the greatest populated areas was no more. So, Abraham

decided simply to move elsewhere, which is how he ends up in Philistine territory (he moved closer to the Mediterranean Sea).

Genesis 21:33b And there, Abraham called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God.

We have come across this phrase many times. On the surface, it may sound as if Abraham stands outside and calls out God's name, until he gets hoarse or breaks for lunch. However, this would be both crazy and unproductive. Do you recall a single instance where Abraham is calling out for God (using this terminology), and God says, "Here I am"? That would be a legitimate translation and interpretation, but, again, such action would be crazy and unproductive.

What we have here is the Qal imperfect of the verb qârâʾ (אָרָק) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*], which means *to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name* [when followed by a lâmed]. When this verb is followed by the bêyth preposition (as we find here), followed by the name of God (in whatever form), it means *to celebrate, to praise God; to implore His aid*.[71] Strong's #7121 BDB #894.

Let me suggest that the speaker is doing both the work of an evangelist and of a teacher when this phrasing is found. Literally, this reads: ...and there he proclaimed the name [= *reputation, character essence*] of Yᵉhowah ʾÊl Everlasting. Abraham is not out there yelling, "God, God, where are you? I want to talk with you." He is out there teaching the Word of God; teaching the values of God; he is teaching divine viewpoint. The word name is shêm (מֵשׁ) [pronounced *shame*], and it does mean *name,* but it also means *reputation, character, essence*. Strong's #8034 BDB #1027.

Therefore, Abraham is speaking about the reputation and character of God. He is speaking about God the Eternal One. He has both his own experiences and, if you will recall, Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek a few chapters back, and we discussed then, why did Abraham pay tithes to Melchizedek? Abraham, at that point in time, had spoken with God face to face three times (if memory serves) and he had just defeated the greatest military power of his day with 318 men (again, I am giving these numbers from memory). So, why would Abraham treat Melchizedek with such respect? I suggest that, Melchizedek began speaking to Abraham the first few chapters of Genesis (or Job), and Abraham recognized this as the truth of God. I also suggested that this was a spiritual handoff, that Melchizedek had the Word of God and he gave the Word of God to Abraham. Furthermore, I don't think it had to be in written form, as I believe that men's brains functioned much better then than they do today. Therefore, Abraham could hear and understand and memorize what was being said.

Don't think this is a ridiculous notion; we have people today with photographic memories; we have people today who remember every single day of their lives—you give them a date and they can tell you what happened on that date, both in their own lives and in the world. So, there is no reason that we ought to doubt that Abraham had a better brain than we

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[71] H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament;* ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 740.

have today. Some of us doubt Abraham's mental capabilities because we have the false notion of evolution that influences our thinking. But, we have devolved as a people; not evolved.

It is my contention that men did not write anything down for the first 1000 or so years, not because they were unable to write or lacked the implements that they could use in order to write, but simply because they did not need to write anything down—they heard it, everyone around them heard it, and they all remembered it.

So, when we have treaties being established between, say, Abraham and Abimelech, nothing is written down to establish the terms of the treaty; all three (or four) men are there, they all hear what is decided upon and they all agree to it; and consideration is given as a part of the treaty.

We came originally from the hand of God, and Adam lived nearly 1000 years. Abraham will live 175 years, and between them, we see a gradual decrease in the ages of the men in the line of Abraham. For this reason, I would suggest also a gradual decrease in the mental abilities of man, which would match up with his decrease in mental abilities.

So, Abraham has what he has learned from Melchizedek, which I believe to be the first 11 or 12 chapters of the book of Genesis, and possibly in greater detail than the way that we what we have. He may also have the book of Job as well. Therefore, Abraham has this little oasis, not too far from a Philistine metropolis, and he would see people often—traders, people from Philistia, or whatever—and Abraham would proclaim to them the essence of Y^{e}howah, the Everlasting God.

Lesson 243: Genesis 21:33–34 — Abraham in Philistia; Gentile Salvation

Previously, Abimelech and Phicol, his general, had come to Abraham in order to make a treaty with him. They made this treaty in order to insure their own relationship with the Living God. They understood blessing by association, which puts them ahead of many believers today. Abraham also settled a legal dispute with them at the time concerning access to a well that he dug.

Did you notice? Abraham did not have to track down Abimelech and complain to him about the problem with the well, and how some of his military men were trying to take it from Abraham. Abimelech came to Abraham; and Abimelech knew nothing about what was going on with that well. But God caused Abimelech to come there, with his head military man, and, as a result, this would be a semi-permanent place for Abraham, because he needed water to survive and Abimelech and Phicol would see to it that Abraham's use of the well would be unimpeded.

Genesis 21:33 And Abraham planted a tree in Beersheba, and there, Abraham called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God.

This verse helps to explain the previous couple chapters. Then Abraham [lit., *he*] planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Y^{e}howah ʾÊl Everlasting. What was Abraham doing? What did God have Abraham do? What was God's plan for Abraham's life? Abraham, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, traveled west, toward the Mediterranean Sea, and settled in an area near a Philistine area (perhaps not the Philistines that we come to know later); and it is here that he teaches about Jesus Christ, the Creator God.

Genesis 21:34 Consequently, Abraham lived in the Philistines' land many days.

What appears to be the case is, Abraham continued to live in Beersheba, which is in southern Judah, and that this land was controlled principally by the Philistines (which may not be related to the Philistines who later occupy this same land area).

The concept of land ownership may have been somewhat of a gradual thing in the ancient world. When the Philistines had determined that they could watch over or guard this or that area, then that area became theirs. When the people of that area rebelled against them, then they either left it alone or the reasserted their control or entered into legal contracts with the people on this land (as they did with Abraham).

However, it was more common for a powerful nation to exert its power over a foreign city and demand tribute from them—which often kept that city from being invaded and destroyed. We saw this back in Gen. 14. The powerful nation does not take ownership over that land; they just require tribute from the inhabitants of that land. Some foreign powers set up outposts in these cities and areas to maintain their control (we will see a lot of this during the reign of Kings David and Saul).

It was simple pragmatism. A large army could come into a village and raze it, and take everything that they see; but, if they went into the village and showed their military might, and then demanded yearly tribute, then that village became a money-making operation for them for many years. And, if the villages rebelled, then they army could go back into the village and destroy them then.

It was when the children of Abraham enter into the Land of Promise (that is where Abraham is right at this point in our narrative), that national and tribal boundaries were set with great precision. In the second half of the book of Joshua, the boundaries of Israel and the different tribes will be specified, and essentially border lines will be drawn from one city to the next. What was done in Israel was either a reflection of the times or revolutionary; but, from that time forward, we had very specific boundaries drawn (which would change with the various power struggles between nations). The boundaries would, of course, expand and contract, but they would be very specific from that point on.

This particular area where Abraham lived was controlled by the Philistines, but you will notice that when Abimelech and Phicol go to Abraham, it is not to assert their ownership of the land in which he lives, but to form a relationship by means of a contract.

Essentially, this is what we gentiles do in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We do not have a natural familial relationship to Him; but we adhere to the terms of His covenant, which is specifically, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Of all people in this world, the person I want to establish a covenant with, first and foremost, is with God through Jesus Christ. Abimelech and Phicol could not establish a relationship directly with the God of Abraham. They had to go through a intermediary, who is Abraham. Until the ministry of Jesus, men established their relationship with God through intermediaries, like Abraham. Abraham, in this way, is a type of Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6). Jesus is our way to God. We need someone to mediate between God and us. Jesus is equal to man and Jesus is equal to God; therefore, He can act as the intermediary between God and man.

Abraham, in this narrative, represents this concept. Abimelech and Phicol can establish a relationship with God going through Abraham. They know that Abraham is directly related to the True God. Therefore, a pact made with Abraham also establishes for Abimelech and Phicol a pact with the True God. This explains the verses which we have studied: At that time Abimelech, with Phicol the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. Now swear to me here by God that you will not break an agreement with me or with my children and descendants. As I have kept faith with you, so you will keep faith with me and with the country where you are a resident alien." (Gen. 21:22–23; HCSB).

We only know one term of this contract (concerning the well), but we do not know all the terms which they agreed to. However, we do not need to, because this is all representative of establishing a relationship with God through Abraham. This incident is real, and it is recorded accurately (that is the human author side of this narrative), but God the Holy Spirit is teaching us about gentile salvation here, setting up a pattern.

People are confused about a great many things in the Old Testament. Some think that all Jews are saved and all gentiles are not. This is a false concept, just as the idea of being saved by the Mosaic Law is a false concept as well.

This may be slightly premature to introduce this doctrine, as there is no nation Israel yet; there are only 3 Jews (Abraham, Sarah and Isaac); so, quite obviously, everyone else who is saved is a gentile.

Gentile Salvation in the Old Testament

1. Throughout the Old Testament, we find that the gentiles were never kept from the gospel of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All men could believe in Him, and thereby be saved (as per Gen. 15:6).
2. The Revealed Lord told Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen. 12:3; NLT). In the life of Abraham, there are essentially 3 Jews: Abraham, Sarah and Isaac. Therefore, those blessed by a relationship with Abraham during his time would be gentiles. We have many instances of this: Abraham's relationship here to Abimelech; Abraham delivering the people of

Sodom; Abraham's compound, which included at least 318 men able to go to war, and their families.

3. There are many specific examples in the Bible of Gentiles who adhere to the God of Abraham.
   1) Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl. We may assume that she is saved because God spoke to her twice. Gen. 16:7–13 21:17–20
   2) Abimelech in Gen. 21.
   3) Rahab the prostitute, who chooses to ally herself with the Israelites rather than with her people in Jericho (Joshua 2).
   4) Ruth, a Moabite, who remains with her Jewish mother-in-law, despite the passing of her husband. The book of Ruth.
   5) The Queen of Sheba, who comes to Solomon because of his great wisdom. 1Kings 10
   6) Jonah going to the Assyrians in Nineveh to evangelize them, even though he hated the Assyrians. The book of Jonah.
   7) There is no reason to assume that this list includes all of the gentiles who had faith in the God of Abraham. These are examples from a variety of situations and circumstances.
4. The nations all around Israel, if they believed that Israel had a real relationship with the true God, went through Israel (or through individuals in Israel) to have a relationship with their God. Israel or people in Israel became intermediaries between God and them.
5. Israel, as a nation, had the responsibility to bring the gospel to the gentiles: He says [to Israel], "It is not enough for you to be My Servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations [= gentiles], to be My salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isa. 49:6; HCSB). Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all to see. For the glory of the Lord rises to shine on you. Darkness as black as night covers all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the Lord rises and appears over you. All nations will come to your light; mighty kings will come to see your radiance (Isa. 60:1–3; NLT). Many nations will join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they, too, will be My people. I will live among you, and you will know that the Lord of Heaven's Armies sent me to you (Zech. 2:11). See also the book of Jonah; Isa. 56:6 Jer. 16:19 Mal. 1:11.
6. The God of Israel is the God of all mankind. Praise Y^{e}howah, all nations; praise Him, all peoples (Psalm 117:1). See also Deut. 32:43 Psalm 18:49
7. God Himself would go to the gentiles. Listen, You shall call a nation You do not know; yea, a nation not knowing You [= a gentile nation] shall run to You, because of Y^{e}howah Your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified You [the Son glorifies the Father—John 13:31 14:13]. [Therefore], seek Y^{e}howah while He may be found; call on Him while He is near (Isa. 55:5–6). This is actually a warning to the Jews.
8. What about nations which are so far from Israel as to not have any interaction with them?

Gentile Salvation in the Old Testament

1) First of all, mankind essentially began in the fertile crescent (the land around the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers) and spread out from there (Gen. 10). We have observed and will observe interaction between Israel and those in the far east. So, for a time, there was a lot of interaction between Israel and nations on its periphery.
2) However, let us assume, just for the sake of argument, that there is a nation or city so far out there that there was no interaction with Israel, what about that?
3) We apply God's justice and righteousness to this situation. If there is someone who has a desire to have a relationship with the Revealed God, then God will see to it that the gospel of the Revealed Lord comes to that person, no matter where that person is.
4) There is no reason to assume that the book of Jonah is entirely unique. How often did God send out men from Israel and from Judah to speak of the Revealed God? We have no idea. However, when we combine what we know about God's righteousness and justice with the book of Jonah, it is reasonable to assume that evangelism of some sort took place wherever there was positive volition.
5) Furthermore, we know from the book of Job that Job's friends, despite their misunderstandings about God, worshiped the same God that Job worshiped. Therefore, it is reasonable that the Revealed God was known apart from the nation Israel. However, it is the nation Israel which, after a time, became charged with the responsibility of teaching about the Revealed God.
6) God is not responsible to bring the gospel to someone who would reject it. Therefore, knowing that God is not willing that any should perish (2Peter 3:9), we can rest assured that the message of the Revealed God went wherever it needed to go. Wherever there was positive volition, then God is always responsible to get that message to those people with positive volition. If God is able to create the universe and all mankind, we may assume that He can work out the logistics to get the gospel of the Revealed Lord to any place in the world.

9. Paul confirms God coming to the gentiles as well in the Old Testament in Rom. 15:9–12, 15–16. In this way, Paul was the apostle to the gentiles. Eph. 3:1–2, 8
10. In the far future, all men would bow to the God of the Jews. All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord. All the families of the nations will bow down before You (Psalm 22:27; HCSB). He will not fail nor be discouraged till He has set justice in the earth. And in His name Gentiles will hope (Isa. 42:4; ACV; LXX, with references to God capitalized).
11. Although Jesus at first offered the Kingdom of God to the Jews, He was rejected by a majority of them, including by the priests and pharisees who should have known better. After this, He began to speak to Samaritans and to gentiles (which was almost unheard of among the Jews).

Many of these passages came from Christianity Stack Exchange.

Genesis 21:34 Consequently, Abraham lived in the Philistines' land many days.

This was a good set up for Abraham. There was law and order, righteousness and justice provided by Abimelech, the ruler over Philistia. We know from this and the previous chapter that Abimelech was an honorable man who entered into honest contracts with those in his realm. We know that he was willing to listen to complaints and to rule on them justly. We know that his dealings with Abraham were on the basis of honesty, contract and a fair judicial system; and that is a good environment for Abraham to live in.

This helps to explain the move. Where Abraham had lived before, he was not too far from Sodom and Gomorrah, and this was a place of lawlessness and sexual perversion. Men would come to town and the males of that town would gang-rape them out of sexual and power lust. Their lawlessness became so bad, God finally destroyed these cities and their inhabitants. This massive destruction near where Abraham lived would have ended caravans traveling through that specific region (a caravan of traders was essentially a traveling Walmart).

Abraham is going to move to a new area for several reasons. New pastureland, a reputable administration of justice, and caravan travel. We may assume that there are groups of travelers and caravans going through this area of Palestine near Gerar quite often, and that Abraham provided shade and water and possibly even a meal for those who traveled through. And, most importantly, he proclaimed the essence and character of Jehovah, the Everlasting God, to all who would listen (Gen. 12:8 13:4 21:33).

Let's step back and look at this chapter as a whole: (1) we have the birth of Isaac, which parallels in many ways the birth of Jesus. (2) Then we have a separation which takes place, which essentially protects Isaac (a hedge is placed around him, so to speak). Hagar and Ishmael rejected Isaac's place as heir to Abraham, and so they were cast out. (3) And here, we have a treaty with the gentile world. In fact, these gentiles seek Abraham out. (4) In the next chapter, we will have Abraham offering up his uniquely-born son to God.

(1) In the gospels, we have the birth of Jesus, the unique Son of God. (2) He is then protected throughout His youth; and separated from those who are related to Him (Matt. 12:44–50). (3) And Jesus—the Messiah to the Jews—will have a special relationship to Gentiles as well (Matt. 8:11–12 21:42–43). (4) Finally, Jesus will offer Himself up as a sacrifice for all mankind.

Again, all the history that we are studying here is real—these are real people and real events. But they are also forward looking, because, at this point in time, Isaac very much is a type of Jesus in his birth.

Gen. 22 is one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament. You will recall the term *progressive revelation;* where, bit by bit, more and more divine truth is revealed to mankind, which parallels our own spiritual lives, where we learn more and more spiritual truth as we advance (or, we don't advance). This is true with respect to the Bible as time goes on, and more is added; until the canon of Scripture is complete.

We have observed this with Abraham. At first, he received a short promise from God. Then, once Abraham had grown more spiritually, God expanded on that promise; God built upon that promise. Abraham's spiritual growth continued, and these promises from God were continued as well, expanded upon with each successive revelation. Every time that God spoke to Abraham, more details were given.

Believers grow spiritually as well, but this involves the intake of Bible doctrine. Grow by means of grace and by means of knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is a mandate from God, given in the imperative mood in 2Peter 3:18. This happens a bit at a time. By the way, there are no other methods by which Christians grow. We do not grow by attending a church that has all of the programs we like (lots of singing, a nursery, a young people's group, etc.). We grow in a church that may be tiny, medium or large, but from which pulpit the Word of God is taught regularly—not in 15 minute chunks thrice a week, but an hour 4x a week or more. We may sing hymns, but they should enforce what we know or help to teach us doctrine. There are a lot of things that we might do at church, but the primary focus of a church is to see that its members Grow by means of grace and by means of knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is the system by which God made it possible for all believers to grow (R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the phrase, the *grace apparatus for perception,* or *GAP*).

I have mentioned this concept in previous lessons, but have never properly defined or explained it. I have even linked to this doctrine several times in the past. This is a summary of this doctrine. R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the phrase and developed the doctrine originally.

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

1. The terminology comes from R. B. Thieme, Jr., and it means that there is a grace means by which all believers may understand Bible doctrine. The basic idea is, all believers grow spiritually through the understanding of Bible doctrine. A believer with an I.Q. of 150 does not have any advantage over the believer who has an I.Q. of 90. This will be backed up with Scripture, but R. B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries also puts out a booklet on a particular person, Laura Kay Tapping, who showed this to be true.
2. That we are to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is a mandate from the Bible. This is not an option; and this is not just one way of many ways for a believer to grow. Just as there is only one way to be saved, there is only one Savior; similarly, there is only one way to grow and there is only one Word of Truth, the Bible, to be learned. 2Peter 3:18
3. Understanding Bible doctrine is much different from human understanding, which

is not the basis of spiritual understanding or spiritual growth. 1Cor. 2:1, 8–9

4. At salvation, we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, which results in our becoming trichotomous, having a soul, spirit and body. Titus 3:5 1Thess. 5:23
5. It is the soul which allows us to understand the things of man; the human spirit which allows us to understand the things of God. 1Cor. 2:10–12 Eph. 3:16
6. Spiritual growth can only take place when we are filled with the Holy Spirit; so, therefore, we must be in fellowship when learning spiritual things. 1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9
7. Being filled with the Spirit is a mandate for the Christian life. Eph. 5:18
8. It is God's desire that everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. 1Tim. 2:4
9. One of the passages grace apparatus for perception is based upon is Eph. 3:16–19 (this is a prayer, written by Paul to the Ephesians) That God would give you, according to [the norm or standard of] the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with inherent power by His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell [or, *be at home*] in your hearts by means of faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **may be able to comprehend with all saints** what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Let's look at this prayer phrase-by-phrase:
    1) That God would give you, according to [the norm or standard of] the riches of His glory,... God has *an abundance of* or *a wealth of* glory. One of the reasons that we are left on earth after salvation is to glorify Him. Now, given your sorry Christian life and mine, that seems pretty much impossible, but that is our Christian duty and purpose. We reveal, from day-to-day, God's character and essence in us, despite our great imperfections and failings. God actually gives this opportunity to us again and again, every single day of our lives. However, only the mature believer truly glorifies Jesus Christ. Let me draw an analogy here: we all understand, to some degree, the father and son relationship. If a son goes out there, and is educated or builds up his own business or behaves like a decent human being, he does his father proud. Such a man glorifies his father. Now, as a child of 7 in a school play or singing some song at a pageant, there is some pride in that, but not a lot. Mostly, that is just cute. But when a son reaches adulthood and begins to apply the principles of life which he has learned at home, that is when a son can potentially glorify his father. As believers in Jesus Christ, we glorify God in the same way. Once we reach adulthood, that is when we begin to glorify Him. You no doubt know some 30 or 40 year-old men who act like children, and everything is about them, and they are selfish and lazy. Such a man is an embarrassment to his father. Some believers reach spiritual adulthood and some do not, but we all have the potential to do so, and this potential is based upon the grace apparatus for perception.
    2) ...to be strengthened with inherent power by His Spirit in the inner man;...

We are *strengthen* or *empowered* (passive voice) with dúnamis (δύναμις) [pronounced *DOO-nahm-iss*], which means *power, ability, able, capable; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature*. Strong's #1411. So this power, which we receive, is an inherent power or a power which resides within us. This is done by means of God's Spirit in the inner man. So, again, this process works within us. Notice that there is no legalism here. This does not happen because you used to be immoral and now you are moral. That is a good thing, but the result of growth and not the means of growth (and becoming moral might be the result of social pressure or self-will as well—as some people turn toward God simply because they are disgusted with themselves). This *inner man* refers to the human spirit, and being strengthened with inherent power in the inner man, refers to this spiritual growth that occurs within us. The Holy Spirit is instrumental in making this happen. The Holy Spirit teaches our human spirit; and the Holy Spirit allows the grace apparatus for perception to function when we are in fellowship.

3) ...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts by means of faith;... This is one of the mysteries of the Church Age, where Jesus Christ indwells us. *To dwell* is the Greek verb katoikéô (κατοικέω) [pronounced *kah-toy-KEH-oh*], which means *to live, to reside;* this is a word which usually refers to one's semi-permanent dwelling. Thayer definitions: *1) to dwell, settle; 1a) metaphorically divine powers, influences, etc., are said to dwell in his soul, to pervade, prompt, govern it; 2) to dwell in, inhabit; 2a) God is said to dwell in the temple, i.e. to be always present for worshippers*. Notice how this is used *metaphorically divine powers, influences, etc., are said to dwell in his soul, to pervade, prompt, govern it*. This is exactly what we are talking about, something which occurs on this inside. Strong's #2730. This is done by means of faith, which is the Greek word pistis (πίστις) [pronounced *PIHS-tihs*], and pistis refers to *having faith or confidence in something,* but it also refers to *that which you have faith and confidence in*. In the latter sense, this is one of the many synonyms in the Bible for *Bible doctrine*. Strong's #4102. Therefore, *Christ makes Himself at home in your inner being by means of exercising faith in Bible doctrine*. Spiritual information in the Bible is of no use to you. Spiritual information which you hear and reject is of no use to you. You must hear it, you must understand it (grace apparatus for perception) and then you must *believe* it. If you find yourself rejecting half of what your pastor says, then you are in the wrong church (or, you are negative toward doctrine). If you are not growing spiritually, then you are in the wrong church. If you cannot look back over a period of, say, 5 years, and be able to note unmistakable spiritual growth, then you are in the wrong church or you are just not doing it right.

4) ...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **may be able to comprehend with all saints** what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge,...

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

This is a long section, so we will break it up into further sub-points:

(1) *Being rooted* is the perfect passive participle of rhizoô (ῥιζόω) [pronounced *hrid-ZOH-o*], which means, *to cause to strike root, to strengthen with roots, to render firm, to fix, establish, cause a person or a thing to be thoroughly grounded*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #4492. A plant without a strong root system is easily harmed. It is the root system which goes deep into the ground, in all directions, which pulls in nutrients for the plant.

(2) *Grounded* is the perfect passive participle of themelioô (θεμελιόω) [pronounced *them-el-ee-OH-oh*], which means, *1) to lay the foundation, to found; 2) to make stable, establish*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2311. Again, notice how all of this is *foundational;* there is strength and power and nourishment in the foundation or in the roots. Perfect tense in the Greek refers generally to a past action with present continuing results. Passive means that we do not actually build this root system ourselves, but this is done for us, when we learn Bible doctrine.

(3) *In love* is often used throughout the New Testament for being in fellowship (we find it used in this manner throughout John's first epistle). No spiritual growth occurs out of fellowship.

(4) *Be able* is the aorist active subjunctive of Verb exischuô (ἐξισχύω) [pronounced *ex-is-KHOO-oh*], which means, *to be eminently able, able, to have full strength*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #1840. The subjunctive mood means that we have this power, we have this ability, but we may not choose to use it. The iterative aorist indicates that there are points in time throughout our lives when we are *able* (when we are filled with the Spirit and growing—more specifically, taking in the food needed to grow).

(5) *To comprehend* is the aorist middle infinitive of Verb katalambanô (καταλαμβάνω) [pronounced *kat-al-am-BAHN-oh*], which means, *1) to lay hold of; 1a) to lay hold of so as to make one's own, to obtain, attain to, to make one's own, to take into one's self, appropriate; 1b) to seize upon, take possession of; 1b1) of evils overtaking one, of the last day overtaking the wicked with destruction, of a demon about to torment one; 1b2) in a good sense, of Christ by his holy power and influence laying hold of the human mind and will, in order to prompt and govern it; 1c) to detect, catch; 1d) to lay hold of with the mind; 1d1) to understand, perceive, learn, comprehend*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #2638. Comprehension is related to spiritual growth.

(6) We are able *to comprehend with all the saints*. This is not something which is reserved for believers who have I.Q.'s of 110 or higher; this is for every believer. If you understand the gospel enough to believe in Jesus Christ, then you can learn in the

classroom of the local church and build upon that session after session, and apply that to your life, with all other believers.

(7) Then we have: ...what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. These are categories of doctrine wherein we store information. If you deal with a lot of paperwork and you are organized, then you separate this paperwork into different drawers, into different files or different containers. Doctrine is much the same way. We begin with basic categories of doctrine (the breadth, and length, and depth, and height), and then we place more and more information into the categories. *Breadth* refers to doctrines concerning Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, along with the essence of God. *Length* refers to dispensational teaching, so that we know what has been in the past and what will be found in the future; as well as to the progressive plan of God for our lives. *Depth* refers to advanced doctrines; and *height* refers to all information related to the Angelic Conflict. As we learn more and more in the Christian life, we are able to file these doctrines into these various drawers.

(8) You are able to, with all the saints, comprehend the *love of Christ;* which refers to the plan of God, which begins at the cross, which represents the love of Christ, as well as His justice and His righteousness. If Jesus chose not to go to the cross, then we would have no relationship with God. Jesus chooses to do this out of love for us and God the Father chose this plan out of love for us. John 15:13 1John 4:10

(9) This *goes beyond* or *exceeds* or *transcends knowledge*. There are several words for *knowledge* in the Bible, but there are two which are pertinent to this context: gnosis and epignosis. What we have here is gnôsis (γνῶσις) [pronounced *GNOH-sis*] which can refer to *human knowledge, general intelligence, human understanding*. This understanding depends upon the context. Strong's #1108. There is another word called epignôsis (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;* this is a word which refers to *over and above knowledge*. Epignosis is *over-and-above knowledge*. When in contrast with gnôsis, this is divine knowledge or knowledge of Bible doctrine. Strong's #1922. Epignôsis is the word that we find in 1Tim. 2:3b–4 God our Savior...desires all people to be saved and to come to the [full] knowledge of the truth.

5) ...that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. The word *that* can refer to a result clause or to a purpose clause, and the purpose of taking in Bible doctrine is so that we might be filled with all the fullness of God. Grace apparatus for perception, the very process that we are describing,

is the way that it occurs. We are not filled with all the fulness of God by learning a holy language and then repeating it at the right intervals; we are not filled with the fulness of God by finding certain people in the church and then imitating their personalities (I have seen this happen even in good doctrinal churches). We are not filled with the fullness of God by turning our lives around and becoming more moral. That is a good thing, but it may or may not indicate spiritual growth.

10. The second extended passage on this topic is 1Cor. 2:11–16 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. But we have not received the spirit of the world, 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, 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? But we have the mind of Christ.

    1) For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? When we are born again, we receive a human spirit, which has been shut down or has been non-operational for the entirety of our lives, due to the function of the sin nature. We understand our fellow man by means of our soul; and we understand God by means of our human spirit. The terms *soul* and *spirit* can be used both technically and non-technically throughout the Bible. Technically, the soul is what is inside of us which allows us to know the things of man; technically, the human spirit is what is inside of us which allows us to know the things of God. The *spirit of man* here is the non-technical use, and it refers to the human soul. We know this, because it is qualified: *the spirit of man*.

    2) So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. It is the Holy Spirit, Who is given to all believers at salvation, which guides us into all truth (John 16:13 1Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit makes the human spirit operational and allows for the flow of Bible doctrine from the teaching of the pastor-teacher to the human spirit of the believer. It is the Holy Spirit Who is the co-Author of the Word of God and Who teaches us through the pastor-teacher (which is the primary means of growth for the believer). If we were supposed to grow by simply reading our Bibles, then there would be no need for the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher nor would there be any need to have a local church, which is designed to be the classroom which allows for spiritual growth. The apostle John speaks of the superiority of face to face teaching over written material. 2John 12. Paul clearly taught this as well in 1Thess. 2:17-18 3:2,10.

    3) But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. The

spirit of the world is the thinking of human viewpoint. Today, this is humanism, fairness, equality and political correctness. Once and awhile, a culture can have as a strong component of that culture divine viewpoint. However, Satan works to destroy that sort of thinking as quickly as possible. A good example of human viewpoint today is the gay marriage movement. If you say that homosexual activity is wrong, you will be told that you are judging, and that Jesus told you not to judge. However, the Bible is clear on this: homosexual acts are wrong and sinful. Understanding what is sinful is not judging. The gay marriage movement says that homosexual desires are natural and God-given. It goes much deeper than that, however. The whole Satanic purpose of the gay marriage movement is to censor pastors and/or to censor the Bible and/or to denigrate the Bible. The idea is to put Christians into difficult positions and then to ostracize them or even sue them if they do not tow the gay marriage party line. Since gay marriage was legalized in Canada, there have been hundreds of lawsuits, most of them against Christians and Christian speech and actions. *To know* is the perfect active subjunctive of eidô (εἴδω) [pronounced *Ī-doh*], which means *to see, to perceive, to discern, to know*. Strong's #1492. The perfect tense is action which occurs in the past, but with results that carry on into the present. The subjunctive mood means, we may choose to know and we may choose not to know. However, that which God wants us to know is *freely given* to us. Any believer with positive signals to the Word of God can learn the Word of God through the channels which God has set up. As an aside, I lived in a large city, at one time, where finding good teaching was nearly impossible. I found okay, but legalistic teaching, at a Christian institute. However, now, with the internet, there is a surfeit of good teaching available. See the cities and pastors in the List. In this day and age, there is no reason for a believer to be ignorant of the Word of God.

4) These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Paul, as an apostle and as a pastor-teacher, teaches these things, not as the philosophies of the day, but he teaches what the Holy Spirit teaches, where spiritual things are compared with spiritual. The verb is the present active participle of Verb sugkrinô (συγκρίνω) [pronounced *soong-KREE-no*], which means, *1) to joint together fitly, compound, combine; 2) to interpret; 3) to compare*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #4793. We then have the neuter plural adjective used twice: pneumatikós (πνευματικός) [pronounced *nyoo-mat-TEE-koss*], which means *spiritual;* as a plural, it acts like noun, and it means *spiritual things, spiritual matters*. Strong's #4152. It is found as an accusative and as a dative; so the verb acts upon *spiritual things* and to this we append *with spiritual things*. The idea here is, doctrine is built upon doctrine. You do not walk into Bible class the first day and, in an hour, get everything you need for you spiritual

life. In fact, you do not get this after going to a good church for a year; or for 5 years. This is a process which continues throughout your entire life, because, for 15 hours a day, you are exposed to human viewpoint from every side: from your parents, from your children, from your supervisor, from your job description, from the movies and from television. Taking the example which I used earlier—gay marriage—we find the gay agenda in such diverse programs as *Downton Abbey* and the innocuous *Pretty Little Liars* (from the Disney channel, I believe). In fact, on perhaps half of the programs I have seen, we have the gay agenda presented, over and over again. We wonder why the youth of America favors gay marriage—it is because they have been exposed to nothing else in all of what they take in. This is one example, mentioned primarily because it is a big issue today (far more important to our president than economic matters). 5 years ago, our president told us that he believed that marriage was between 1 man and 1 woman and that God was in the mix. And recently, he is telling Africans about the gay agenda. So, in order to combat human viewpoint, which is going to come at us from every side, we need a little bit of the Word of God. The reason we need it daily is, we are going to be exposed to human viewpoint all day long, in its many and contradictory forms (for instance, American Muslims and LGBT types overwhelmingly support the Democratic party, even though these two groups are diametrically opposed to one another).

5) 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. The *natural man* is the unbeliever, who views the things of the spirit as foolishness. On the Facebook page *Being Liberal,* nearly every day, there are anti-Christian graphic postings. Here, the Bible tells us that the unbeliever cannot learn or retain the things of the Spirit. This helps to explain to me how I could listen to and sing Christmas hymns throughout my entire life without understanding what they all meant. Although I celebrated Easter for 20 or 21 years before I was saved, I did not even know what happened to Jesus after the resurrection. I am not sure if I knew much about the resurrection itself, despite all of my exposure to it. This explains why liberals complain that Christians are *judging* when they say that homosexual acts are wrong. This is why these same liberals think that this is a violation of what Jesus said about judging, because they are unable to understand spiritual matters. This is why liberals often think that Jesus is a long-haired, sandal-wearing hippie who was the first socialist who gave away free healthcare. He did wear sandals, by the way, but the rest of this picture is wrong. However, they cannot receive the things of the Spirit. Also, it is man's nature to make God in his own image.

6) 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? But we

have the mind of Christ. To be *spiritual* here means not just filled with the Holy Spirit but with some spiritual growth as well. Also, Paul here claims to have the *mind of Christ,* which is the thinking of Jesus Christ, which is the content of all Bible doctrine. He uses the pronoun *we* referring to himself and the crew that he moved about with. This can be further extended to all of the apostles at this time, as well as to their protegees; and to pastor-teachers today who actually know and teach the Word of God.

11. A natural question which may come out of this is, *how does the unbeliever understand the gospel of Jesus Christ?* After all, this is fundamental Christian doctrine. The Holy Spirit graciously acts as the human spirit for the believer and makes the gospel understandable. I recall hearing the gospel for the first time and it was really poorly explained to me, but I walked away from that conversation knowing that I needed to make a decision. I wasn't sure about what exactly, but I did understand that there was a decision to be made. I eventually turned to the book of John, and understood the decision to be made as Jesus explained it in John 3 (like so many others who have been saved).
12. To sum up the doctrine of GAP, you need a trained pastor-teacher teaching his congregation Bible doctrine. They need to be filled with the Spirit (in fellowship) and there needs to be enough teaching to counteract the constant flow of human viewpoint which we all experience. All believers in that congregation, being in all stages of spiritual growth, can learn from what is being taught. One of the things which I found to be fascinating is, I listened and took copious notes on R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s study of David. 30 years later, I re-listened to this study, and it was as if I had never heard a word of it before. The difference was, I had a much greater background of spiritual information the second time that I listened to this study. I got something out of it when I first heard it; and I got a great deal more out of it the second time through. There was more spiritual information in my soul, to which I could compare (lay along side) the spiritual information being taught.
    1) As an aside, the same thing is true of the pastor. R. B. Thieme, Jr. for 10+ years taught book after book after book of the Bible to his congregation (none of which is available to us today). He would teach 1 or more chapters a night, night after night, which we are aware of today because of the classes from the early 1960's which are still available to us. He continued increasing the number of classes to the point where, at his peak, he was teaching ten 1.25 hour classes a week. By the 2nd or 3rd or 4th pass-through of this or that book, his knowledge and understanding of the Bible expanded to a point where he could expound on these passages in much greater detail, often spending a full hour on each verse, gleaning from it as much meaning as possible.

Other resources for the Doctrine of grace apparatus for perception (GAP) (some of these were used as partial sources for this doctrinal development as well):
http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=134
http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/gap.html
http://makarios-online.org/notes/pdf/GAP%204-09.pdf
These other sources go into greater detail on this doctrine.
Related to this doctrine is the Importance of Bible Doctrine (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

In a similar fashion, we learn more and more about God's plan as we move through the book of Genesis. Here, God will reveal His plan for salvation for mankind. So far, we have the promise of Gen. 3:15 "I [God] will put enmity between you [the serpent = Satan] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He will bruise your head [deadly blow], and you will bruise his heel [painful, even debilitating blow, but not fatal]." The cross of Christ would result in a painful, debilitating suffering for our Lord, but He would recover and He would be raised up again. However, this same cross would break the back of Satan, so our Lord would, thereby, crush his head.

After this, we have the importance of animal sacrifices; and, many times, the narrative of the life of Abraham is stopped as he builds an altar to God and offers on this altar animals as blood offerings and/or burnt offerings. Therefore, we understand that long before God gave the people of Israel the Mosaic Law, the key is, the sacrifice of an innocent (this is where Adam and Eve received the animal skins; this is the dispute between Cain and Abel; and this is the sacrifice which Noah made coming out of the ark).

Lesson 245: Genesis 22:1–2a — The Trinity in the Old Testament

In Gen. 22, God takes this another step forward and reveals more about this sacrifice which is to come.

All of these things mentioned speak of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which is the central event of human history, and the most important event of human and angelic history. On the one hand, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ reveals all of the hatred and anger of Satan, which continues to grow; and, on the other, the crucifixion is the central event of God's plan—God the Father poured out on God the Son all of the sins that we have committed (and will commit), and He judged those sins in God the Son. Jesus took on the penalty for our sins during the crucifixion. This same event is, at once, the result of the hatred and viciousness of Satan and is simultaneously the ultimate expression of God's love, righteousness and justice. It reveals just how deep the hatred of Satan and the depravity of man can go; and it reveals the perfect character of God at the very same time.

At this point in the narrative of Genesis, we come to the most powerful foreshadowing of the crucifixion to date—the offering of Isaac—Abram's unique son—as a sacrifice to God. We should understand that there are two very different perspectives of this event: the perspective of the Old Testament; and the perspective of Church Age believers.

When it comes to Abraham, he looks at what is to come as a simple act of obedience—God tells him to do this, and so he does it. God will ask Abraham to offer up his uniquely-born son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God, and Abraham will obey God. For the next 2000 years, this is how Jews will view this event—as a great act of obedience. Abraham will show all of human creation just how devoted and obedient that he was to God. He was obedient to the point of the offering of his son to God as a sacrifice.

From our perspective, we know that this sacrifice is all about Jesus Christ. Progressive revelation. *Progressive revelation may be defined as the process of God's own disclosure of Himself and His plan given to man throughout history by means of nature (Rom. 1:18-21; Ps. 19), providential dealings (Rom. 8:28), preservation of the universe (Col. 1:17), miracles (John 2:11), direct communication (Acts 22:17-21), Christ Himself (John 1:14) and through the Bible (1 John 5:39)*.[72] There is much more involved in Abraham's offering up his son to God as a sacrifice than simple obedience. However, what that *much more* is, will be revealed at the cross and discovered by Christian theologians (there is only one verse which hints at the parallel).

For Abraham, the basis of all that God has promised him lies in his uniquely-born son Isaac. All that God has promises Abraham is meaningless apart from Isaac. Isaac is key to the blessings promised by God. Therefore, Abraham knows that, even though God will ask him to sacrifice Isaac, God must bring about what He has promised. Therefore, whatever happens, Isaac cannot die (of, if he dies, God must revive him again). Consequently, Abraham will respond to God's demand with perfect obedience. I realize that I am telling you the basic plot of the narrative to come, but this narrative is better understood if we know what is going to happen from the beginning.

Genesis 22:1 And it happened after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am [lit., *Behold me*]."

God initiates this contact. He speaks to Abraham.

There seems to be a pattern—when God asks a question, then He is speaking to someone who is outside of the plan of God—be they an unbeliever, a fallen angel or a believer out of fellowship. Because God has asked a question, protocol demands that they respond. However, when speaking to one in the plan of God, God simply speaks—often calling them by name.

Recall that, only recently, Abraham planted a tree, and then called upon the name of the Lord, meaning his fellowship with God centered around teaching.

Genesis 22:2a And He said, "Take now your son, your only one, Isaac,...

However, we should be able to tell from the very beginning, that a parallel is being drawn here between Abraham and his son, and God the Father and Jesus, His Son.

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[72] From http://www.theopedia.com/Progressive_Revelation accessed July 10, 2013.

Concerning the Trinity: this has been in the Bible from the very first chapter of Genesis. It does not matter if no Jew realizes this ever, throughout the entire history of Israel. It is important that we recognize it now. In fact, it is far more amazing that the Trinity is found throughout the Old and New Testaments, even though Jews never believed in a Triune God. This way, we take what we know from the New Testament, look back to the Old, and are encouraged to see, "It's the same. The Trinity exists in both testaments."

What about salvation? If no Jew ever understood the Trinity and therefore, never believed in the Trinity, what about their salvation? All Jews are saved by believing in the 2nd Person of the Trinity, Who is Y^{e}howah Elohim in the Old Testament—the Revealed Lord. Abraham had believed Y^{e}howah and it was credited to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). Abraham did not have to know that the Godhead was a Trinity; he did not have to know the separate functions of the Members of the Godhead, even though these functions are laid out in the first chapter of Genesis. Abraham simply had to believe in the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the Revealed God, Y^{e}howah Elohim in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ in the New. He would be the One to die for Abraham's sins, future from Abraham; and He has died for our sins, which is an event from the historical past.

Here are a few Old Testament verses where the Trinity is clearly proclaimed:

The Trinity in the Old Testament (the Abbreviated Version)

1. The 4th word of Gen. 1:1 is Elohim, which can be translated *God* or *gods*. The *-im* ending is the plural ending in the Hebrew. This word takes on a masculine singular verb here, and for that reason, some have called this the *plural of excellence,* indicating that God is so excellent that, this could only be expressed with a plural noun. Although I am not saying this is wrong, at the same time, always bear in mind that the first title used for God is a plural word.
2. Before we go further, we should make a quick stop at Deut. 6:4: Listen, O Israel, Jehovah *is* our God [Elohim] Jehovah *is* one. I have carefully maintained the order of the Hebrew words, and note two things: the parallelism and the italicized words. The italicized words are inserted, and every translator inserts them; sometimes the nouns are mixed around a bit (e.g., Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD or Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one). You will note that *Jehovah* occurs twice and therefore suggests a parallelism. In the Hebrew, the subject is not necessarily found first, but the parallelism suggests that *Jehovah* is either the subject both times or it is the predicate nominative both times. So Moses could be saying, "Listen, O Israel, our God is Jehovah, One is Jehovah;" or, "Listen, O Israel, Jehovah *is* our God [and] Jehovah *is* **one**." The latter makes the most sense to me, as the numeral *one* is found more often as a modifier than as a noun. However, the numeral *one* is not necessarily *one in number* but it is often used for something which represents a unity, as in, a man and a woman shall leave their parents and they will become ***one*** flesh. Even in sexual union, a man and a woman are still two distinct people; however, what they form is a union (ideally a union for life). So, Moses was not making the point that Jehovah God is a single God, although Christians do believe in one God; but

that Jehovah is our Elohim (plural) and Jehovah is **one**, indicating one in unity and purpose and essence rather than one in number. *Jehovah* (or, more properly, *Y^{e}howah*) can refer to any Member of the Trinity, and these Members of the Trinity act as one.

3. Now let's return to creation. Although it is clear that God created all that is, with and through Jesus Christ (John 1:1–14), we are going to restrict ourselves to the Old Testament. On the 6th day, God created man. we read: God [plural noun] said [masculine singular verb], "Let **Us** make [plural verb] man in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gen. 1:26). Up until now, even though we had the plural noun *Elohim,* we would always find a masculine singular verb; however, this time, the verb *to make* is a plural verb. This is followed by two words which plural suffixes (*our*). When God designed man, there is apparently a different approach to man than God creating even the heavens and the earth. Up until the creation of man, the verbs have all been masculine singular; now, the verb *to make* is in the plural. Man will be created trichotomous and, apparently, with a greater complexity than what God had already created. We can attest to this complexity, as we can usually recognize human life, but giving it greater definition than that eludes even those in the medical profession. For instance, just how alive is a person who is hooked up to medical machinery which, for instance, breathes for him? Just how alive is the fetus in the womb? These are almost more moral questions than they are medical, as medicine and science cannot say with complete certainty what these lives are. Science, in most cases, is able to sustain these lives or to destroy these lives, but giving them further definition, beyond a guess as to how viable these examples are, is outside of medicine's ability. So, when God created a body with a soul and a spirit, this is a creation which man to this day does not fully apprehend. Scientists may tell us that we are 98% identical to chimps (I have forgotten the exact percentage here), in terms of DNA, but people with an IQ above room temperature don't have any problems distinguishing their fellow human beings from chimps. So, as a result, we have a large percentage of scientists who believe that we evolved from primates, as our DNA is so similar; yet there are a significant number of scientists who do not believe that such an evolution occurred. As a result, there are scientists out there who want to create life in order to harvest portions of it to attempt to cure this or that disease; and there are even some who would want to try human cloning; and there are many out there who view these things as morally repugnant, and in differing amounts. This is all because, we do not know exactly what the soul is, how it is connected to the body, and we medically don't know what the soul is doing or where it can be found with respect to fetuses, lobodomized patients or comatose patients. Some think that the key to life is the EEG (electroencephlograph) readings of the brain (which is what we use, essentially, to determine if someone is dead). However, a 3 week old fetus has EEG readings; and who knows before that? My only point in all of this is, we are

wonderfully made, put together with a variety of elements, that, in and of themselves, are clearly not alive; and that, somehow, by the breath of God, we are made alive (Psalm 139:13–16 Gen. 2:7). And so, when God made man, all 3 members of the Trinity were involved.

4. The building of a house can be likened to the function of the Trinity.
   a. You have the plans for a house, which is analogous to God the Father. The architect may never be seen by anyone directly associated with the house. We know God's plan as the divine decrees.
   b. You have the workmen who show up—they are seen, and they actually do the work—and these workmen are analogous to God the Son. Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament; He kept the Law of Moses, and He died on the cross for our sins. This is the work that man saw.
   c. Thirdly, you then have the power for the power tools—also unseen—and that is analogous to God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit gives us the power and ability to do the plan of God. Although this is an excellent analogy, analogies do not prove anything; they simply help to illustrate truths.
5. Isa. 48 is spoken by God, although we may not, at first understand which member of the Trinity is speaking. However, generally speaking, the revealed member of the Trinity is Jesus Christ. In Isa. 48:3, we read: "I have declared the former things from then; and they went out of My mouth; and I made them hear; suddenly I acted, and they came about." This is clearly God and not Isaiah speaking, because Isaiah did not act in order to make his own words come to pass. God speaks of His wrath in v. 9, He speaks of refining Israel in v. 10, and of His name being profaned in v. 11. Then He says (vv. 12–13): "Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel My called: I am He; I am the First; surely I am the Last. My hand surely founded earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; I called to them, they stood up together." Clearly this is God Who is speaking, and, as we will find out, God the Son, the Revealed Member of the Trinity. Isa. 48:16: "Come near to Me, hear this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning. **From its being, I was there**; and now **the Lord Jehovah, and His Spirit, have[1] sent Me**." The Lord Jehovah refers to God the Father; His Spirit, of course, is the Holy Spirit. The One speaking is Jesus Christ, the revealed member of the Trinity. The singular verb here is sometimes used, even with a plural subject, when that subject is split up, as it is here. The Hebrew actually reads: ...the Lord Jehovah has sent Me and His Spirit. The exact understanding can be cleared up at a later date; but that we find the Trinity here is clear.
6. In Daniel 7:13, we have two members of the Trinity: I was looking in the night visions. And behold! One like **the Son of Man came** with the clouds of the heavens. And **He came to the Ancient of Days**. And **they brought Him near before Him**. God the Son comes to God the Father. And **to Him** was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve **Him**; **His** dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass

away, and **His** kingdom one that shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:14). God the Father gives to God the Son an everlasting kingdom.

7. We find God the Father and God the Son in Hosea 1:4–7 as well: **Yahweh said to him**, "Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease. It will happen in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." She conceived again, and bore a daughter. Then he said to him, "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah; for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, that I should in any way pardon them. But **I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by Yahweh their God**, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen."

[1] This is a singular verb and is a peculiarity of the Hebrew. Two subjects may be involved in the action; however, one is named first, with the verb (as we find in the Hebrew of this verse), and then the second subject of the verb follows. In that construction of a Hebrew sentence, the verb is found in the singular, even though there are two subjects.

I strongly recommend reading the complete **Doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament** (HTML) (PDF).

When it comes to faith in Christ, there is not a lot that we have to believe. When I believed in Jesus Christ, as dumb as it may seem, I did not know about the resurrection. For some reason, that fact had gone over my head, even though I had attended many different churches in the past, including a Baptist church. When I began to study, I found out more about the cross of our Lord, that He had died, was in the grave for 3 days, and then God raised Him from the dead. I did not know about His later ascension at the time that I expressed, privately, faith in Christ. I believe all of that now; but, when I first believed in Jesus, I did not know much more than a little about Who Jesus is. Everything else, I may have been aware of, from time to time, but it never really sank in. This was information that I could not have drawn upon, to say, “Here is what Christians believe.”

Lesson 246: Genesis 22:1–7 — Abraham and Isaac Go to the Mountain

So far, we have studied the first verse and a half:

Genesis 22:1–2a And it happened after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am [lit., *Behold me*].” And He said, “Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love.

As we have discussed, there will be two tracks to observe in this narrative: first, the obedience track, where God tells Abraham what to do, and Abraham obeys God. That is the simplest view of this passage and the way that most Jews read this passage. God tells Abraham what to do and Abraham does it. This is, no doubt, how Abraham understood

this incident in his life, and how Isaac appreciated it in looking backward. There is no indication that Abraham ever saw this in any other way.

However, the second view is that, this chapter reveals the crucifixion of Jesus Christ 2000 years prior to this crucifixion taking place. We have a father offering up his uniquely-born son as a sacrifice in a very near to the place where the crucifixion will actually take place. This is known as a *type,* which is a person, an action or a circumstance which looks forward to Jesus Christ, to His sacrifice on the cross, or to some other future event. The thing that it looks forward to is called the *antitype*. We studied this with **Melchizedek** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), where he is the type and Jesus is the antitype. Our study of type and antitype goes back to **Gen. 3** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) (also lesson #39).

This obedience track is the understanding of the human author,[73] who is Abraham or Isaac. However, the Divine Author, God the Holy Spirit, knows the plan of God. He knows that, in this same place, Jesus the Messiah would give Himself as an offering for our sins. That is the foretelling of this passage; or, if you will, the type to the antitype of the crucifixion.

Genesis 22:2a And He said, "Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love. And go into the land of Moriah...

There are several mountains scattered in the land of Moriah (we are assuming that this is in the Mount Moriah, Mount Zion area).

The land of Moriah takes us back to the general area of Mount Zion, where the Jebus were living.

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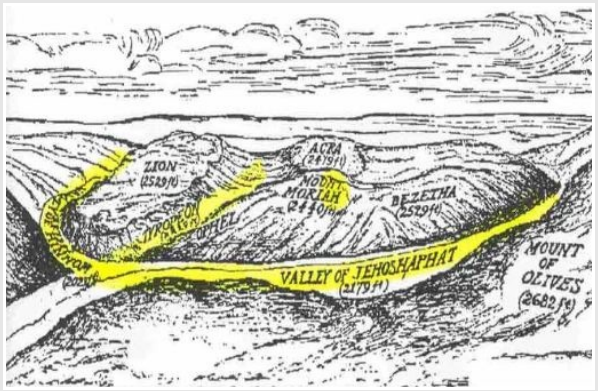
[73] And, by author, I do not mean that either man wrote this down; but that one or both of them began to teach this to their sons and their son's sons, and that it was remembered until the time came for it to be recorded in written form.

Maps of the Land of Moriah

The Four Mountains	The City of Jerusalem
	
http://www.oxfordbiblechurch.co.uk/media/MOUNT%20MORIAH%20pics/moriah-book3.jpg	http://www.gilai.com/product_1044/Wilkinson-Map-of-Jerusalem-1807.-The-Land-of-Moriah-or-Jerusalem.#

To the left of Zion, on the left hand map, would be the location of Golgotha or Mount Calvary. It is my contention that this is the place where God will lead Abraham. However, we do not know that for a fact. Angels know for a certainty where this took place; we do not.

Genesis 22:2 And He said, "Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love. And go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will name to you."

What God is going to ask Abraham to do will not take place in southern Israel. Not only does God want Abraham to sacrifice his only son (by Sarah), but this has to be done in a place which is far away from where Abraham is at this time. There is a right place and a right time.

A *burnt offering* always speaks of judgment. Fire is always associated with judgment in God's plan.

Although we do not know for certain where the land of Moriah is, there is a Mount Moriah in Jerusalem (which is known as Salem at this time). Given the trip that Abraham will take (3 days), it is reasonable to assume that he actually went to Mount Moriah, which received

its name, at that time, from the general land around there, which was called Moriah. One of the hills in this mountainous region is called Golgotha. Although the Bible does not specify that this is Mount Moriah that Abraham is going to, or Golgotha specifically, the time frame of a 3 day's journey is reasonable—this would be the time required for Abraham to go from far southern Israel in the Beersheba area up to Jerusalem (then called Salem), given the rugged territory through which Abraham would have to travel. Obviously, the name *Moriah* suggests that this is the same place (ancient areas often retained a specific name for hundreds and even thousands of years). Furthermore, the simple fact that God would require Abraham to go on a 3-day journey would suggest that he was being led to a very particular place and not to some far-away random hill. Furthermore, God tells Abraham that He will specify to him where to offer up Isaac.

So Abraham is to take his only son, the son whom he loves, and sacrifice him at a place God would lead him to, which place is probably where our Lord would be sacrificed for us as well.

Genesis 22:2 And He said, "Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love. And go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will name to you."

God is directing Abraham to a specific place, and when he arrives there, God will direct him specifically to one of the mountains, indicating that Abraham will be in a place where he can go up several different mountains. Again, this coincides with the four mountains near Jerusalem.

Okay, let's just say for a moment that my theory here is correct, and this is Mount Golgotha that Abraham takes his son to—why isn't this made a big deal of in Scripture? Why don't we know that for a certainty?

Here is there reason why: we are not the only beings involved in the conflict of the ages. We are anthropocentric, and we want to make everything all about us, but imagine the angels, who are watching all of this unfold, on a very particular mountain—and then 2000 years later, Jesus is offered up to God by crucifixion from that very mountain. Angels are observing everything that occurs. They see God's words fulfilled in the great drama that they are observing, aka human history.

Angels observe this in real time, in the spectacle of human history. They first observe that Abraham is willing to sacrifice his son Isaac to God, as a great act of obedience. And angels do not forget things, so they will remember everything that they have seen forever. Then, as they watch the drama of human history play out, 2000 years later, probably in the same place, they see the Son of God being offered as a man on the cross. This powerfully clicks with all angelic beings. They remember in vivid detail Abraham offering his own son to God; and now they view God offering up His Own Son for Abraham (and for all mankind). They learn from this the sovereignty of God, as well as the justice and righteousness of God.

Remember, that angels have a starting point to their existence. So, they don't know what happened before their existence except whatever God tells them. They do not know Who God is, except that God either tells them or shows them. Here, we have an amazing thing—Abraham offering up his uniquely-born son on Mount Golgotha, a parallel to the offering of Jesus Christ, God's uniquely-born Son on the same mount. This act informs the angels. By this, and millions of other things that they observe, the angels continue to learn about Who and What God is. For them to understand God and His righteousness is just as important as us understanding God and His perfect righteousness.

You will recall that, all of the dispersions which are cast upon God by Satan reference His perfect character and His relationship with mankind. All of the objections which Satan leveled against God before human history are all being dealt with, and this is one illustration of that.

This does not mean that the angels viewed this sacrifice with an understanding that God had Abraham reveal the cross in advance, and that it would take place right at this spot. I am of the opinion that neither man nor angels fully understood the cross prior to it occurring in time. I don't believe that Satan, with all his genius, realized that the cross that he took Jesus to would be his own undoing—that this is how the Seed of the Woman would crush his head. I think that, after the fact, the angels put everything together; and, after the fact, so did the disciples (with Jesus' help). I am suggesting that there is progressive revelation for angels just as there is for mankind. If Satan knew that the cross would be his ultimate undoing, then why would Satan taking every step to get Jesus to the cross?

God magnificently takes the rebellion of Satan and the sin of mankind and utilizes these to take Jesus to the cross, which is, simultaneously, the great proof of God's perfect love, justice and righteousness.

I have made the analogy before that human history is like a giant morality play for angels. They observe all that goes on. God, as a great playwright, will foreshadow certain events, but He does not give away all of the plot points. So angels observe this great act of obedience by Abraham, not knowing that it also represents the great act of obedience of Jesus on the cross. They will find this out 2000 years later. They will then realize why God emphasized this particular scene in the life of Abraham. They will piece it altogether with great appreciation for God's plan.

We have the same thing in many movies that we watch. There is some foreshadowing of future events in the movie; and as the movie progresses, these things come to pass, and we recall those scenes early on in the movie which told us what was coming, but we did not fully appreciate it until the conclusion of the movie.

What is amazing about this event is, we know that this was all laid out in the Word of God before Jesus walked on this earth. No matter how conservative or how liberal the interpretations of the Bible and the writing of the Bible, historically, the Old Testament had to be written before the New Testament because we have copies of the Old Testament

from the Dead Sea Scrolls circa 100 B.C. And not only did Jesus and His disciples use the Old Testament as their Bible, but it was *very well known* to their audience already, as evidenced by, for instance, the many times that the scribes or pharisees attempted to trap Jesus with one of their theological questions.

Therefore, Abraham offering up his uniquely-born son as a sacrifice is exactly what it appears to be: a real historical incident which clearly foreshadows the offering of our Lord on the cross (just as Psalm 22 and Isa. 53 do).

The Angelic Conflict is of paramount importance—without it, there is no fall of man, there is no Satan, and the book of Job makes no sense. Therefore, there will be some things in Scripture which do not make complete sense apart from the **Angelic Conflict** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Genesis 22:3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him.

Abraham has offered up animal sacrifices many times in the past. When he cuts the wood to take with him, this is an indication that he will be offering up an animal sacrifice. This establishes purpose from the very beginning.

It is interesting that he is splitting wood and carrying wood with him. There are several possible explanations: (1) it is clear from the beginning that Abraham is going to offer up a sacrifice and (2) it is possible that he does not expect to find dry wood where he is going to. (3) To establish the clear purpose of this trip from the outset.

Abraham, Isaac and these servants will travel to the exact place that God has told them to go. Geography is an important consideration in the plan of God.

Genesis 22:4 Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.

What is it that you can see *afar off?* Generally speaking, you can see mountains from a distance. Unless Abraham is standing on top of a mountain looking down into a valley (which is not suggested at all in this context), if he sees something *afar off,* it is very likely that, he is looking at a mountainous region. V. 2 tells us that God is going to indicate to Abraham one of the mountains to go up.

As mentioned before, it would be about a 3-day trip, in the era, to go from the southernmost area of Israel (then under the control of the Philistines) to Mount Moriah, in the Jerusalem area.

Genesis 22:5 And Abraham said to his young men, "You stay here with the ass. And I and the boy will go on to this way and worship, and come again to you."

Something which is hidden in many translations is the morphology of the final 3 Hebrew verbs. They are all 1st person **plural**, imperfect verbs. Abraham is saying, "I and the boy will go this way and **we** will worship and **we** will return unto you." The imperfect tense is used for successive, continuous and/or future action. The plural means that, both he and his son will do these things, which includes the final phrase, *we will return to you*.

Abraham knows what God has asked him to do. God has told Abraham to offer up his son to God as a sacrifice. This is quite difficult, because, up until this point in time, apart from heathen religion, there are no human sacrifices. Abraham is holding two things in his mind, even though they may seem to be contradictory: God has told him to sacrifice his son and this young man, Isaac, is the son through whom all of the promises will be fulfilled. God has done nothing but, year after year, come to Abraham and say, "You are going to be father of many nations; I am going to give your descendants this land; and in Isaac, will your seed be called." So there is no question as to what God has planned for Abraham and his seed—this particular young man, Isaac. And, remember that Isaac was born to Abraham under very unusual circumstances, at a point where he and his wife would not have been able to give birth another time. So, Isaac is the one and the only one through whom these promises from God could be fulfilled. We could call Isaac, Abraham's uniquely-born son, because he was born to Abraham and Sarah long after they were physically able to have children. Despite their age, God promised them Isaac, and God brought this to pass. So, Abraham knows, no matter what happens, God has made a series of promises to him and those promises will be brought to fruition through his son Isaac. Abraham knows We need to have patience in our faith, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised (Heb. 10:36).

Genesis 22:6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took the fire in his hand, and a knife. And they both went together.

Given that Isaac carries the wood, we can assume he is probably more than 8 years old.

Abraham had gathered the wood from where he was and brought it to this place. Wood is needed to burn for a burnt offering, but the wood is also representative—it represents the cross (in the Greek, Jesus is said to be offered up on the *wood*). The wood also represents our sins, which are the fuel for the fire. It is our sins that are judged.

Abraham and his son begin their trek up the mountain, with all that is needed for a burnt offering. There was wood, a stick of fire and a knife, which would be used to slit the throat of the sacrifice. The blood of a sacrifice represents the spiritual death of Jesus Christ, which is called the *blood of Christ*.

Genesis 22:7 And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here am I, my son." And he said, "I see [lit., *behold*] the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Isaac had observed his father offering up animal sacrifices on many occasions. We do not know his age here, but he is old enough to understand burnt offerings, and that usually,

a lamb is offered up. He observes everything that is necessary for an animal sacrifice, except for the animal itself. Isaac also heard his father say, “We will worship on this mountain and we will return to you.”

Lesson 247: Genesis 22:1–10 God Looks to Himself, the Lamb, for a Sacrifice

So far, this is what we have studied:

Gen. 22:1–7 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and we will worship and we will come again to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (ESV, mostly)

We have discussed how this foreshadows the offering of God the Son by God the Father for our sins, very possibly on this same mountain. The Bible is not specific about this mountain, but angels know where it is and angels know where Jesus is offered up. God’s plan includes both man and angels.

The next verse of your Bible probably reads like this:

Genesis 22:8 And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” So they both went together.

This is probably the translation which you find in your Bible, but this is not really what we have here. The subject is *God*. The verb is 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of râʾâh (הָאָר) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means, *to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know*. This is one of the most common verbs in the Hebrew and its meaning is not doubted by anyone. This verb does not mean *to provide,* as is found in so many translations. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. This is followed by the lâmed preposition and the 3rd person masculine singular suffix. Literally, this reads, “God will look to Himself, the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” Do you see how dramatically different that is?

Genesis 22:8 And Abraham said, “My son, God will look to Himself, the lamb for a burnt offering.” So they both went together.

I could only find a few translations which got the verb right. Now, on the one hand, we can understand this to read, "My son, God will see the lamb for Himself for a burnt offering;" or, "God will look to Himself, the Lamb, for a burnt offering, my son."

On the one hand, Abraham is saying, "God sees the lamb to be offered." However, more literally, Abraham is saying, "God looks to Himself, the Lamb, for an offering." Based upon the actual words that are found here, either approach is legitimate.

Abraham knows that God has to see something—the lamb, the sacrifice—in some way or another. He does not have all of this worked out in his own mind; he is simply operating under the orders of God. Believers for many years would look back on this passage—some even after the crucifixion—and not quite get it. But, what is happening here is an illustration of the crucifixion. This is a foreshadowing God offering up His Uniquely-born Son—the Son Whom He loves—as a sacrifice for our sins. God the Father, who is omniscient—not just with regards to place, but with regards to time—sees God the Son, as the Lamb for the sacrifice.

Abraham represents God the Father; Isaac represents God the Son. They are probably ascending Golgotha, although there is not enough evidence in this passage to say this without equivocation. The sacrifice, of course, is parallel to the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross, where He took upon Himself the penalty for all of our sins.

Genesis 22:9a And they came to the place which God had told him of.

There are some implications which must be considered: God gave detailed and explicit directions. He gave them one time to Abraham several days previous. Abraham is now following those directions. They took him to a specific place.

Application: God's plan is explicit; it is specific. Although we do not receive our marching orders directly from God (as in the way that God speaks directly to Abraham), we do get them from the Bible. More specifically, we get them in Bible class from the pastor-teacher. R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls this the protocol plan of God. *Protocol* is *a rigid long-established code prescribing complete deference to superior rank and strict adherence to due order of precedence, precise and correct procedure*. At this point, we are just getting a clue as to the precision of this plan. God described to Abraham a place where he and Isaac would go to, and this was a 3-day journey away from him; yet God describes this place with exact precision so that Abraham could both recognize where he was from a distance (v. 4) and there was apparently an exact place for Abraham to go to.

Application: It ought to be clear that Christians today do not tend to operate under a clearly-defined, explicit plan. When it comes to adhering to precise and correct procedure, most believers do not even know how to get back into fellowship when they get out. This is not just today but it appears to be the case throughout much of the Church Age, despite man having the complete Word of God. However, even a superficial understanding of the Word of God has decreased dramatically during my generation, and these effects are obvious, particularly with reference to the United States of America. We have not been in

a precarious place like this since the Great Depression. There are so many things which could knock our country out of alignment, but the fundamental reason for this is our spiritual state.

We stand before God, as a nation, in the same spiritual state as Israel did in the time of Hosea, when God, through Hosea, warned, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge [= Bible doctrine]; because you have rejected knowledge [understanding of the protocol plan of God], I reject you from being a priest [nation] to Me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The more they increased, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame. They feed on the sin of My people; they are greedy for their iniquity. And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways and repay them for their deeds." (Hosea 4:6–9). These verses are designed to warn us today just as much as they were 3000 years ago.

Or, as we read in the New Testament, Jesus warns the church at Ephesus: "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love [which was Jesus Christ and a love of the truth]. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; change your thinking and do the first works; and if not, I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place [they had been a light to the world]; unless you change your thinking." (Rev. 2:4–5). Although this was written to a church, this passage may be also applied to a nation founded on the principles of the Bible, which our nation was. See the **American Heritage Special** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Abraham had to go to a very specific place in order to offer up his son, Isaac. Once God gave him the directions, that is exactly where Abraham needed to go.

Genesis 22:9 And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood.

They have ascended a mountain. Abraham begins to ready to offer his son in obedience to God upon the altar he just made.

Isaac has seen this done before. He has seen his father take a lamb and place it upon an altar, and tie it down to the altar. So, most of what Isaac is observing is not coming out of nowhere. Isaac is confused about Abraham tying him down, but he understands what is being done. He is being offered up as a sacrifice to God, as Abraham's uniquely-born son. This is a sacrifice which God's perfect justice demands—as long as you understand that God will stop this before Abraham cuts Isaac's throat.

My guess is, Abraham, based upon what he has already said, expects for his son to be resurrected from the dead, after being sacrificed to God, even though nothing like that has ever occurred before. Abraham knows that all of God's promises are bound up with Isaac. Isaac is the son of promise; so God's promises, therefore, must come through Isaac. Recall that God has spoken to Abraham again and again and again, about how his seed would be like the sand of the sea or like the stars of the heavens. Abraham knows,

therefore, that Isaac cannot die, even though he is about to offer him up as a sacrifice. Or, if he dies, then God will resurrect him.

Notice what Abraham places his faith in—his faith is in the Word of God. His faith is in what God has told him. This is why Bible doctrine is of the utmost importance. We must actually know what God's Word is in order to place our faith in it. We must know divine viewpoint in order to base our lives upon it. We must be able to think as God thinks in order to direct our own lives.

This is why learning the Word of God is so important to the believer after becoming a believer. Without the Word of God, you have no real direction in life, apart from your training as a child and the societal norms that you have learned (some of which are good but most of which are lousy). God's norms and standards are perfect, absolute and permanent; our norms and standards are imperfect, relative and transitory. One clear example that I have seen occur in my own lifetime is, homosexual activity was almost universally understood to be a sin in the United States in the 1950's (and before). That was an accurate societal norm. Today (I write this in 2013), saying that homosexuality is a sin is thought by many in our country to be a homophobic remark, and, as such, hate speech. The idea that homosexual desires and behavior is not wrong (sinful), is taught over and over again in television shows and movies. One day, 10 or 15 years ago, homosexual characters began being portrayed on television with absolutely no differences between themselves and anyone else on the show, except for their sexual preferences. Real male homosexual behavior, which is quite deviant and far outside the norm for male sexual behavior, is almost never portrayed in any of these shows. In any given season of television, you are more likely to come across a female character who treats sex almost as causally as do real male homosexuals, even though that behavior is typical of male homosexuals and not of female heterosexuals. However, at the same time, casual multi-partner sex among homosexuals (which is often random, takes place in public places, and occurs with little or no personal relationship) is almost never portrayed.

Individuals change their minds on this (or claim to). In 1996, Barack Obama agreed that "I favor legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages." However, later, in 2011, his staff claimed that this was a questionnaire filled out by someone else (although it had been signed by Mr. Obama). In 2004, *Obama said he believed marriage was between a man and a woman. He also said that didn't necessarily mean marriage was a civil right*. In 2008, then Senator Obama, running for president, clearly said that marriage should be limited to unions between a man and a woman. "For me as a Christian, it's also a sacred union. God's in the mix." *In 2010: Obama spoke to liberal bloggers and said that positions evolve, including his own, but that he was unwilling to support gay marriage at that time*. In 2011, President Obama took a more pro-gay marriage stance, but allowing states to make this decision. Quite obviously, we are speaking of a politician here, who takes whatever vocal stance helps him gain more power. His views on such things may have set in stone long ago, or it may have changed. We have no idea.

My point in all of this is, society says one thing on one day; and it says something completely different on another. Societal norms are imperfect, relative and transitory. No one in the 1950's would have seriously said, "People who engage in homosexual behavior are doing what is normal for them; therefore, it is not wrong." It would be like saying today, "People who engage in pederasty are doing what is normal for them. Therefore, it is not wrong." One of society's norms today is, "People who have more than one wife at the same time are polygamists and have transgressed the law." However, using exactly the same arguments for gay marriage, we may see this societal norm change in the next few years (however, polygamists are not nearly as well-organized, "out there" and politically active as homosexuals are).

A society is not advancing when it wants to recognize sinful behavior as normal; and then give its practitioners special legal privileges. This indicates that a society is moving toward a hedonistic bend, which can be observed throughout our society today.

How do we decide on what is right and wrong? That is where the Word of God comes in. We cannot depend on our society to get God's norms and standards right, because what society calls wrong today, it will call right tomorrow. Therefore, we need Bible doctrine so that we can think like God thinks (or, as the Apostle Paul once wrote, "We have the mind of Christ").

As a parallel, just as there is no fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham without Isaac; there is no fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham without Jesus Christ come in the flesh and offering Himself as our sacrifice.

Back to Abraham and Isaac:

Genesis 22:9 And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood.

You will note that, up until this verse, there has been quite a bit of talking in this passage. God talking to Abraham, Abraham speaking to his servants and Abraham and Isaac talking with one another. However, nothing is said in vv. 9–10. Abraham is being obedient to God and Isaac is being obedient to his father. Neither one knows how far this will go, or what will happen next.

This verse also gives us a clue as to the age of Isaac. Notice the final phrase and the order of the action: And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood. There are two imperfect verbs with wâw consecutives. This generally connotes successive action; so Abraham first ties or binds Isaac, and then Abraham himself places Isaac on the altar. This suggests that he is able to lift Isaac up and place him there. This suggests to me that Isaac is somewhere between 5 and 13. Isaac has to be strong enough to carry the wood for the burnt offering, and small enough where Abraham can place him on the altar. Since Isaac is able to carry the wood (v. 6), I would place him between ages 8 and 11. You look at what Isaac says and does (he asks about the sacrifice, not realizing that

he is the sacrifice; he carries the wood); and you consider that Abraham is able to lay the bound child upon the wood, which suggests that Abraham might have to lift the boy up somewhat.

Genesis 22:9 And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood.

Bear in mind that a host of angels are observing this as well. They all know about Isaac, and how God will fulfill all of His promises to Abraham in Isaac; but now, Isaac has been tied down onto the altar, and the next step is for Abraham to slit his throat—so, right now, angels are watching this from the edge of their seats, as it were.

How do angels know which events to pay attention to? There are billions of people on earth at this time. How do angels know who to follow around? God often tells them. In the first chapter of Job, God asks Satan, "Have you observed my servant Job?" This focuses angelic concentration upon Job. From that point on, billions of angelic eyes will be upon Job. We know that, for significant events and for significant people in God's plan, there are more angels observing.

We should understand human history as though it were a tremendous movie production—or, better yet, a stage production taking place and being viewed by angels—and angels are right there in the midst of it all, taking it all in.

Many years ago, I attended a stage production of Marat-Sade, and this takes place in an insane asylum, and behind all of the seats was a walkway through which the inmates (actors) would wander, and you could see them, hear them and smell them. It was as if you were right in the middle of all the action. That is very much what human history is to angels. It is the greatest morality play, if you will, ever produced. Since angels can apparently congregate in huge numbers, not limited by space in the same way that we are, there will be certain parts of human history which they will find more interesting than others (this ought to be obvious, as the Bible is not a complete history of ancient man). Right now in the book of Genesis, nearly all of angelic creation is there with Abraham, watching everything that occurs. Those angels who are not there will be told about it.

Genesis 22:10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

Abraham reaches out and takes the knife. His intention is to slay his son, just as God has required of him. The lâmed preposition combined with the Qal infinitive construct of *to slay* indicates purpose and intent in the Hebrew, not action. However, at this point, Abraham is ready to slit the throat of his son, the son whom he loves. We are literally seconds away from this happening. And then, suddenly, a voice:

So far, we have studied this:

Gen. 22:1–7 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and we will worship and we will come again to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (ESV, mostly)

God has led Abraham and his son Isaac out to the land of Moriah, which probably includes the ancient Gethsemene, and God has made it clear to Abraham that he will offer up his son as a sacrifice to God. Abraham is obedient to God, knowing that all of God's promises must be fulfilled in Isaac. Therefore, Abraham has assumed the God will have to do something like bring Isaac back from the dead (although, historically, this has never occurred before).

Genesis 22:8–10 And Abraham said, "My son, God will look to Himself, the lamb for a burnt offering." So they both went together. And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

Isaac asks about the lamb who is to be offered, and Abraham gives Isaac a fairly cryptic answer: My son, God will look to Himself, the lamb for a burnt offering." God the Son is the Lamb for our offering; He is the Lamb who will be offered up in our stead.

V. 10 stops, right where Abraham is about to slay his son, Isaac. He has the knife in his hand, and Isaac lies bound before him on the altar, and Abraham is about to slit Isaac's throat when suddenly:

Genesis 22:11 And the Angel of Jehovah called to him from the heavens and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I."

Abraham clearly hears an audible voice—the Angel of Jehovah speaks to Abraham. As we have studied previously, the Angel of Jehovah is the Revealed Lord, Whom we call today, Jesus. See the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** (HTML) (PDF).

The doubling of Abraham's name is interesting, but a study I will save for another occasion. It appears as though God is indicating great significance here by saying, "Abraham! Abraham!"

Genesis 22:12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me."

There are several things that we need to note here. God is omniscient, and the future is as perspicuous to Him as the past, so, long before this trip occurred, God knew that Abraham would make the trip and be willing to offer up his son to God. So, this is a test of sorts (v. 1) which Abraham has passed. In life—particularly in school—we are tested all of the time, and that is to ascertain if we have grasped the material enough to move forward. Here, Abraham has understood obedience to God enough to move forward.

Now, if God knew in eternity past that Abraham would do this, then why does God test him in this way? There is a twofold reason here: for Abraham himself, as this would strengthen his faith, and for the angels, who are observing human history play out and, as a result of their observations, drawing their own conclusions about God and His character via His participation in human history.

From Peter Bently's website, accessed June 11, 2013.

I like this picture of **Abraham and Isaac** for several reasons: Isaac is tied down to the wood, as the text tells us; Abraham has short hair; and you cannot see the face of God. The artist is Peter Bently, who is a contemporary artist in Seattle, Washington.

Angels observe all that God does and all that He says. Here, angels marvel at the wonderful obedience of Abraham. However, they will become even more impressed by God when they observe, probably in this same spot, Jesus, His Son, being offered up for the sins of all mankind.

Contrast this with Satan, who also commands the attention of the angels during an angelic convocation, when he tells them, "Let me mess up Job's life; then he will curse You, God." Then,

Satan takes this opportunity to inflict great suffering upon Job, and yet, it does not produce the result that he predicts. Such events help to cement the thinking of both fallen and elect angels. God's truth is vindicated again and again; Satan's lies are also documented, again and again. Satan's objections lodged against God, His plan and His character, are shown, again and again, to be without merit.

Now, in case you think this makes fallen angels want to change their allegiance, think again. We have politicians in this country who propose government program after government program which rarely works anywhere close to the way it is promised; these politicians usually exempt themselves from these same programs; and these programs tend to threaten the stability of the United States when they cannot be paid for. Yet, these same politicians are voted in, year after year after year. Just as people seem to get locked into negative volition, despite all of the evidence to the contrary, the same appears to be true of angels. There is nothing in the Bible of fallen angels who recognize the error of their ways and now ask for mercy.

Genesis 22:12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me."

Next we have the word *to fear,* which we have found before. This suggests that Abraham has reached a certain plateau in his spiritual growth. Abraham entered into a relationship with the Revealed Lord through faith in Y^{e}howah, and he was therefore declared righteous (Gen. 15:6). Every time we see the word righteous in the Old Testament, we need to consider that this may refer to positional righteousness, which is what Abraham possessed. When Abraham and God discussed the number of righteous in Sodom, Abraham was talking about Lot and his family. It ought to be clear that Lot and his daughters were not wonderful and great people whom we ought to emulate, but their righteousness was imputed because they believed in the Revealed God. So when the angels came to them and said, "Get out of town, right now" they did, albeit grudgingly. They may have led sorry spiritual lives, but when faced with a message from God, they were ready to go.

In this passage, we have the word *fear* and it ought to conjure up in your mind the same concept as spiritual growth. Here is where we must be discerning. When God would appear to Abraham or to others, often He would first tell them, "Do not be afraid" (Gen. 15:1 21:17); which is the same word. This indicates that there are two ways to understand this word. In one case, this is something that we ought not to do; and in another, it is something which God appears to be praising. Therefore, we ought to have in our minds, two concepts of the word *fear* (or, *afraid*): (1) a mental attitude sin, when a person is taken to a point where he cannot function normally (fear in battle or fear in a sporting event can simply be a normal reaction which is turned into adrenalin for the person having the initial reaction of fear); and (2) fear/respect, which means what God says becomes more important than anything else in your life. When you fear something, you focus your attention on that thing; you begin to make decisions based upon that which you fear. This is the fear that God approves of, when this focus is upon Him. Quite obviously,

this fear also recognizes Who God is and who we are by comparison; and that we deserve eternal judgment because of our thinking and our actions.

Jesus explains fear in this way: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28). Don't fear man; fear God. One may understand fear in both ways in this passage.

For more information, there is the **Doctrine of Fear of the Lord in the Old Testament** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

God here told Abraham to sacrifice his son, the son whom he loves. Abraham is willing to do that, even though this appears to be against everything that is normal. The idea is, nothing is more important or more real than the Word of God. In fact, the Word of God is more important than what we see and hear (2Peter 1:16–19).

However, let me caveat this with, God is not going to speak to you from above and tell you to do some ghastly or weird thing. We are in a dispensation where God speaks through His Word, and not audibly. Our trust needs to be in the Word of God. Nor are we to read a passage like this and think, "Hmm, does this tell me to sacrifice my son?" or something that like that. If that thought crossed your mind, that God is calling upon you to kill your child, then you are borderline psycho. God called upon Abraham to offer up his son, as this is a picture of God offering up Jesus Christ on behalf of all mankind. God does not pick out new men in each generation and see, "I wonder if he will offer up his son to Me?" God is not a psycho. This was done *one time* and *with one man,* because the offering of Jesus Christ is done once and for all (Heb. 7:27 10:10). God does what He does for a reason and we are in a dispensation where we can understand the plan of God for our lives through His Word, and not through some personal revelation. In this dispensation, we need no further revelation. There is no additional word from God that would guide us in our lives any better than what is available to us today. God does not speak to us through angels, through prophets, through direct contact; He **only** speaks to us through His Word.

Now, if you are in a church or under a ministry where there are those who claim to have special messages from God, you need to quickly and quietly leave that church and those people for good. That is psycho. And, in case there is any confusion on this issue, God has not called upon you or your pastor to be psycho.

God's plan is such that we do not require additional personal guidance from God in order to live our lives. When you come to a stop sign, the plan of God is not going to hinge on you making a right turn instead of a left, and that God just has to speak to you from heaven in order to get you going in the right direction. Having the power of the Holy Spirit combined with doctrine in your soul is what provides you with guidance, not God whispering in your ear, "Left turn up ahead."

Genesis 22:11–12 And the Angel of Jehovah called to him from the heavens and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on

the lad, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me."

Again, you see how this narrative progresses on two levels. This is really Abraham offering up his uniquely-born son, Isaac. This is an actual and unique historical event. However, it is also representative of God the Father offering up God the Son on our behalf. But, at this point, God stops Abraham from proceeding any further. To Abraham and those who read this narrative for the next two thousand years, it is all about obedience—God, the same God that promised to Abraham that Isaac would be born to him, is now requiring Isaac to be sacrificed—and Abraham is obedient to the Revealed Lord. However, at the same time, this narrative is all about the crucifixion. There is the human author—probably Abraham or Isaac—and the divine Author, God the Holy Spirit. Abraham would note here the series of events and his obedience to God's commands; however God the Holy Spirit includes this chapter because He knows that this is a picture of Jesus Christ—something that we know in retrospect, and very likely something which Saint Paul taught on many occasions (but not in any of his epistles). Years later, we can read this passage, and we see what was intended by the human author and what was intended by the Divine Author.

I have mentioned this before: the Bible is both the Word of God and the writings of men. They are analogous to the person of Jesus Christ, Who is fully man and fully God. There is a two-fold reality to the Bible and to Jesus Christ.

The Great Analogy of the Written Word of God and the Living Word of God

Scripture (the Word of God)	Jesus Christ (the Living Word of God)
The Bible is written by men, recording actual historical events and reflecting men's memories, thoughts and aspirations. The example of our passage is, this is really what God asked Abraham to do, and this narrative describes accurately what Abraham really did. Abraham's understanding here was simple obedience to God.	Jesus Christ was truly a man. He is born in the line of Adam, Abraham, and David (Luke 3:23–38). He is fully and completely man in all respects. Sometimes when Jesus speaks, what He says comes solely from His humanity. "I thirst." Or, "The Father is greater than Me."

The Great Analogy of the Written Word of God and the Living Word of God

Scripture (the Word of God)	Jesus Christ (the Living Word of God)
The divine Author of Scripture is God the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is always the divinely-inspired words of God the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, with the same words, God the Holy Spirit can have a different intent for a passage of Scripture. This passage illustrates the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The human author is often unaware of this; but God the Holy Spirit knows that is what is going on here.	Jesus Christ was empowered by God the Holy Spirit. Prophetically, this is seen in Isaiah 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations." In time, this is seen in Matt. 3:16–17 John 1:32–34, where the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus and remains with Him.
The Bible contains material that only God knows—such as, the restoration of the earth and the creation of mankind (Gen. 1–2). These are things that no man observed and then wrote down.	Jesus Christ, as God, did things and said things which only God could say and do. He said, "Before Abraham, I am [that is, *"I existed eternally."*]." Only God can say this.
The word of God came to John the Baptizer in Luke 3:2.	The Living Word of God came to John the Baptizer as well. Matt. 3:13
Because the Holy Spirit is the co-Author of Scripture, and because the Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead, the Bible is known as the Word of God, even though what is contained in the Bible is written by man. 2Tim. 2:9 Heb. 4:12 13:7	Because Jesus is a member of the Trinity, He is known as the Living Word of God. Rev. 19:13 Jesus is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. See also John 1:1–3, 12 1Peter 1:23.
Then there are times when what the human author writes and intends match up with what the divine Author writes and intends. This is most of the Bible.	This is analogous to Jesus speaking from His hypostatic union, such as, where He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6). These are words which can only be spoken by Jesus, the God-man.
The Word of God has not failed. Rom. 9:6	Jesus, the Living Word of God, in going to the cross, was not a failure. It is the cross where He offered Himself up for our sins, which was the great event of the plan of God. Eph. 5:2 Heb. 10:12

The Great Analogy of the Written Word of God and the Living Word of God

Scripture (the Word of God)	Jesus Christ (the Living Word of God)
The Word of God works within us. 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 is at work in you believers (1Thess. 2:13). See also Luke 8:4–15 Col. 3:16.	Similarly, we are indwelt by Jesus Christ as believers. Rom. 8:10 Eph. 3:17 Col. 1:27
Jesus is called the Word of God in Rev. 19:13.	
We also see an equivalency of sorts in Rev. 20:4b Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God. We find a similar equivalency in Rev. 1:9, where the Apostle John is confined to the island of Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. See also Rev. 1:2.	

Lesson 249: Genesis 22:1–14 — The Angel of the Lord Stops Abraham

This is what we have studied thus far:

Gen. 22:1–7 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and we will worship and we will come again to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (ESV, mostly)

What follows is often mistranslated, primarily because it is a difficult, enigmatic passage.

Genesis 22:8–10 And Abraham said, “My son, God will look to Himself, the Lamb, for a burnt offering.” So they both went together. And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his

son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

Abraham had gotten to the point where he was ready to kill his own son, on the orders of God.

Gen 22:11 But the angel of Y^{e}howah called to Abraham from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I."

The purpose of Abraham offering his son was for this to be a type and the crucifixion of Jesus to be the antitype. This is a parallel track here: for those in the Old Testament time period who read this, Gen. 22 is all about the obedience of Abraham; but for us who read this in the New Testament era, this is all about the offering up of Jesus Christ for our sins.

Abraham, who is probably the human author of this passage, understands this in terms of obedience, and he knew he was ready to go through with what God had asked him to do. God the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author, understood this event as looking forward to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Genesis 22:12 And God said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me.”

Here, the narrative is all about obedience. The parallel to Abraham’s obedience is found in Philip. 2:8 [Jesus] humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, that is, [His] death on a cross. The offering up of Isaac is also a picture of God the Son offering up Himself before God the Father for the sins of all mankind (1John 2:2).

We find this sort of thing throughout the Old Testament—actual historical incidents, but which are recorded by God the Holy Spirit in order to teach us some specific truths from Bible doctrine. Furthermore, these events happen with such regularity that we cannot help but be convinced of the truth of the Bible.

In part, this is why we have and Old and New Testaments, separated in time by 400 years, during which time one very major translation of the Old Testament was done (the Greek Septuagint). So we know, from history, and from the Dead Sea Scrolls (this library is dated about 100 B.C.), that the Old Testament which we study clearly occurred and was recorded long before Jesus walked on this earth.

Furthermore, there are incidents such as this one where the parallels between it and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ are *never* discussed in the New Testament. Without a doubt, I am sure that Paul taught the offering of Isaac and drew parallels for his various congregations, but, at no time was this a topic in any of his epistles (Heb. 11 is on the topic of *faith,* not on the topic of *types*). However, this parallel is perspicuous to the believer who understands both Old and New Testaments.

Back to Abraham, who is about to slit the throat of his uniquely-born son; and God has told him to stop.

Genesis 22:13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked. And, behold, a ram behind him was entangled in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

Interestingly enough, God does not say, "Look behind you, Abraham. Now, take this ram that you see and sacrifice it to Me instead." God tells Abraham not to harm Isaac, but then, it is Abraham who looks up and sees the ram, which Abraham would offer up to God as a substitutionary sacrifice.

Abraham sees this ram, which was caught up in the thicket by its horns. Abraham knows that this ram should be the sacrifice to God. This ram is an innocent creature which was entangled in the thicket—it would be substituted for Isaac, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust (1Peter 3:18). Isaac has a sin nature, as do we all. This ram will be offered up in Isaac's stead. This completes the parallel, which we will later delineate.

Gen. 22:14 is a rather difficult verse, although it may appear to be very simple in your translation. Let me give you 5 ways this verse has been rendered in translations which are usually understood to be fairly literal:

Green's Literal Translation	And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Will See; so that it is said until this day, In the mount of Jehovah it will be seen.
NASB	Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide [Heb *YHWH-jireh*], as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided [Lit *be seen*]."
Webster's Bible Translation	And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said [to] this day, In the mount of the LORD it will be seen.
World English Bible	Abraham called the name of that place Yahweh-Jireh. As it is said to this day, "In Yahweh's mountain it will be provided.
Young's Updated LT[74]	And Abraham calls the name of that place "Jehovah-Jireh," because it is said this day in the mount, "Jehovah does provide."

The first phrase is accurate except where the Hebrew words are transliterated *Jehovah Jireh*. There is no *j* in the Hebrew (or, for that matter, in the Greek). All those people that you know from the Bible: Jacob, Joshua, Job, John—not one of them has a name that sounds like its English counterpart because there is no *j* in the Greek or Hebrew.

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[74] Don't search out *Young's Updated Literal Translation* in your stores. I simply wrote a macro to update much of the old English used by Young.

Abraham calls the name of this place, YHWH (Y^e^howah) yir^e^ʾeh,... That last word is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of the very common verb râʾâh (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means, *to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. So, literally, the name that Abraham gives this place is *Y^e^howah sees; Y^e^howah will see*. All of the other meanings are very secondary meanings, some of which are not even found in some Bibles. The imperfect tense in the Hebrew is used for extended action, for future action and for successive actions.

Then there is a relative pronoun connecting these thoughts together; the very common relative pronoun ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *uh-SHER*], which means, *that, so that, in that; for that, since; which; when, at what time; who, whom; where, wherever; the fact that = how; because that, because; as, like as; yea, even, yea even; until that; then, so* [in an apodosis]. Strong's #834 BDB #81. In this case, ʾăsher acts more like a connective (a conjunction) than is does a relative pronoun. Therefore, the translation *so that* or *because* is appropriate. Then we have the words, *it is said today,* which gives us, thus far: And so Abraham calls the name of this place *Y^e^howah will see,* because it is said today...

The next problem is the phrase *mount of Jehovah*. *Mount* (or, *mountain, mountain range*) is considered by many to be in the construct form (this is how it reads in John Owens' *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*). The construct form means, the noun is very closely related to the noun which follows, and, in this instance, we would translate this *mount of Y^e^howah* or *Y^e^howah's mountain*. Sometimes there is a slight change in the spelling to indicate a construct; sometimes not. Here, there is no change in the spelling of *mountain* so that this does not *have* to represent a construct form. That is, *mount* or *mountain* may simply stand on its own without a close relationship to *Y^e^howah*.

I should add that *mount* or *mountain* is preceded by the bêyth preposition, so that this reads *in the mountain, at the mountain,* followed by the proper noun *Y^e^howah*.

After *Y^e^howah* is the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of râʾâh (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means, in the Niphal (the passive stem), *to be seen, to be visible; to let oneself be seen, to appear; to present oneself; to be provided [cared] for (i.e., looked after)*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. This verb occurs over 90 times in the Old Testament in the Niphal stem. Over and over again, it is translated *to be seen; to appear*. I have a very handy reference book, which I haul off the shelves for a situation like this, called *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament* by George Wigram. It lists every single form of every verb separately, so all the Niphal perfect's are together, all of the Niphal participles are together, etc. I can therefore peruse these 90+ verses and confirm that **none** of them have the translation *to be provided for*. I don't care what your Bible says. There is no overpowering reason why here, we should have this alternate meaning of râʾâh—an alternate reading which is not found in any other verse.[75] Therefore, this verb should be translated *will be seen, will appear*.

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[75] Quite often, BDB will include some of these oddball definitions because they have found their way into some ancient translations—this verse being a prime example of this.

Generally speaking, the perfect form of the verb is properly translated with the English past tense (although the Hebrew perfect tense can refer, from time to time, to a certain future action); and the imperfect tense can refer to an ongoing action, a group of successive actions, or to a future action.

I realize that the previous 6 paragraphs may have been the most boring paragraphs that you have ever read in your life. However, these paragraphs explain exactly why I translate this verse the way that I do; and why many other translations are bogus (all those with the word *provide* in this verse).

Genesis 22:14 And Abraham called the name of that place *Y^e^howah-Yireh* so that it is said this day: "In [this] mountain *Y^e^howah will be seen* [or, *Y^e^howah will appear*]." This could also be translated, "In [this] mountain, Y^e^howah is seen [or, *Y^e^howah* appears]."

What we do have here is a play on words, which is found throughout the Bible. And Abraham called the name of that place, *Y^e^howah will see;* so that it is said in that day, "In [this] mountain *Y^e^howah will be seen*." Or, *"in [this] mountain, Y^e^howah will appear*." So, where Abraham was about to offer up his son, in that mountain, that is where Y^e^howah would appear; that is where Y^e^howah would be seen.

Or, if one insists upon the construct form of *mountain* (which is not incorrect), this would read: And Abraham called the name of that place, *Y^e^howah will see;* so that it is said in that day, "In the mountain of Y^e^howah, He will be seen [or, *He will appear*]." In this slightly different translation, where they are, Abraham is speaking of *the mountain of Y^e^howah,* and he says that it is here where *He (Y^e^howah) would appear*. So, even if the translation is changed slightly to reflect a construct form of *mountain,* the general meaning can be understood to be almost identical to the other translation.

This is the mountain where Y^e^howah would appear; where Y^e^howah would be seen. This may be Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion. It is also possible that Abraham was about to offer his son upon the Mount of Olives, which is where Jesus' feet will touch down when He returns in the 2nd Advent (Zech. 14:4). An alternate view would be, this is the mountain where the Temple would be built. All of these places are reasonably close to one another, and they are all near to Mount Moriah. We know that Abraham was directed to the land of Moriah, but we do not know exactly to which mountain he went to after that.

Here, we learn several things: the exact location of the mountain that Abraham went to is known to God and to all the angels; it is not known to us. However, this event reveals to angels the wisdom and foreknowledge of God.

As said before, an angel goes from not being to suddenly being. There is God in front of the angel and God tells him, "I created you." The angel did not see himself being created; he did not feel himself being created, any more than we see God creating us. In fact, there are numerous people who believe that they are the result of biological evolution, that somehow, out of non-life sprung life, and that life somehow kept evolving, forming such complex structures as eyes and kidneys, and nerve systems by means of some undirected

process which few evolutionists can agree upon.[76] Just as many people take issue with being created by God, it is reasonable that some angels (fallen angels) would distrust what God told them.

However, angels can see how God interacts with His people and how Satan interacts with mankind; they can see how God says, "In the mountain of Y^{e}howah, He will appear;" and, 2000 years later, He appears. Satan, at the same time, says, "Destroy Job's prosperity and he will curse You to Your face." And what Satan predicts is wrong. What God predicts always comes to pass. Truth versus lies; good versus evil.

Why are we not told specifically the location? First of all, we are given the name of the location: *Y^{e}howah will be seen*. So the location then has a completely different name than it did 2000 years later.

Given what happened at the end of Gen. 19, it seems reasonable that Abraham is not at the place where Melchizedek lives—that is, these would be separate mountains. In any case, angels will know where this place is. The name of that place is *Y^{e}howah-Yireh*, which name we might not identify it with Golgotha. There are other places named like Bethlehem or descriptions given (Isa. 53) which clearly look forward to the cross and to Jesus Christ. There are certainly a hundred prophetical statements which are about our Lord; so it is not as if lacking the exact location of this mountain will make a difference in someone's faith.

As believers, there is one thing that we need to know—we are not alone. Everything is not about us. The universe does not revolve around us. There is more to this world than the things which we see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

It is always interesting is discussing such things with atheists about matters of faith and what is not seen because (1) many will argue incessantly about things they cannot see and do not believe in; and (2) virtually all of them believe strongly in things they cannot see or verify (evolution being a conspicuous example).

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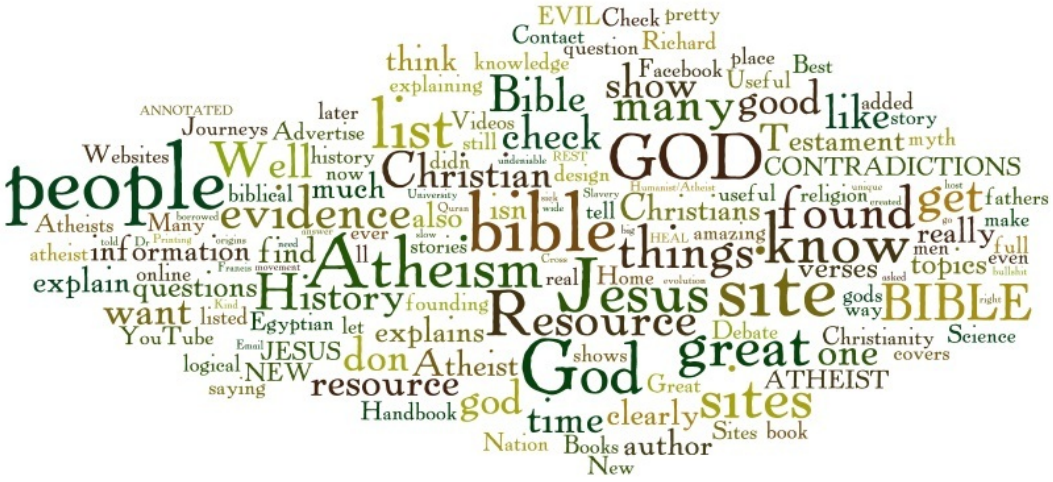
[76] All evolutionists obviously believe in evolution. However, the processes by which nature created life out of non-life, and then created specific kinds of plants and animals, and their genetic attributes, is not agreed upon nor are these processes observable in a lab. Virtually everyone believes in micro evolution (limited adaptation) as well as genetic isolationism (the ability to breed in or out specific characteristics within a species). These things may be observed—but they are not enough to explain evolution (although I have heard many people vehemently testify, *micro-evolution is macro-evolution*). What has to happen is brand new, never-seen-before, never-existed -before, genetic traits must appear out of nowhere, and be interrelated in millions of ways to the existing system (such as, for instance, *eyes*). Then we get into theories involving the *hopeful monster* and *good genetic mutations,* etc. I have had one person tell me, very seriously, that the eye began as a fish scale and went from there to become an eye. How this exactly happened, we do not know, but this person had great faith that it did happen. And even if this person could have gotten 20 evolutionists in the same room who agreed that fish scales became eyes, that evolutionary trip from scales to eyes would be given 20 different and contradictory explanations. But they would all have faith that it occurred.

Over the years, I have become quite the fan of Word Clouds, and this is one taken from the homepage of an atheist website (atheismresource.com) (I chose that site simply because it had a lot of text on their homepage):



Not all atheist websites are quite this devoted to the Bible, Jesus and God; but it did make me smile to see an atheist website so clearly labeling their enemy, and so clearly being concerned about things they don't believe exist. My point here is, I would not give half a thought to arguing with someone who believed the earth to be flat, which ought to parallel their thinking about God and Jesus Christ. However, many of them will support atheist causes to post signs which say, in so many words, "We don't believe in God. We are reasonable." And many of them have webpages or frequent webpages where they will argue these points incessantly. On the other hand, if someone contact me through my website to discuss the flying spaghetti monster, it is unlikely that I would take the time to even respond.

Lesson 250: Genesis 22 — Operation Footstool

Genesis 22:15 And the Angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of the heavens the second time,...

Abraham has done one of the most phenomenal things in human history. He was ready to offer up his son, because God had asked him to. He was ready to take his son, the basis of all the promises God had made to him, and offer this son to God.

God knew this about Abraham, and He knew this about Abraham in eternity past. God knew that this was the one man upon whom He could depend, to give us a picture of the

obedience of our Lord to the cross. This was a one-time thing done by one man, who had everything to lose by offering up his son. Again, this verse cannot be over-emphasized: Philip. 2:8 [Jesus] humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, that is, [His] death on a cross. The obedience of Abraham is paralleled in the obedience of Jesus Christ.

Here in v. 22, it says that the Angel of Y^{e}howah calls out to Abraham *a second time,* the first therefore would have been Gen. 22:11a, 12 (But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham! Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."). So, some time has passed. Abraham has loosened his son from being tied to the altar and he has taken the ram and has laid the ram down instead of his son (v. 13). This ceremony required some time. Once this had been completed, then God calls to Abraham a second time.

Genesis 22:15–16 And the Angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of the heavens the second time, and said, “I have sworn by Myself, says Jehovah; because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only one;...

When a person takes an oath, he takes this oath upon something that is greater than he is. Often, politicians—including lying, scheming politicians—take oaths on the Holy Bible, the Word of God. That is because the Bible is greater than they are. However, there is nothing greater than God. Therefore, God can only take an oath on Himself—on His Own perfect character.

God recognizes the importance that Abraham did not withhold his uniquely-born son; just as God would not withhold His Son, His only One.

Genesis 22:17 ...that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your Seed will possess the gate of His enemies.

God repeats these blessings, which He has given to Abraham in the past. God knew in eternity past that Abraham would be obedient to Him.

The first blessing that God offers Abraham is that his seed would be multiplied, like the stars of the heavens or the sand of the seashore. It is quite fascinating that, at that time, there was any kind of equivalence made between the number of stars in the heavens (man then might be able to see a few hundred or a few thousand) and the sand of the seashore, which appears to be uncountable.

We have also looked at the seed of Abraham, which is broken down into 3 groups: the Jews, the Arabs and believers in Jesus Christ. There have been billions of each of these groups of men. So God has indeed multiplied Abraham’s seed as the stars of the heavens and the sand of the seashore. This does not mean that there is a one-to-one relationship between the number of those who are descended from Abraham (as a Jew, as an Arab,

as a believer) and the sand of the sea; but that there is virtually an uncountable number (there are Jews and Arabs being born every second; and there are people who trust in Jesus Christ every second).

Then we have a new promise added here: *Possessing the gate of His enemies* is a phrase indicating that Abraham's Seed would not only defeat his enemies, but all that they have will be His. This is what is known as ***operation footstool,*** where God the Father makes all of the enemies of Jesus Christ His footstool (in the sense that they are subjugated to Him).

R. B. Thieme, Jr. came up with the designation of *Operation Footstool* and he originally developed this doctrine (the concept may have been develop by others earlier).

Operation Footstool

1. The name of this doctrine comes from Psalm 110:1, which reads: Y^{e}howah [the Father] says to my Lord [Jesus Christ, the Revealed Lord, as David knew Him], "Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet." God the Father tells God the Son to sit at His right hand, and His enemies will be made a footstool for his feet.
2. The doctrine of Operation Footstool is first found in Gen.3:15, where God puts the curse upon Satan: "And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed (Christ); He (Christ/ Second Coming) shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel." In the crucifixion, Satan (the serpent) would bruise the heel of Jesus; in the 2nd advent, Jesus would crush the head of the serpent.
3. Jesus will accomplish this in His Second Coming: Rom.16:20a: And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. Since we are *in Christ,* the enemies of Abraham would be trampled over by us. God will cast Satan and the fallen angels and all who have not believed in Jesus Christ into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10–15). That is how they would be crushed under our feet.
4. Additional Scripture: 1Cor.15:27: For He (God) has put all things in subjection under His feet [the feet of Christ Jesus]. But when He says that all things are put in subjection, it is clear and unmistakable that He (God) is excepted [that is, *outside* or *other than*] who put all things in subjection to Him (Christ). Psalm 8:6 You made Him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet.
5. Psalm110:1 was quoted several times in the New Testament because the ultimate triumph of God over all that is evil will occur and we can place our confidence in this.
    1) Jesus used it to show that He was the Christ (Messiah) of Davidic prophecy. Matt. 22:42–46 Mark 12:35–37
    2) Paul used it to straighten-out eschatological doctrines associated with resurrection of Jesus Christ in 1Cor.15:24-28.
    3) Peter used it to show that the Jesus that was crucified is the Lord spoken of in Psalm 110:1. Acts 2:34-36.

4) The writer of Hebrews used it twice to teach that (1) Jesus was greater than angels (Heb.1:13) and to teach that (2) the session of Jesus Christ precedes Operation Footstool (Heb.10:12-13).

6. While Jesus Christ sits on the throne, Operational Footstool is doctrinal prophecy. However, when He leaves the throne, it will become doctrinal reality. 1Cor.15:24–28 read: Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that He is excepted Who put all things in subjection under Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to Him Who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all. (Psalm 110:1 8:6)

7. The last two enemies defeated by "Operation Footstool" are Satan and the Second Spiritual Death (that is, eternal separation from God and eternal judgment for the rejection of Jesus Christ). The 1st Advent is when Jesus walked this earth as man; the 2nd Advent is when He returns to incarcerate Satan and to restore perfect environment to this earth (somehow, Jesus will do this without the help of environmentalists, new age light bulbs or electric cars).

1) The 1st Advent and Satan: 1John 3:8 The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of Man appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Heb.10:11-14 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Col.2:15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. Eph.1:20-23 Which power He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and authority and power and dominion, and every name being named, not only in this world, but also in the coming age. And He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

2) The 2nd Advent and Satan: Rev.20:2 And He laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. Rev.20:10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are also; they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

3) The 1st Advent and spiritual death: Rom.5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, so death spread to all men, because all sinned. Rom.5:10 For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more,

Operation Footstool

being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

4) The 2nd Advent and the second death: 1Cor.15:24–25 For he must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Rev.20:14–15 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev.20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

8. Another way to look at this is, the 2nd advent concludes what the 1st advent began with regards to operation footstool.

Much of this was taken directly from http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D120418.pdf with several modifications.

Other places to study this doctrine in much greater detail:
http://www.amadorbiblestudies.org/Doctrines/Doctrine%20of%20Operation%20Footstool.doc (This will open up as a Microsoft document in Word on your computer).
http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=403

Genesis 22:15–17 And the Angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of the heavens the second time, and said, "I have sworn by Myself, says Jehovah; because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only one; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your Seed will possess the gate of His enemies.

Abraham, in obeying God, has done one of the greatest things ever done by a man in human history. Then understood to be a great act of human obedience; and now, understood as a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of our Lord on our behalf.

So that there is no misunderstanding, we have only been dancing around the parallels of this chapter and the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross. We will delve into that topic in more detail in the next few lessons.

Lessons 251–252: Genesis 22 — Typology

So far, we have begun to see how Isaac and his birth foreshadow Jesus Christ (this has not yet been fully developed into a complete doctrine). In theology, this is known as *typology,* where Isaac's birth is *typical* of the birth of our Lord. Isaac's birth is known as the *type;* and our Lord's birth is known as the antitype. Isaac's birth foreshadowed the birth of our Lord, although, at the time of Isaac's birth, no one said, "This will be like the birth of the Messiah." Types and antitypes don't work that way. When the antitype comes on the scene or occurs, at that point or later, people are able to bring the two concepts together, but not before.

The Doctrine of Typology

1. Definition:
   1) The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines type as *a foreshadowing in the Old Testament of a person or event of the Christian dispensation*.
   2) Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines a *type* as *a figure, representation, or symbol of something to come, as an event in the Old Testament foreshadows another in the New Testament*. The Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary says an *antitype* refers to *a fulfillment or completion of an earlier truth revealed in the Bible*.
   3) Altogether Lovely Ministries: *A "Type" is some person, event, or ceremony that is recorded to "foreshadow" some future person, event, or ceremony. In types, we see the Bible was written by one author; the Holy Spirit, for who else could write these kinds of amazing types and antitypes*.
   4) Dake: *A type is a preordained representation wherein certain persons, events, and institutions of the O.T. stand for corresponding persons, events, and institutions of the N.T. Types are pictures or object lessons by which God has taught His redemptive plan. They are a shadow of things to come, not the image of those things (Col. 2:17 Heb. 8:5 10:1). The Mosaic system, for example, was a kind of kindergarten in which God's people were trained in divine things and taught to look forward to the realities of things yet to come*. What is particularly good about Dake's definition is, he points out that a type and an antitype are preordained. God the Holy Spirit, when recording specific events in Old Testament Scripture, was fully aware that there would be future parallels to these events in the gospels, even though, at the time of their writing, this was not necessarily known to the writer or the readers.
      (1) As an aside, bear in mind that there are two authors who coterminously wrote down the words of Scripture. The human author and the Holy Spirit.
      (2) The Holy Spirit sees that certain words, phrases, and historical situations are recorded, for these things often carry a different meaning than intended by the human author.
      (3) So, whereas Abraham or Isaac recorded information about Isaac's birth and offering as factual information; God the Holy Spirit saw to it that all of these things looked forward to the birth and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.
      (4) Just as Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man; the Holy Scriptures are written by God the Holy Spirit and by man.
   5) Dake: It is clear from the Scriptures listed below that the New Testament writers used the word type with some degree of freedom; *yet they had one general idea in common, namely, that all types show a likeness existing between two persons, events, or institutions. The one resembles the other in some essential feature. In typology these two are called type and antitype, and the link that binds them is the correspondence or similarity of the one to the other. The type is the preordained shadow of the antitype. The type is the object lesson, the temporary and shadowy resemblance of some predicted*

person, event, or institution. The antitype is the fulfillment of that which has been predicted.

6) Dake continues: *A genuine type is a true figure or shadow of the reality to come, which is the antitype (John 3:14 Rom. 5:14 Heb. 9:23-24 10:1 1Peter 3:21). Centuries or even millenniums may lie between them but the shadow is never lost and the figure is never destroyed. The fulfillment or reality always comes. Furthermore, a type has its own meaning apart from the antitype (John 3:14 with Num. 21). The details of a type (as with parables, allegories, and symbols) are not to be stressed; nor are they to be interpreted apart from the antitype; only the intended truth should be emphasized*.

(1) When Dake says that a type has its own meaning apart from the antitype, this means that, the incident recorded really happened; the person recorded really existed. No one at that time of the type (person, event, ceremony) understood the type to be a type. **No one** during the Old Testament, when they knew about Abraham offering his son (or read about Abraham offering his son), thought, "God the Father will offer up His Son in the future." As an aside, angels did not know this either. As a further aside, even people today do not know this. Anti-Bible people and atheists often question and mock this narrative of Abraham offering up Isaac as a human sacrifice.

(2) Again, this is the co-authorship of Scripture. The human author records information about an incident or a person, and to that human author, there is nothing more to it than that. When it comes to the birth of Isaac and the offering of Isaac, the human author is simply recording what the facts were.

(3) However, at the same time, God the Holy Spirit made certain that these facts would be *typical* of what is to come, so that we can look back and think, "Whoa!"

2. New Testament justification for typology:

1) Hebrews 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realties themselves, for this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make complete those who draw near to worship. This does not mean that the Mosaic Law was simply made up, or that people did not know and follow the Mosaic Law; it simply means that the purpose of the animal sacrifices (the illustration used here) was to look forward to the ultimate sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins.

2) Jesus spoke of typology in a parable: He said, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of its storeroom new treasures as well as old." (Matthew 13:52). The "old" are "types of the Old Testament" and the "new treasures" stand for the antitypes found in the New Testament. A person who would teach the Old Testament would teach exactly what is there (the old treasures); and then that teacher would show how many of

these things are shadows of the spiritual reality of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for us (the new treasures).

3) This brings us to the following conclusion: Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **These are a shadow of the things that were to come**; the reality, however, is found in Christ (Col. 2:16–17). When the disciples began to teach, they were teaching Church Age doctrine during the Church Age. The various Old Testament celebrations and ceremonies were designed to look forward in time. Once these things had found their fulfillments in the actual events of the New Testament, there was no longer a reason to celebrate to those ceremonies or to adhere to the laws which were *typical*. However, people were confused by the transition, so people who followed the traditions of the Jews, often continued in the ancient celebrations, ceremonies and observances, not fully understanding that God looked forward in time by means of these things.

4) As an aside, this does not mean that we just throw out the Old Testament. Contained in the Old Testament are moral values and spiritual truths and revelations which are still relevant to today. Although *types* are prominent in the Old Testament, they certainly do not make up the entirety of the Old Testament.

3. Greek words related to type:

1) The masculine noun tupos (τύπος) [pronounced *TOO-poss*], which means, *1) the mark of a stroke or blow, print; 2) a figure formed by a blow or impression; 2a) of a figure or image; 2b) of the image of the gods; 3) form; 3a) the teaching which embodies the sum and substance of religion and represents it to the mind, manner of writing, the contents and form of a letter; 4) an example; 4a) in the technical sense, the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made; 4b) in an ethical sense, a dissuasive example, a pattern of warning; 4b1) of ruinous events which serve as admonitions or warnings to others; 4c) an example to be imitated; 4c1) of men worthy of imitation; 4d) in a doctrinal sense; 4d1)* ***of a type****, i.e. a person or thing prefiguring a future (Messianic) person or thing*. BDAG says it refers to "(1) a mark made as the result of a blow or pressure, mark, trace (John 20:25); (2) embodiment of characteristics or function of a model, copy, image; (3) an object formed to resemble some entity, image, statue of any kind of material (Acts 7:43); a kind, class, or thing that suggests a model or pattern, form, figure, pattern (Rom. 6:17); (3) the content of a document, text, content (Acts 23:25); (4) an archetype serving as a model, type, pattern, model; (a) technically design, pattern (Acts 7:44 Heb. 8:5); (b) in the moral life example, pattern (1Tim 4:12 Phil. 3:17 1Thess. 1:7 2Thess. 3:9 Titus 2:7 1Peter 5:3); (c) of the types given by God as an indication of the future, in the form of persons or things (Rom. 5:14)." Thayer and BDAG definitions only. Quite obviously, the word *type* is a transliteration of *tupos*. Strong's #5179.

2) The New Testament adjective is antitupon (ἀντίτυπον) [pronounced *an-TEET-oo-pon*], which means, a thing formed after some pattern; a thing

resembling another, its counterpart; something in the Messianic times which answers to the type, as baptism corresponds to the deluge (1Peter 3:21). Thomas defines [antitupos] as a compound of anti [over against, opposite] and tupos [the mark (of a blow), i.e., an impression, stamp (made by a die), type, pattern], meaning "struck back, corresponding to" [499]. BDAG say antitupos, used generally "of something that corresponds to another; esp. used metaphorically," specifically "(1) pertains to that which corresponds to something else, adj. corresponding to; (2) substantivally, a copy, antitype, representation." Antitupon is translated *like figure* (1Peter 3:21) and *figure* (Heb. 9:24). Thayer, Thomas and BDAG definitions only. The word *antitupon* is transliterated *antitype*. Strong's #499.

3) The neuter noun hupodeigma (ὑπόδειγμα) [pronounced *hoop-OD-igue-mah*], which means, *1) a sign suggestive of anything, delineation of a thing, representation, figure, copy; an example: for imitation; of the thing to be imitated; for a warning, of a thing to be shunned*. John 13:15 Heb. 4:11 8:5 9:23 James 5:10 2Pet. 2:6. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #5262.

4) The feminine noun parabolê (παραβολή) [pronounced *par-ab-ol-AY*], which means, *1) a placing of one thing by the side of another, juxtaposition, as of ships in battle; 2) metaphorically; 2a) a comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude; 2b) an example by which a doctrine or precept is illustrated; 2c) a narrative, fictitious but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's kingdom are figuratively portrayed; 2d) a parable: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning; 3) a pithy and instructive saying, involving some likeness or comparison and having preceptive or admonitory force; 3a) an aphorism, a maxim; 4) a proverb; 5) an act by which one exposes himself or his possessions to danger, a venture, a risk*. This word is mostly limited to the parable or illustration in the N.T. Types are illustrations, but they are also the preordained shadow or likeness of things to come, while parables may be illustrations of something in the past, present, or future. Scriptural types and prophecy are the same in substance, differing only in form. This fact distinguishes between types, parables, symbols and other forms of human expression. Parabole, translated *figure* in only two places, may also refer to types (Heb. 9:9; 11:19). Thayer definitions only. Strong's #3850.

5) The feminine noun skia (σκία) [pronounced *SKEE-ah*], which means, *1) shadow; 1a) shade caused by the interception of light; 1b) an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object; 1c) a sketch, outline, adumbration; 2) shade, shadow, foreshadowing*. Skia is translated shadow three times, referring to types (Col. 2:17 Heb. 8:5 10:1). The English word *type* best corresponds with skia because it means *a shadow, a limited idea or likeness of the reality it foreshadows*. Thayer definitions mostly. Strong's #4639.

4. Remarks on typology:

1) There are certain doctrines and topics which generally do not get screwed up by various theologians, groups, and even cults.[77] The problems with evolution, the fulfillment of prophecy, and use of typology in Scripture, all come to mind. Interestingly enough, in searching out various references on typology, much of the information posted was Church of Christ.[78]

2) This does not mean that we do not find error in these topics, but we generally do not find as many. Finis Jennings Dake, from which most of this doctrine comes, requires that *a divine type is confirmed by at least two or three plain statements in God's Word*. Although the bulk of his doctrine is spot-on, having two or three plain statements in the Bible is not necessary, unless we understand it to mean that we can back up a topological example with clear statements from the Word of God (which is not what he meant). For instance, Isaac is a type of Christ, both in his birth and in his being offered up by his father Abraham. When these topics are pursued, the parallels are both obvious and remarkable. Isaac is mentioned many times in the New Testament, including the portion that we are studying, but he is not clearly called a type of Christ, though he clearly is. However, Abraham's act of obedience in offering Isaac up is expressed as a type of crucifixion in the New Testament, but in only one passage (Heb 11:19 He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead, from which Abraham also got Isaac back as an illustration.).

3) On the other hand, Dake makes a comment on this topic on restraint, which is worth noting: *The Bible is not as full of types...Some make nearly every person and event of the O.T. typical. Such a method of interpretation leads to confusion and a wrong understanding of the Word of God. Searching for hidden meaning in every passage and pressing the typical teaching so far imperils the literal teachings and soundness of many biblical truths*. Also from Dake: *The objection to this method of interpretation is that it wrests the scriptures out of their natural and historical setting and intent. It destroys the simplicity of the Word of God, detracts from its trustworthiness and leads men to believe there is a hidden and mysterious meaning to every detail of Scripture. The safe way is to prove every doctrine with plainly related passages, and use any historical event or resembling detail as an illustration of some point in teaching. Innumerable applications can rightly be made apart from the authentic types and antitypes, but that is all they are--illustrations or applications*.

4) So, in a way, a type is like the chiasmos—we do not find one in every chapter, but when we come across one, it is really quite cool.

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[77] Some of the very best information on evolution was put out by Armstrong's church, such as, *A Whale of a Tale*; *Bombardier Beetle Blasts Evolution*; *The Fable of: The First Fatal Flight*; *A Theory for the Birds*; *The Amazing Archer Fish Disproves Evolution*; *Some Fishy Stories*. You can either download the booklet from those links or open it up into Acrobat reader, which sometimes takes a little time.

[78] Quite frankly, I know next to nothing about this denomination, apart from them being weird about musical instruments (the same thing that others know about them).

5) Typology should not be used to *prove* specific doctrines of the Bible, but to illustrate those things which we already know to be true. Dake gives the examples of some who try to prove the Trinity by using the 3 stories of Noah's ark; or the pre-tribulational rapture by using Enoch being translated before the flood. Not only would these illustrations not prove anything, but they are not even reasonable types for the things that apparently some use them to prove.

6) Typology is not the same as prophecy. Concerning both the birth and the offering up of Isaac, at no time in the Old Testament did anyone say or even think, "This will illustrate the birth and the crucifixion of the Messiah." So, very often, something which is a type in the Old Testament, is not known as being a type in the Old Testament among the Old Testament saints. We can look back in retrospect and recognize types; but in most cases, something actually being a type was not known until the antitype is known.

7) My personal concern is typology and the Church Age. I don't know that there is anything in the Old Testament which clearly predicts or typifies events in the Church Age specifically. My *inclination* is to say unique church age doctrines are not to be found in typology. However, this is one of the things which I am still sorting out.

8) Consequently, typology can certainly be overdone. When there are 2 or 3 parallels which are clear, possibly unusual, and stand out, then it is likely that we are viewing a type and its antitype. When Absalom, David's son, is killed during his revolution against David, it would be a bridge too far to try to show that his hanging in a tree by his long hippy hair is a picture of Jesus on the cross. This topic is discussed in depth in **2Sam. 18** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

9) Types are real people, real events, or real ceremonies; and these things are generally seen quite differently in their time. For example, when Abraham showed himself willing to offer up the son of promise, Isaac, this was viewed in the Old Testament as a great act of obedience, but not as a shadow of what God would do on our behalf through Jesus Christ. On the other hand, Old Testament Jews viewed many *other* passages of Scripture as being Messianic.

10) Theology does not base doctrines upon types. That is, we do not discover something new about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ because we study Gen. 22.

5. Five essential characteristics of types:

1) A type and its antitype should have one or more points of resemblance. Col. 2:14-17 Heb. 10:1

2) A type is prophetic of the antitype. The type must foreshadow something which is to come. John 3:14 Rom. 5:14 Col. 2:14-17 Heb. 8:5 9:23-24 10:1 1Peter 3:21

3) The type is merely the shadow of the realities to come, the type is never the reality that it typifies. Col. 2:14-17 Heb. 8:5 10:1

4) The type is always an earthly person or event while the antitype could be earthly or heavenly. The Angel of the Lord, for instance, is Jesus Christ; but the Angel of the Lord is not typical of the Lord. Heb. 8:5 9:24 1Peter 3:21

5) Since both type and antitype are preordained as part of the plan of God, they cannot be chosen by man, developed simply because certain details resemble some future truth. Rom. 5:14 Heb. 9:23-24 10:1-21

6. Typology should be distinguished from parables, symbols, allegories, riddles, figures of speech, figurative statements and prophecy. For instance, type and antitype relationships are to be differentiated from:
   1) Allegory, which is *the representation of abstract ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events in narrative, dramatic, or pictorial form*.[79]
   2) Parable, which is a *story that uses familiar events to illustrate a religious or ethical point*.[80]
   3) Most prophecies of future events are understood as such from the beginning; types are real people or historical events which are not understood to be anything else during their time period.

7. Five Classes of Types (the list below is not exhaustive):
   1) Typical Persons:
      (1) Adam was a type of Christ. Adam is an interesting type, because Adam and Christ are also spoken of antithetically as well. Rom. 5:12–21 2Cor. 15:45–49
      (2) Melchizedek represents the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ (Gen. 14:18-24 Heb. 5:5-9 6:20 7:1–10, 17); the combined kingship and priesthood (Heb. 7:1-3 with Zech. 6:12-13); as well as our Lord's eternal existence (Heb. 7:3, 6 with Micah 5:1-2 John 1:1–3 Heb. 1:8).
      (3) Moses was a type of Christ as the prophet of God (Deut. 18:15–19 Acts 3:19-26), and in terms of his faithfulness toward his *house* (Heb. 3:1–6).
      (4) Aaron as the high priest was a type of Christ. Heb. 5:1-5
      (5) Jonah was a type, revealing our Lord's death, burial, and descent (into the lower parts of the earth for three days), as well as the resurrection of Christ. Jonah 2 Matt. 12:40 Eph.4:8-10
   2) Typical events:
      (1) The flood was a type of baptism (the baptism of the Holy Spirit into Christ). 1Peter 3:20-21
      (2) Isaac's birth was typical of the birth of our Lord. (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)
      (3) Some of the events during Israel's wandering in the wilderness were typical of salvation through faith in Christ. These things also provided a clear delineation between right and wrong throughout many dispensations. 1Cor. 10:1-13
      (4) The lifting up of the bronze serpent in the wilderness was typical of the crucifixion of Christ and benefits of the cross realized by those who believe in Him. John 3:14 Num. 21
   3) Typical acts:

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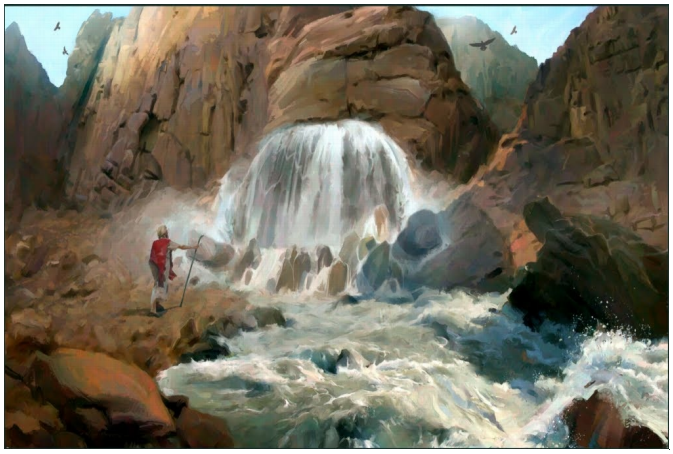
[79] From http://www.thefreedictionary.com/allegory accessed July 30, 2013.
[80] From http://www.thefreedictionary.com/parable accessed July 30, 2013.

(1) Abraham offering up his uniquely-born son was a type of God offering up His uniquely-born Son. Gen. 22 John 3:16 Heb. 11:17-19

(2) Striking the rock as in Ex. 17 was typical of Christ being crucified or stricken by God. 1Cor. 10:4–6

(3) Striking the rock the second time instead of speaking to it was typical of crucifying Christ afresh. Moses was supposed to have only spoken to the rock, in order to maintain the type. Jesus Christ was crucified one time for our sins; so Moses was not to strike the rock a second time. He failed to continue the type. Because of this (he disobeyed God's clear directive), God would not allow Moses to lead his people into the Land of Promise. Num. 20 2Cor. 10:4 Heb. 6:6



From the ABCParish.Blogspot. Accessed August 21, 2013.

(4) Men who rejected the chief cornerstone was typical of the rejection of Jesus Christ. Isa. 28:16 Matt. 21:42

4) Typical ceremonies:

(1) The many acts of the priests in the tabernacle worship as directed by the Mosaic Law were typical of various aspects of redemption through Christ: sacrificing the animals; shedding and sprinkling blood; burning incense; the showbread; lighting lamps; and the daily and yearly rituals were all typical acts, fulfilled in Christ and His redemptive work. Ex. 12-13 25:1 - 40:38 Heb. 7:11-28 8:1-6 9:1-28 10:1-22

(2) The feasts of Israel were typical of various aspects of redemption through Christ. Ex. 12 Lev. 23 2Cor. 5:7 Heb. 5-10

(3) The temple and all the rituals of worship carried on in it were typical of the same things the tabernacle and its worship were typical of. The only difference is, the Temple represented our Lord's permanent reign over the world.

(4) The Day of Atonement, when the High Priests enters into the Holy of Holies once a year was typical of God the Son coming before God the Father after dying for our sins and being resurrected. Ex. 26:33–34 Heb. 9:25 10:19 13:11

5) Typical Institutions:

(1) The Aaronic priesthood, the garments of the priests, and other aspects of the ministry of the law spoke of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. Ex. 28-29; Heb. 7-10

(2) The Sabbath for Israel was typical of the eternal rest in Christ and of that which is to come for all the redeemed. In fact, the Sabbath is a good illustration of two ways to look at a thing: celebrating the Sabbath looks backward to the fact that God has provided everything for us, and has no need to do anything else. And, as mentioned, the Sabbath speaks of our own rest from works. Gen. 2:1–3 Ex. 20:8-11 25:21 26:22, 34–35 27:9–13, 21 31:12–18 Deut. 5:15 Heb. 4

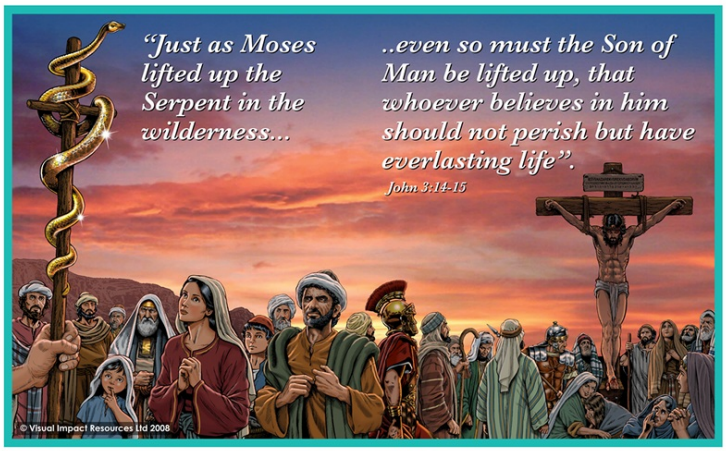
(3) The tabernacle and temple, their compartments, and furniture were themselves typical of the heavenly tabernacle Christ entered into; and the furniture was arranged in the shape of the cross. Heb. 8:1-5 9:1-10, 23-24

8. The two comparative words "as" and "so" are often found together, connecting a type with its antitype. The first thing named is historic; the second thing named is prophetic.

1) **As** in Adam all die, even **so** in Christ shall all be made alive. 1Cor. 15:22.

2) **"As** the days of Noah were, **so** shall also the corning of the Son of Man be." Matt. 24:37.

3) **As** Moses lifted up the serpent in the Wilderness, even **so** must the Son of Man be lifted up. John 3:14. The serpent is often used to represent Satan and what Satan has done. It is because of Satan's deception that Adam and the woman fell. Jesus takes upon Himself all of the sins of the world, as if all the evil in the human race first caused by Satan, was poured out on Him. The people during the time of Moses looked to this serpent held up on a stake in order to be delivered from their illness (Num. 21:7–9).



From the art of Graham Kennedy. Accessed July 30, 2013.

4) **"As** Jonah was three days and three nights in the Whale's belly; **so** shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matt. 12:40.

9. Interpretation of Types:

1) Only the point or points of resemblance between the type and the antitype should be emphasized.

2) Types are not designed to be used as proofs for other doctrines or as the basis of other doctrines which they do not typify.

3) Types should be understood and interpreted only in the light of their plain historical facts.

4) Plain historical events should not be forced into some sort of type simply because there are some points of resemblance between them and New Testament truths.
5) The type and the antitype must agree with each other as well as with all related scriptures.
6) The historical sense of Scripture or the literal meaning of the words telling of the type or antitype should never be destroyed.
7) All "hidden" meanings of the words should be avoided, for such explanation only leads to confusing interpretations.

Sources:
http://www.dake.com/dake/types.html accessed July 30, 2013. Most of the material comes from this source and all of the direct quotations from Dake are found on this page.
http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/larkin/dt/28.cfm accessed July 30, 2013.
http://www.altogetherlovely.org/downloads/11.%20TYPES%20IN%20THE%20BIBLE.pdf accessed July 30, 2013.
http://markmayberry.net/wp-content/uploads/bible-study/2010-12-19-am-MM-BasicsOfBibleStudy-TypesAndAntitypes-02.pdf accessed July 30, 2013.

The **Doctrine of Typology** has also been posted, and it has some additional points. (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Lesson 253: Genesis 22:1–18 Parallels between Isaac Being Offered and Jesus

In the previous two lessons, we studied typology. In this lesson, we will see how this plays out with Isaac, both as a type of Christ and his offering by his father as a type for the offering of Jesus Christ on the cross.

God continues to speak to Abraham after Abraham showed that he was willing to offer up Isaac, his uniquely-born son, to God.

Genesis 22:18 And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

There are two ways of looking at this verse. Abraham's seed can refer to Isaac, and God is telling Abraham that, through Isaac, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. It is through Isaac, and all of those who will preserve and record the Word of God, that all mankind has been blessed.

However, more importantly, all the nations of the earth would be blessed because of the Seed Who would be born in the line of Abraham and Isaac: Jesus Christ. He is the true blessing which is for all mankind. All mankind is potentially saved through Jesus Christ; and through operation footstool, God will remove Satan and his minions from the earth and restore perfect environment.

In other words, we have a near fulfillment of this promise (Isaac) and a far fulfillment (Jesus the Messiah).

Gen. 22 is one of the most amazing chapters in all of the Bible. God comes to Abraham and asks for him to offer up his uniquely-born son, the only time that God ever calls for man to offer up a human sacrifice. This is done to set up a parallel between the offering of Isaac to the offering of our Lord for our sins.

This is an example of typology. Isaac is the type; Jesus is the antitype. The actual historical narrative of God asking Abraham to offer up his son is real; but typical (meaning *it is a type*). The offering of Isaac foreshadows the future event of our Lord being offered up on the cross and being judged by God the Father for our sins. The offering of Isaac is the type; it finds its fulfillment in the crucifixion of Jesus, the antitype.

Isaac in general was a type of Christ:

Most of this doctrine is taken from the Blue Letter Bible site.

Isaac was a Type of Christ

1. Both Isaac and Christ were children of promise. Gen 15:4 Isa 7:14
2. The birth of both was pre-announced. Gen 18:10 Luke 1:30-31
3. Both were named before their birth. Isaac in Gen 17:19 and Jesus in Matt. 1:21 and Luke 1:31
4. The birth of both was contrary to nature. Sarah was barren all of her life and Isaac was born to her past the age of giving birth (Gen 11:30). Mary was a virgin (Matt. 1:18-20).
5. When these births were prophesied, they were received with skepticism. Gen. 17:17 18:12 Luke 1:34
6. These births occurred at the proper time in history. Gen. 21:2 Gal. 4:4
7. Both are called an *only son*. Gen 22:2 (Heb 11:17) John 3:16
8. Both were mocked and persecuted by their own kindred. Gen 21:9-10 Gal. 4:28-29 Matt. 27:29
9. Neither Isaac nor Christ had transgressed the law that they should be offered up. Gen 22:2 Matt. 27:24
10. As Isaac carried the wood on which he was to die, so Christ carried his own cross. Gen 22:6 John 19:17
11. As Isaac went willingly to the "altar," so Christ went willingly to the "cross." Gen. 22:9 John 10:17
12. Both were given up or forsaken by his father. Gen 22:12 Matt. 27:46
13. Both rose from the place of death in resurrection (actually, Abraham expected that this would happen if he killed his son). Heb 11:17-19 Matt. 28:6
14. The seed of Isaac would be multiplied throughout the world (Gen. 22:17); through Jesus, many sons of God would be born (John 1:12 Heb. 2:10).

Points taken from: http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/larkin/dt/28.cfm accessed July 30, 2013. This is also found here: http://www.altogetherlovely.org/downloads/11.%20TYPES%20IN%20THE%20BIBLE.pdf accessed July 30, 2013.

This is the chapter that we have been studying:

Gen. 22:1–7 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and we will worship and we will come again to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (ESV, mostly)

Genesis 22:8–10 And Abraham said, “My son, God will look to Himself, the Lamb, for a burnt offering.” So they both went together. And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

You will recall that v. 8 required a great deal of exegesis to translate it properly.

Gen 22:11–13 But the angel of Y^{e}howah called to Abraham from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." And God said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked. And, behold, a ram behind him was entangled in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

Genesis 22:14 And Abraham called the name of that place *Y^{e}howah-Yireh* so that it is said this day: “In [this] mountain *Y^{e}howah will be seen* [or, *Y^{e}howah will appear*].” This could also be translated, “In [this] mountain, Y^{e}howah is seen [or, *Y^{e}howah* appears].”

v. 14 also required a great deal of careful exegesis in order to come up with that translation.

Genesis 22:15–18 And the Angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of the heavens the second time, and said, “I have sworn by Myself, says Jehovah; because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only one; so that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your Seed will possess the gate of His enemies. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Compared to the chapters in the Bible spent on Abraham, Jacob and Joseph, there is relatively little time spent on Isaac. However, there are two things which are emphasized in the book of Genesis about Isaac: his birth and his being very nearly sacrificed here in Gen. 22. Isaac's birth points directly to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac foretells our Lord's sacrifice on the cross. Isaac was a type of Christ in his birth and he was a type of Christ when being offered as a sacrifice.

Somehow, Abraham or Isaac knew (whichever man authored this portion of Genesis), as guided by God the Holy Spirit, that this is what we needed to know about Isaac. Nearly every single verse in Gen. 22 finds fulfillment in Jesus Christ and His being offered for our sins.

The Offering of Isaac and Our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross

The Offering of Isaac	The Offering of Jesus Christ
We have already examined the parallels in their births. Isaac is a uniquely-born son, born of a promise made to his father, which birth was outside of the laws of nature and, of course, a great surprise to his mother. Gen. 22:2	Our Lord is the Uniquely-Born Son of God, born of a promise made to all mankind, Whose birth was outside the laws of nature, and, which birth was a great surprise to his mother. John 3:16
This was discussed in great detail in the exegesis of Gen. 18:11. **How Isaac's Unusual Birth Foreshadowed the Birth of Our Lord** (HTML) (PDF).	
Abraham is specifically told in advance to sacrifice his son. Gen. 22:2	Jesus Christ was ordained from eternity past by God the Father to die for our sins. 1Peter 1:20
We are told specifically that Abraham is to offer up the son whom he loves. Gen. 22:2	God the Father loves God the Son, Whom is offered up for our sins. Isa. 53:5–6 John 3:35 5:20 2Cor. 5:21
This was done by the edict of God. Gen. 22:3	This was done by the edict of God. Acts 2:23

The Offering of Isaac and Our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross	
The Offering of Isaac	**The Offering of Jesus Christ**
God only asks one man—Abraham—to offer up his son as a sacrifice. God never asks anyone to do this again. The offering of Isaac is a unique occurrence in Scripture and in human history.	The offering of Jesus Christ for our sins is a unique occurrence in human history. For Christ also **suffered once** for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit (1Peter 3:18). So also the Messiah, having been **offered once** to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him (Heb. 9:28; HCSB). See also Heb. 7:27
The offering is made on a hill in the vicinity of Moriah. Gen. 22:2	The offering is made on a hill in the vicinity of Moriah. Matt. 21:10
Abraham appears to be offering Isaac from a mountain (possibly Mount Golgotha). Gen. 22:14	Jesus will be crucified upon Mount Golgotha. Matt. 27:33 Mark 15:22 John 19:17
A donkey was brought to the place of sacrifice. Gen. 22:3	A donkey was brought to the place of sacrifice. Matt. 21:2–11
Wood was carried to the sacrifice. Gen. 22:6	Our Lord carried probably the top section of the cross[81] to where He was offered up. John 19:17
Isaac, the one to be offered, specifically carried the wood to the site of his sacrifice. Gen. 22:6	Jesus, the One to be offered, carried a portion of the wood, partway to where He would be crucified. John 19:17
The son Isaac was offered up on the wood. Genesis 22:9	Jesus, the Son of God, was offered up on the wood. Luke 23:33
Because Isaac was a young man, this would have required his obedience.	Going to the cross required the obedience of Jesus Christ. Luke 22:42 Philip. 2:8
Two men went with Abraham and Isaac. Genesis 22:3	Two men were on crosses next to Jesus. Mark 15:27 Luke 23:33
It was a 3-day journey to the place of the sacrifice. Genesis 22:4	Although Jesus spends 3 days in the grave (Luke 24:13-21), I believe, however, this to be analogous to our Lord's 3-year ministry.

[81] There is some historical evidence to suggest that the "cross" is more like a "T."

The Offering of Isaac and Our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross

The Offering of Isaac	The Offering of Jesus Christ
Isaac asks, "Where is the lamb?" Gen. 22:7	Jesus is the Lamb of God. John 1:29, 36
Then Abraham said, "Elohim looks to Himself—the lamb—for the burnt-offering, my son." (Gen. 22:8a).	
Gen. 21 is about the birth of Isaac; and Gen. 22 is the offering of Isaac. This information is presented first; and is, therefore, the most fundamental.	The purpose of Jesus was to go to the cross and die for our sins. This is the purpose of the 1st Advent. Apart from that, we are not saved. Isa. 53:4–5, 10–11 1John 5:12
It is God Who provides the sacrifice. Genesis 22:8	It is God Who provides the sacrifice. John 1:29
God would see of the willingness of Abraham to offer up his son and be satisfied. Gen. 22:14–17	God would see the sacrifice of His Son and be satisfied. Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied... (Isa. 53:11). And Then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:9a, 10). Also see Luke 22:42
Abraham was obedient to God, ready to offer up His Son. Gen. 22:12	Jesus Christ was obedient to the death of the cross. Philip. 2:8
Isaac was restrained and placed upon the wood. Gen. 22:9	Jesus was fastened to the wood. Luke 23:33
Abraham offers his own son to God (actually, he is about to offer up his son).	God offers His Own Son for Abraham (and for all mankind).
All of God's promises made to Abraham are based upon Isaac. Still God requires the sacrifice of Isaac. Gen. 13:16 Heb. 11:17–18	All of God's promises to us are based upon His Son, Jesus. Still, God requires the sacrifice of Jesus. Isa. 53:10–11 1Cor. 1:30 Col. 2:8–10
Abraham expected that God would resurrect Isaac from the dead. Heb. 11:17–19	This foreshadows God the Father raising Jesus from the dead. Acts 2:24, 32 Gal. 1:1

The Offering of Isaac and Our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross

The Offering of Isaac	The Offering of Jesus Christ
There is clearly a substitutionary death here. The ram is offered up instead of Isaac. Gen. 22:13	There is clearly a substitutionary death here. The Son of God is offered up on our behalf. Isa. 53:4–5 2Cor. 5:21 Gal. 3:13 Heb. 7:27 1Peter 2:24 3:18
The ram's horns are caught in thicket of thorns. Genesis 22:13	Jesus wore a crown of thorns. John 19:2
This in itself is symbolic. The word *horn* is found throughout the Old and New Testaments as a symbol of power and authority. Being caught in a thicket of thorns of wearing a crown of thorns is relinquishing that authority to suffer on the earth.	
After this offering, Isaac is still alive. (Gen. 22:5, 19). Abraham had assumed that, if he killed Isaac as a sacrifice, that God would raise him up from the dead (Heb. 11:17–19).	Jesus was resurrected from the dead after He offered Himself for our sins. Heb. 10:12–13
Heb 11:19 He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead, from which Abraham also got Isaac back as an illustration. This is the only verse that I am aware of where the offering of Isaac is seen as typical of the offering of Jesus.	
Isaac's seed would be multiplied. Genesis 22:17	Jesus is the firstborn of many sons (John 1:12 Isaiah 53:10). His offering would justify the many (Isa. 53:11).
Isaac's seed would triumph over all of his enemies. Gen. 22:17 24:60	The cross is the basis for the triumph of Jesus Christ over all of His enemies [**Operation Footstool** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)]. Psalm 110:1 Luke 20:43 Acts 2:35 Heb. 10:13
The nations of the earth would be blessed because of this offering of Isaac. Gen. 22:18	The people of the earth are blessed because Jesus died for our sins. By His knowledge shall the Righteous One, My Servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities (Isa. 53:11b) See also Psalm 72:17 Gal. 3:8–9, 28–29
Servant gets bride for son. Genesis 24:1-4	God would provide a bride (the church) for Jesus. Eph. 5:22-32 Rev. 21:2, 9; 22:17
The bride was a beautiful virgin Genesis 24:16	The bride of Christ is a beautiful virgin. 2Cor. 11:2

Whereas, we could easily overlook 2 or 3 parallels in this instance, and write if off as coincidence, it is hard to look at over 30 parallels between the offering of Isaac and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ without concluding that God reveals the crucifixion through this offering.

The more you know about the Bible, the more you appreciate it and come to believe that it is the Word of God. Few people who believe in Jesus Christ decide, the very next day, that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. However, as you learn more and more about what the Bible says, and more and more about its history, it becomes quite clear that parallels like these are more than some interesting set of coincidences, but additional proof that this is the Word of God.

Some of these parallels came from: http://www.ovrlnd.com/Teaching/Typology.html
http://www.godsholyspirit.com/christian_desk/isaac_jesus.html

Lessons 254–255: Genesis 22:10–18 Adoption, Inheritance, Escrow Blessings

This is a rather complex addendum to Gen. 22:10–18. The concepts named above—**adoption, inheritance and escrow blessings**—are all interrelated. Therefore, this will be a longer lesson to include them as they relate to Abraham.

Abraham has his son Isaac, the son whom he loves, tied down to the altar, and he is about to cut Isaac's throat. Then we read:

Gen 22:10–18 And Abraham put out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of Jehovah called to him from the heavens and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he said, "Behold me." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God and you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold! A ram behind him was entangled in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place "Jehovah Will See;" so that it is said until this day, In the mount of Jehovah, "He will be seen" [or, *"He will appear"*]. And the Angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of the heavens a second time and He said, "I have sworn by Myself, declares Jehovah, that on account of this thing you have done, and have not withheld your son, your only son, that blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the shore of the sea. And your Seed shall possess the gate of His enemies. And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed My voice."

Heb 11:17–18 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; he who had received the promises was offering up his unique son, about whom it had been said, In Isaac your seed will be called. (Gen. 21:12)

Abraham was faced with the dichotomy of realizing that all of the promises of God would be fulfilled in Isaac; but that God asked for Abraham to offer up his son as a sacrifice. This

same dichotomy existed for Jesus in His 1st advent. Nearly everyone knew Jesus (or the Messiah, if they did not recognize Jesus as such) as the returning king, Who would destroy all of the enemies of Israel, and Who would fulfill all of the promises made to Abraham; but few could reconcile this with the Suffering Servant of Isa. 53 and with the generally nonviolent Jesus Who taught them. Even His disciples could not understand the cross and they ran for their own safety after Jesus had been seized.

Heb 11:19 Abraham considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead, from which he [Abraham] also got him [Isaac] back as an illustration.

Apparently, Abraham assumes that, if he sacrifices Isaac, then God would have to raise him up from the dead. So, without God ever having raised a man from the dead before, Abraham believed it to be possible. If Abraham had sacrificed his son to God, then God would have to do something like resurrection in order to fulfill all of His promises to Abraham.

Abraham does not stop halfway with this. When asked to offer up his son, Abraham does not say, "Listen, God, I am really happy to have this boy Isaac as my son and my heir. You have made a lot of other promises to me, but I am happy with him, just as things are. Can't we just leave it at that?"

God's plan is person-specific

God had a set of blessings designed specifically for Abraham and designed to move His plan forward. Abraham's life and what God did on his behalf takes into consideration the character and personality of Abraham; and, at the same time, the plan of God. You will note that God began telling Abraham about these blessings decades before they occurred in his life. The fact is, God, in eternity past in the divine decrees, determined this.

God took into consideration the power of Abraham's faith, because, if you will recall, all of God's promises to Abraham were based upon having a son, and that son did not happen until Abraham was 100. And after that, God then told Abraham to go and offer up his son as a sacrifice. All of this took great faith, and, as a result, Isaac, Abraham's son, is a type of Christ in his birth; and Abraham's being willing to sacrifice Isaac, provides us a wonderful parallel to Jesus Christ dying for our sins.

God could not have used just anyone in this regard. God could not have used Nahor or Terah (Abraham's brother and father); it had to be Abraham, because God knew Abraham in eternity past. God designed a plan which was perfect for Abraham. God knew what Abraham would do.

It is important to consider this, because God has a plan for each of our lives, and that plan is suited perfectly for us. The rationale that some people have for not learning Bible doctrine is, they might feel as if they are forced to do something that they do not want to do—evangelize when they hate crowds or become a missionary when they cannot stand learning a foreign language. But God does not do that to us. Now, some of us may have

a particular problem with this or that area of service, but your mind changes as you age (and sometimes not). At this point in time, I spend about 4 hours a day studying the Word of God and writing. Back in, say, 1990, that would have seemed to be excessive to me, even though I had been a Christian for nearly 20 years at that time and studied the Bible about an hour a day at that time at my church and through recorded teaching.

In any case, God will not trick you into some sort of ministry that is not suitable to your interests and talents. Furthermore, your ministry might not be what you consider to be Christian service. It may just be what you do. Now, some people from some churches might try to bully you into doing things that you do not want to do or things for which you are not suited, but God will not.

However, as long as you are alive, God has a specific plan for your life. This plan is not onerous nor is it contrary to your nature. Most of us are saved, and then we live a few years (or decades) after that. We are not given this time to just dink around. God gives us this time to grow spiritually and then to apply what we have learned, as we greater align our lives with God's plan.

Escrow Blessings

The application to us is, God also, in eternity past, designed a plan and purpose for our lives which is person-specific. What God has designed for us is specifically for us, which includes blessings and direction. R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the term "escrow blessings." God has a plethora of blessings designed for our lives; but which blessings are not automatically conveyed simply because we are alive and have believed in Jesus Christ. We receive these blessings when it is time-appropriate. In some circumstances, we do not receive some of these blessings because we never develop the capacity to appreciate them. Let me give you the illustration of a young son: you show a football to a 2-month-old baby, and he is not going to be very impressed one way or the other. However, when you show this same football to a 6-year-old son, this can represent time spent with his father. The baby lacks the capacity; the young boy has some capacity. Now, you may want to give the 6-year-old a car, and he may think that is the coolest thing ever; but he lacks the capacity to appreciate what a car is and the responsibilities associated with having one's own vehicle. That understanding kicks in around age 26.

The capacity of the son depends upon his age and maturity level.

Ancient adoption

The ancient tradition of adoption also illustrates the concept of escrow blessings. A man may have great power or great wealth, but when he looks on his sons, they are undisciplined fools who would waste away every dime they inherit or use whatever inherited power they receive simply to gratify their own desires. They have no capacity for wealth, power and responsibility. They would part out the father's company before he is laid into the ground, and they would be spending all of the excess as quickly as the cash

came in. The father might spend 50 years building up a 1000 person business, and the sons will decimate that business in a few years.

Such a wealthy or successful man, being able to objectively regard his blood-kin as such, would often find another young man—someone more worthy than his own flesh and blood—and adopt him as a son, so that he can convey the blessings of his life to this adopted son. The father recognizes that the blessings of his life would be wasted on his blood-kin. He has spent all of his life acquiring wealth and/or power, but he sees no reason to convey it to those who would simply waste it awat.

The key here is, what would the heir do with the wealth left him; and does the heir have the capacity to appreciate the responsibilities of wealth? Let's say that you spend your entire life building up a business, and it is clear that, your sons would destroy that business if it was left in their hands. Do you want to simply leave them the business, knowing that, within 5 years of your death, that business will no longer exist? All your employees will have been laid off or fired, and your yearly revenues will go from several million to nothing. And this is not simply about your name being a legacy for years after you have died. A successful business is made up of dozens, hundreds or thousands of employees, many of whom are very dedicated to that business, and many of whom base their livelihoods upon that business. Even if you are responsible for indulgently raising such sons, you are going to consider their impact upon those associated with this business.

For these reasons, rich and successful people in the ancient world practiced *adoption,* by which they would take a young and responsible adult under their wing with the intention of giving him the family business or the lion's share of the family inheritance after their death. A king might do this to give his kingdom to the adopted son. This young man would be formally adopted, even if he was age 30, with the intention of making him heir to the family fortune and/or business; or to the crown. Kings even adopted servants, former slaves, who have shown great potential. This is not unlike a one-on-one mentoring process today, but it was more specific and official.

> Hugh Lindsay: *Two of the most striking differences between modern Western adoptions and the ancient Roman practice are related. First, the adoptee in Rome was usually an adult male. Second, the reason for adoption was usually to pass on one's inheritance*.[82]

Probably the most famous example of this is Gaius Julius Cæsar, who adopted his great-nephew Octavius as his son and main heir. Cæsar had no living legitimate children, so Octavius was adopted by Cæsar in his will (the adoption took place *after* Cæsar had died). Upon his adoption, Octavius assumed his great-uncle's name.

Adoption and escrow blessings

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[82] From http://www.dts.edu/reviews/hugh-lindsay-adoption-in-the-roman-world accessed September 2, 2013.

Eph 1:3–5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for **adoption** as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will,...

God's plan was for us to be adopted as God's sons through Jesus Christ. The key to adoption is the inheritance (= escrow blessings). As men of sin, we have no full appreciation of what our inheritance is; God has to cleanse us of our sin, which is ultimate sanctification. We are forgiven of our sins at salvation (positional sanctification), we grow spiritually in our lifetimes (experiential sanctification) and when we die, we are cleansed of our sin nature, which is ultimate sanctification. In this way, we are made holy and blameless before God. And we are able, then, to receive the adoption as sons, which is all based upon our Lord's death for our sins.

What is this adoption all about? Jesus came to the Jews and offered them the kingdom; however, they were not interested. Therefore, Jesus (and later, the Apostle Paul) turned to the gentiles. It is we gentiles who are adopted into the kingdom; we are adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. We are not our Lord's *natural sons;* we are not those from Abraham's stock. We are a wild tree which has been grafted in, so to speak (Rom. 11:17–24).

Eph 1:6 ...to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

The key to this is, we are in the Beloved. That is, we are in Jesus Christ. This is the basis for all of our blessings. The blessings are salvation and the escrow blessings, which we may or may not get.

Our spiritual advance, to the point where we begin to receive some of our escrow blessings in time calls attention to His glorious grace.

Eph 1:7–8 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and spiritual insight...

The key phrase is *in Him;* because we are in Him, we have been redeemed (purchased) by His blood (His death on the cross), which means we have received forgiveness for our wrongdoing.

Redemption is payment, and we were purchased with the blood of our Lord; His death on the cross also secured us forgiveness, as the sins we have committed and will commit were atoned for (covered over).

The riches of His grace is the inheritance that we receive because we are adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. What is fundamental to this adoption is, we are redeemed by His blood (our Lord's spiritual death on the cross) and our sins are therefore forgiven.

Eph 1:9 ...making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ...

When we see the word *mystery,* this is a word which always refers to Church Age doctrine. This is the neuter noun mustêrion (μυστήριον) [pronounced *moos-TAY-ree-on*], which means: *1) hidden thing, secret, mystery; 1a) generally mysteries, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals; 1b) a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding; 1c) a hidden purpose or counsel; 1c1) secret will; 1c1a) of men; 1c1b) of God: the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly; 2) in rabbinic writings, it denotes the mystic or hidden sense; 2a) of an OT saying; 2b) of an image or form seen in a vision; 2c) of a dream*. Strong's #3466.

Mustêrion refers to the doctrines of the Greek fraternities which were not known outside of these organizations. Similarly, there is nothing in the Old Testament to get us fully prepared for the Church Age. The entire Church Age is a mystery to the Old Testament saints. Ask Moses, the greatest man of the Old Testament, or Isaiah or Jeremiah, the great prophets of the Old Testament—and none of them had a clue that God would reorganize His plan and program on this earth and seemingly desert Israel (don't become confused, however; God has not and never will completely abandon the nation Israel). Only those who are inside the fraternities understand their mystery doctrines, and only someone inside the Church Age knows the doctrines of the Church Age. This is ideally speaking, of course. There are millions of Christians meandering around out there who do not have the slightest clue as to why they are alive.

God has plans for the Church Age; that is the mystery of His will. There are specific things which we must know about God's will which are directly related to our place in the Church Age.

Eph 1:9 ...making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ...

God's *purpose* here is the feminine noun eudokia εὐδοκία) [pronounced *you-dohk-EE-ah*], which means, *1) will, choice; 1a) good will, kindly intent, benevolence; 2) delight, pleasure, satisfaction; 3) desire; 3a) for delight in any absent thing easily produces longing for it*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2107. It is what He delights in doing. This is His will and His intent; these are His acts of benevolence.

To set forth is the word protithemai (προτίθεμαι) [pronounced *proht-ITH-ehm-ahee*], which means *1) to place before, to set forth; 1a) to set forth to be looked at, expose to view; 1b) to expose to public view; 1b1) of the bodies of the dead; 1b2) to let lie in state; 2) to set before one's self, propose to one's self; 2a) to purpose, determine*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #4388. God's will in the Church Age *is made known;* it *is placed into view;* it *is exposed to view*. We know it by means of the Word of God.

The NET Bible lays it out like this: He did this when He revealed [Or "He did this by revealing"; Greek "making known, revealing." Verse 9 begins with a participle dependent on "lavished" in v. 8; the adverbial participle could be understood as temporal ("when He revealed"), which would be contemporaneous to the action of the finite verb "lavished," or as means ("by revealing"). The participle has been translated here with the temporal nuance to allow for means to also be a possible interpretation. If the translation focused instead upon means, the temporal nuance would be lost as the time frame for the action of the participle would become indistinct.] to us the secret [Or "mystery." In the NT mustêrion (μυστήριον) refers to a divine secret previously undisclosed.] of His will, according to His good pleasure that He set forth [Or "purposed," "publicly displayed." Cf. Rom 3:25.] in Christ [Greek "in Him"; the referent (Christ) has been specified in the translation for the sake of clarity.] [In Christ. KJV has "in Himself" as though the antecedent were God the Father. Although possible, the notion of the verb set forth (Greek protithemai (προτίθεμαι) implies a plan that is carried out in history (cf. Rom 1:13; 3:25) and thus more likely refers to Christ.],...

Or, as translated by R. B. Thieme, Jr.: When He [God the Father] had made known to us the mystery [musterion = Church Age doctrine] of His will, according to His gracious intention [good will, purpose, game plan, acceptance] which He planned/purposed [protithemi] in Him Jesus Christ;...

The mystery is God changing His program and functioning through the church, which is His body, which is made up of all believers on earth, rather than through the nation Israel. This was done according to His plan, known to Him from eternity past. He began to make this plan known through Jesus Christ, Who taught some Church Age doctrine (a concentrated dose of Church Age teaching can be found in the Upper Room Discourse).

Eph 1:10 ...as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

The fullness of time is Jesus Christ coming to die for our sins, and this being taken out to the final sanctification of all believing mankind at the end of time. Because we have sinned against God, because we have a sin nature, and because we have Adam's sin imputed to us, we could not be united with things in heaven, because God is holy and we are anything but. God's plan for the fullness of time deals with the barriers between us and God and makes us acceptable to God. The key is *in Him,* a little phrase that occurs over and over again in the New Testament (along with *in Christ*), and it means that we are placed in Christ, because we have believed in Him. When God looks at us, He does not see us with all of our imperfections, but He sees His Son because we are in Him.

Uniting all things includes uniting the Jews from the Age of Israel and the gentiles from the Church Age (some Jews will believe as well); and it includes the unification of man and angels as well, where angels will no longer be invisible to us. Furthermore, we are united to God through Jesus Christ because we are in Christ.

Our inheritance is based upon adoption, which is according to the will of God

Eph 1:11 In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,...

Our adoption is based upon being *in Him,* and it is because we are in Him that we have obtained this inheritance, which God predestined (= planned from eternity past). Similarly, the adoption of a son in the ancient world was about looking forward to that son being your heir. Jesus Christ is the heir of all things; we are in Him, and so we share His heirship.

Adoption was actually quite a common occurrence in the ancient world. Charley Brown was a rich and influential man; but Charley Brown, Jr., not so much. Chuck Jr. is born into money, born into a good life, so he turns out to be a layabout, a drunkard, a skirt-chaser. The last thing that Charley Brown, Sr. wants to do is to leave all of his money (business or authority) to Chuck Jr., whom he finds to be a complete personal embarrassment. It does not matter that Chuck Jr. is what he is because of Chuck senior; Chuck Jr. is still an embarrassment. Therefore, Charlie Brown adopts a son. He has a humble, hard-working slave boy, who has been with the family for a long time, and that young man shows all of the potential the Chuck Jr. clearly lacks. Therefore, this slave boy, who might be a young man of majority age, is adopted by Chuck Sr. and is thereby eligible to inherit from Charley Brown Sr.

We are adopted as sons in Christ, and are, therefore, heirs to the promises of God. We have great potentials as sons of God in Christ, but we do not necessarily live up to that potential.

However, you must not become confused about this new dispensation. God is not done with the Jews as a people nor is He done with Israel as a nation. The church did not become Israel. In many ways, we, as gentiles, have been adopted by God into His kingdom. However, his natural-born heirs, the Jews, will be able to make claim on their inheritance when they believe in Jesus Christ as well.

Eph 1:12 ...so that we who were the first to have confidence in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

Having confidence in Jesus Christ is a step beyond having simple faith in Him. We glorify Him with the confidence which we have.

Eph 1:13 In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,...

These are the steps: we hear the gospel of salvation; we believe in Jesus Christ; and we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

The 3 categories of truth

Truth comes in 3 categories: the gospel, Bible doctrine, and the laws of divine establishment. The gospel is for the unbeliever. The gospel is that Jesus Christ died for

your sins and that, by believing in Him, you receive eternal life. Bible doctrine is the information which is found throughout the Bible. It is the manna that we eat daily in order to grow spiritually (ideally speaking). The laws of divine establishment are laws which preserve a people and preserve a nation. The laws of divine establishment are for all people—believers and unbelievers alike. When these laws are rejected, as in Sodom, then this rejection does not bode well for the people of that geographical area. These are *laws,* just like the law of gravity. You can jump off a 4 ft. platform, and if you land right, it is not a big deal. However, if you jump off a 10 story building, that is pretty much the end of your jumping career. Because man is sinful, no geographical area adheres completely to the laws of divine establishment. However, there are degrees as to how much these laws are flaunted. Is your society jumping off a one-story building or off a ten-story building? That determines the affect of the rejection of these laws in that society.

In most Muslim countries, the laws of divine establishment have been completely and totally abandoned. This is why few people want to move to Muslim countries, despite their great production of energy. European countries, some of which were great places because of the laws of divine establishment (such as, the British empire), have degenerated over time. Therefore, most of Europe is jumping off one-story buildings. Many churches in European countries are being converted into mosques. That does not bode well for the population within. You cannot reject God and begin worshiping Satan without there being profound changes in that society.

Eph 1:14 ...Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

Our inheritance is based upon adoption. We are adopted as sons into the Beloved. The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is our guarantee of this inheritance.

However, there are portions of our inheritance which we do not receive until we develop the capacity for those blessings.

Eph 1:15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints,...

Faith in Jesus Christ is salvation. (Impersonal) love toward the saints is one of the steps of spiritual maturity. This is a personal message from Paul to the Ephesians, who are one of the more advanced groups of believers. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is filled with great information about our place in the Church Age.

Eph 1:16 ...I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,...

Paul had a very close and meaningful relationship with the Ephesians, and some of the greatest doctrines in the New Testament are found in this short book. With the Ephesians, Paul did not have to go back and help fix everything that had gone wrong in the church due to legalism or false doctrine (as in Galatia or Corinth).

Eph 1:17 ...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him,...

It is the function of the human spirit which allows for our spiritual growth. We store doctrinal information about Jesus Christ and the plan of God within the human spirit. The unregenerate person does not have a human spirit,[83] nor do they need a human spirit. When we are regenerated (born again), that is when we need to have the human spirit to store information about God, just as we store information about people in our human souls.

Eph 1:18 ...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,...

The "eyes of the heart" refers to the thinking of the believer. *Enlightenment* is the understanding of Bible doctrine (that is, understand God's plan, called here, *what is the hope to which He has called you*). We are called for a reason, beyond salvation. There is a reason why we are first saved and then continue to live on this earth.

The riches of our inheritance is tied here to our knowledge of Bible doctrine. Have you noticed the words and phrases which Paul has been using: *wisdom, revelation, eyes of your hearts, you may know;* all which refer to knowledge of Bible doctrine. We receive this inheritance, also known as escrow blessings, because we have been adopted in the Beloved and because we have exhibited spiritual growth.

All of us know people who have great potential, but have wasted their lives away due to drugs, drinking or chasing. They may be very creative, very smart, very charming, but all of this ends up being undeveloped potential. The same is true of the believer in the Church Age. All believers have great potential, but few believers properly exploit the spiritual assets which they are given at salvation.

Eph 1:19–20 ...and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,...

We know that the power of God is immeasurable, as He raised Jesus from the dead and sat Him at His right hand in the heavenlies. Jesus was not merely resuscitated but He was raised from the dead permanently, and we have access to that very power. This does not mean that we are going to wander about doing miracles or raising people from the dead; our power is not in miracles, but in creating *an island of sanity in a world of pain*.[84] We offer life to a world mired in death.

We have modern-day examples, Billy Graham being one of the most visible. Jesus spoke to crowds in the thousands. Billy Graham, when there was a great deal of positive volition

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[83] Perhaps it is a vestigial part of the soul.

[84] Quoted from the movie *Morgan*.

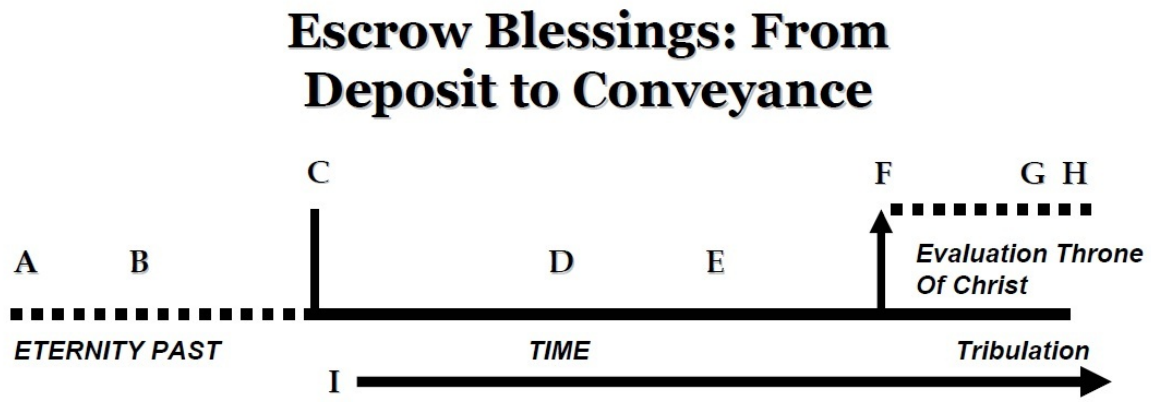
in the United States, spoke to crowds of tens of thousands and millions would watch him on television during a crusade (if you are a younger person, you may not realize that Billy Graham would hold a series of evangelism meetings, and they would be held in football stadiums and broadcast on network television, often during prime time). In the 1950's, Billy Graham went all over the United States and millions of people would listen to him and believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus did not have a ministry like this; His Apostles did not have ministries like this.

Obviously, the key to evangelism is positive volition where the evangelist goes. We do not have a Billy Graham for this generation or the previous generation. God the Holy Spirit is still the great power, but the people of the United States do not have the same positive volition that they had in the 1950's.

Eph 1:21 ...far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

This is Jesus Christ Who is above all and over all.

Joe Griffin put together an excellent chart which lays out the time frame for escrow blessings (there is a slight problem with this graphic, as it appears as though the Tribulation occurs after the Evaluation Throne of Jesus Christ):



A. Blessings deposited in escrow for all believers. (Eph. 1:3)
B. All believers are elected. (Eph. 1:4)
C. Creation of the universe. (Eph 1:4)
D. Salvation of the elect by grace through faith in Christ. (Eph 2:8-9)
E. Escrow Agreement fulfilled by some of the elect. (Heb. 10:35-36)
F. Rapture of the Church. (1 Thess. 4:16-17)
G. Escrow account conveyed to winners only. (1 Cor. 3:14)
H. Escrow account of losers retained on deposit forever. (1 Cor. 3:15)
I. Those who do not believe remain in just condemnation forever. (John 3:18)

Grace Doctrine Church
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From: http://admin.joegriffin.org/Visuals/escrowblessingsdeposittoconveyance.pdf accessed August 12, 2013.

This second chart is from the Eusebia Bible Church, accessed August 12, 2013. PPOG = *the Protocol Plan of God*. TLJC = *The Lord Jesus Christ*. Jesus Christ is the escrow officer Who receives these escrow blessings, later to be conveyed to us upon the execution of the protocol plan of God.

From Stan Simonton of Katy Community Church on Escrow blessings:

Eternal inheritance means exactly that - it lasts for all eternity. Our inheritance begins at salvation but will not be fully realized until we enter the eternal state. After the believer is evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ, his "escrow blessings" (those kept in his escrow account) will be conveyed to him to enjoy for all eternity. It is the realization of these greater blessings in eternity that should be a motivating factor in the life of every believer. This knowledge becomes part of our personal sense of destiny and the hope (full confidence) of a future filled only with peace and happiness.

In God's grace He has provided for every believer for the eternal state. ***For those believers that execute the Christian Way of Life, the rewards will be greater.*** *Nevertheless, all believers will be blessed in eternity and all believers will enjoy eternal happiness. Personal sins are not going to be an issue when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ to be evaluated, because your sins were dealt with on the Cross. Only what you did or did not do with your Christian Way of Life will be evaluated.*

Escrow blessings are grace blessings given to the believer in time and in eternity as a part of God's predesigned plan. Most of us are familiar with the concept of escrow as related to real estate. When you purchase a home, for example, monies are set aside in an escrow account to pay certain future bills, such as taxes. This escrow money is YOURS, even though it is held until such time as it is needed. The mortgage company also assigns an escrow officer to manage your account. Upon sale of the home, all monies in escrow that are unused are returned to you.

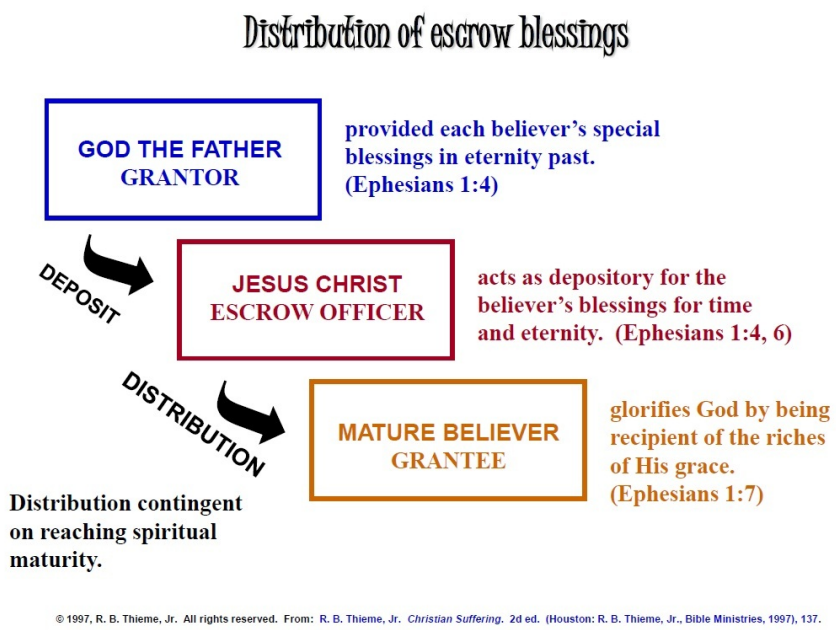
God has set up an escrow account for you. God the Father is the grantor of the escrow, the Lord Jesus Christ is the escrow officer and the Holy Spirit is the conveyor of the escrow. The divine blessings that are in your escrow account are yours forever whether

you access them or not. The way in which you access divine escrow (divine blessings) is by possessing the capacity to receive them, which is obtained through spiritual growth. Spiritual growth only occurs when there is consistent study and application of God's Word. As you grow up spiritually, God is able to convey these blessings from escrow into your life. Lack of capacity from lack of study and application stalls the conveyance of blessings from escrow.

Many believers wonder why God is not blessing them more, not realizing that they do not possess the capacity to receive greater blessings. There are certain blessings that we all receive as believers called logistical grace blessings (food, clothing and shelter). But the escrow blessings that are being held for us are much greater than the logistical blessings that we all receive. These blessings are not always material possessions, but more often are related to spiritual things, such as wisdom, discernment, happiness and peace of mind. These greater blessings are in direct proportion to the amount of Bible doctrine that a person has stored in his soul and is utilizing in his daily life.[85]

Another place to go for more information on Escrow blessings, where the Scriptures are laid out:

http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=pre&sf=rea&tid=818



This doctrine was originally developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

Graphic from Joe Griffin's page, accessed August 12, 2013.

In a real estate transaction, usually the buyer has funds placed into escrow which will be eventually applied to the purchase of a home. Primarily, this escrow account has the buyer's earnest money; and, upon the execution of the earnest money contract, the earnest money in the escrow account is applied on behalf of the buyer for the purchase of the property. However, monies can be placed in the escrow account by the seller for, say, the repair of some item in a house. The seller may place $4000 into this

[85] From Katy Community Church accessed August 12, 2013.

escrow account for the repair of the air conditioner. The buyer fulfills the terms of the escrow by having the air conditioner replaced, and this $4000 is then taken out of escrow and distributed to the buyer. Once the conditions of the escrow are fulfilled, then the escrow account can be transferred over to the grantee. This would illustrate the distribution of escrow blessings above. Or, even more simply than that illustration, the deed to the house is placed into escrow, and when all of the conditions are fulfilled (primarily financing), then the deed of the house is transferred to the buyer as a part of the closing of escrow.

Lesson 256: Genesis 22:19–24 — The Eastern Genealogy

Now let us return to the time of Abraham.

What follows in an interesting excursion into those who have been born into Abraham's family to the east. Recall that Abraham first moved with his family up to Charan (Haran), then he and Lot and Sarah set out for the Land of Promise. Back among his own people, is a young woman named Rebekah, and she would become the wife of Abraham's son, Isaac. The genealogy which follows tells how Rebekah is related to Abraham.

Genesis 22:19 Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

The young men were those who accompanied Abraham and Isaac on this 3-day journey, where Abraham obeyed God and was ready to offer up his son as a sacrifice to God.

Beersheba, as we have studied, means *well of the sevenfold oath*.

Although we do not know exactly how personal news was relayed about, someone—possibly because of trade—told Abraham what was going on with his family. Abraham had a brother, Nahor. God chose Abraham; God did not choose Nahor.

Genesis 22:20 And it happened after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Behold Milcah! She also has borne children to your brother Nahor:

After these things means that this news came to Abraham *after* he had offered up his son Isaac to God.

We do not know exactly how communications were handled in the ancient world. Since there does not appear to be an Verizon network set up in Canaan around this time, apparently messages were sent by caravans; or this or that person from this family (possibly a slave) would ride out and communicate what is going on. What appears to be the case is, their family lines would be exchanged. Who is still alive, who is married to whom, and who is having children. That is found throughout the book of Genesis.

Abraham takes all of this as good news. Prov. 25:25 reads: Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. Your brother having a large and prosperous family is good news.

A written language existed in the time of Abraham. In fact, we have a variety of Akkadian texts which go back to 2300 B.C.[86] Therefore, it is not impossible to imagine that there were even letters exchanged in the time of Abraham.

It is very possible that Abraham was considering marrying Isaac to a member of his family, so he personally made some inquiries as to who had been born to whom back in the east. The fact that this reads *after these things* suggests that Abraham started considering this matter before Isaac was very old. We have recently discussed Isaac's age and have determined that, when Abraham offered him up, he was probably between 8 and 11. He was small enough for Abraham to lift up onto the altar; but he was large enough to carry wood for the burning of the sacrifice. Isaac is not going to marry until he is 40, so Abraham thinks about this situation for a long time.

There are two types of genealogies found in the Bible— (1) cluster genealogies, where 2, 3 or even 4 generations are looked at, but most of the sons of some of these families will be named; and (2) straight-line genealogies where one particular line will be followed for 4 or more generations. When we combine all of the straight-line genealogies from Scripture, we get the line of Jesus. Some of the cluster genealogies are related to His line and some are not. Since the line of Nahor will not lead to Jesus (except by marriage), it will not be explored in any real detail. Eventually, we will find out how Rebekah, Rachel and Leah are in this line, and they link up with Abraham's line, which is the line which will lead to Jesus. However, we will not extensively examine Nahor's line—apart from the women mentioned, his line will lead nowhere.

Genesis 22:20 And it happened after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Behold Milcah! She also has borne children to your brother Nahor:...

Here is an interesting match up: Abraham left his people when he was *Abram* and his wife was *Sarai* (my *prince*). Nahor (*snoring*) was asleep when Abram (*exalted father*) was blessed and guided by God. However, interestingly enough, Nahor married Milcah, which means *queen*. It sounds as if his brother was trying to one-up him.

Abram's name means *exalted father,* but it is Nahor who has all of the children. It is interesting as to why this information might be passed along. Abram thought it necessary, on the orders of God, to go to Canaan. Nahor, apparently, did not see any reason to go there. Furthermore, God wanted Abram to remain separate from his family). Therefore, Nahor stayed in the vicinity of Haran (Charan).

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[86] *The Bible Almanac,* J.I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney, William White, Jr.; ©1980 Thomas Nelson Publishers; p. 342.

So now Abraham receives the message that his brother Nahor has married Queen, and they have 8 children. Abraham, which means *father of a multitude,* had but one child; and it is possible that Nahor did not realize that Abraham had even this one child. In any case, there is a great contrast here between *Sleepy,* who had many children, and *Father of a Multitude,* who had but one child.

Now Nahor's children will be listed:

Genesis 22:21 ...Huz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel (the father of Aram),...

Abraham probably received bits and pieces of information concerning Nahor's family over the years. He no doubt heard of Nahor's children a long time ago—perhaps 50 or more years previous, when Snoring and Queen began to have children.

Huz here is the same name as *Uz,* found back in Gen. 10:23. The Uz named in Gen. 10:23 is probably the man who established the city where Job was from (Job 1:1); but he is not the Uz (Huz) in this passage. The *Buz* named here is probably not the head of the family of Elihu, from the book of Job (Job 32:2). It is likely that the book of Job took place coterminous to Abraham or before the time of Abraham (I place it several generations prior to Abraham). These same names simply indicate that *Huz* and *Buz* were common names for that time period (like *William* has been over the past 1000+ years).

That Kemuel is called the father of Aram here ought not to be a problem. The first Aram was a son of Shem (Gen. 10:22). This is another person named Aram, which is reasonably understood as a family name in the Shem family. Did he later join up with the family bearing his name? We do not know. In any case, he would not be the same person as Gen. 10:22, where Shem being the father of the other Aram is mentioned, as they are so far removed from one another in time. Furthermore, the Aramæans would have been established long before Aram ben Kemuel came on the scene.

Although the name *Aram* is found in several cities and areas named in the Bible (Aram-naharaim and Aram Aram-zobah of Psalm 60 inscription), there is no reason to tie this to the Aram named here. It is much more likely that this are related to the Aram of Gen. 10:23.

The famous Aramæans of that time period are also known to us as Syrians. Although there was some interaction between the Jews and the Syrians (Judges 10:6), King David would turn history on its head when he defeats the Syrians in 2Sam. 8. The Bible gives us a little detail about how this came about, as the Bible does not deal with the historical changes which came about as a result of David defeating the Syrians in battle.

What appears to be the case is, Nahor named some of his sons after well-known people to that era.

Genesis 22:22 ...and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

Milcah bore these 8 children to Nahor, so their children are Huz, Buz, Kemuel, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethel. It is likely that all of these sons are grown to become young men before Isaac is born.

> Gill tells us: *Hazo or Chazo settled in Elymais, a country belonging to Persia, where is now a city called Chuz after his name, and from whence the whole country is called Chuzistan; and the inhabitants of it are by the Assyrians called Huzoye or Huzaeans (r); the same which Strabo (s) makes mention of under the name of Cossaeans, who are described as a warlike people, inhabiting a barren and mountainous country, and given to spoil and robbery; and are mentioned by him along with Elymaeans, Medes, and Persians*.[87]

For the most part, there is very little that we can say about Nahor's sons. Whereas a couple of them may have begun a city or a people; none of them seem to have made an important mark on history. Yet Abraham has one son, and his son Isaac is more famous than all of Nahor's sons put together. Only one son of Nahor's does any good, and he fathers a female child named Rebekah. Her greatness will be in association with Isaac, separated from the rest of her family.

Genesis 22:23a And Bethuel fathered Rebekah.

The last son of Milcah and Nahor mentioned is Bethuel, who has a variety of meanings assigned to his name: *destroyed of God, God destroys; man of God; a virgin of God; a house of God, dweller in God*. When Abraham sends his most trusted servant back east to meet this family, he meets Rebekah, who is named here. The servants asks her who she is and She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." (Gen 24:24). This woman will be brought to the Land of Promise, to meet and to marry Isaac. Of these many sons of Nahor, only Bethuel really stands out, as he did a wonderful job of raising Rebekah (which will become apparent in Gen. 22). Her brother Laban, not so much.

In fact, Isaac was so happy with his wife that he will send his son, Jacob, to this same area to find a wife for himself.

Genesis 22:23 And Bethuel fathered Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.

Nahor's youngest son, Bethuel, has a daughter, Rebekah. Rebekah will become the wife of Isaac.

Bethuel also has a son, Laban (Rebekah's brother), who will figure into the life of Isaac and Jacob many years down the road. He will be a lot less honorable than Rebekah.

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[87] Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible;* from e-Sword, Gen. 22:22. Gill cites (r) Hyde's Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 35. p. 415; and (s) Geograph. l. 11. p. 359, 361. & l. 16, p. 512.

We will meet Rebekah again in Gen. 24, where she will be brought in Canaan, the Land of Promise, to marry Isaac.

Genesis 22:24 And his concubine [= mistress], named Reumah, she also bore Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

> Clarke: *We borrow the word "concubine" from the Latin compound concubina, from con, together, and cubo, to lie, and apply it solely to a woman cohabiting with a man without being legally married. The Hebrew word is* שגליפ *pilegesh, which is also a compound term, contracted, according to Parkhurst, from* גלפ *palag, to divide or share, and* שגנ *nagash, to approach; because the husband, in the delicate phrase of the Hebrew tongue, approaches the concubine, and shares the bed, etc., of the real wife with her.*[88]

A concubine in the ancient world is a mistress, inferior to the wife or wives of the man, but not considered a disreputable person.

> Clarke so describes the concubine: *[She] is a kind of secondary wife, not unlawful in the patriarchal times; though the progeny of such could not inherit. The word is not used in the Scriptures in that disagreeable sense in which we commonly understand it. Hagar was properly the concubine or pilegesh of Abraham, and thus annuente Deo, and with his wife's consent. Keturah, his second wife, is called a concubine, Gen. 26:15; 1Chron. 1:32; and Bilhah and Zilhah were concubines to Jacob, Gen. 35:22.*[89] The wife appears to be celebrated with a marriage ceremony; the concubine appears to be more of a live-in lover.

I have been on many different websites, and some, particularly those which are anti-Bible, seem to be so disconcerted over the mention of mistresses in the Bible. The Bible simply tells us who these people are and what they did. There are so many things found in the Bible which cannot be interpreted as being condoned by Scripture, and this is certainly one example. When the Bible speaks of the guidelines for a relationship of a man and a woman, it is always one man and one woman—it is never two men, it is never a plural marriage, it is never a marriage which includes mistresses. However, the Bible does not hide these relationships when speaking of godly men or those who are not very godly.

Those groups who are pro-gay marriage often cite the variety of human relationships documented in the Bible, somehow thinking that, this makes homosexual behavior okay. Or maybe their thinking is, the Bible is wrong somehow to record accurately these relationships and to condemn homosexuality.

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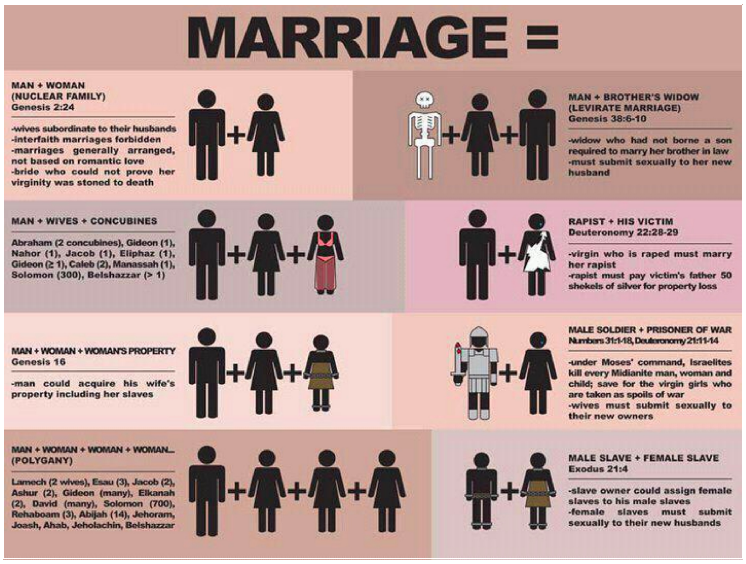
[88] Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible;* from e-Sword, Gen. 22:24 (edited).

[89] Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible;* from e-Sword, Gen. 22:24.

Even though some of these relationships are accurately described, many are not or they are misrepresented. It is not difficult to find relationships in the Bible which fall outside of the ideal marriage relationship. This is not evidence that God likes or approves of these different sorts of relationships; this is evidence of the sin nature of all men. **Marriage Equality Graphic**. This chart is from the marriage equality[90] USA website, accessed July 24, 2013. When the pharisees were trying to trap Jesus with a social question about divorce, Jesus answered: "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." (Matt. 19:8–9). So the short explanation is, all of the alternate relationships come from man's sinful nature (including homosexuality), not from God's directive will.



If you have seen this graphic and it concerned you, all of these marriage alternatives are covered in **Marriage Alternatives Found in the Bible** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). As already noted, some of the relationships above are inaccurately portrayed; but most simply are an historical fact which reveals more about the nature of man than the will of God.

Genesis 22:24 And his concubine, named Reumah, she also bore Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah."

Reumah is Nahor's concubine (mistress). Nahor has a great number of children, both by his wife Milcah and his mistress Reumah. Of these 4, only one of them likely represents a family of note. Maachah apparently heads a tribe named in Deut. 3:14 and Joshua 12:5. Later, we find a small kingdom east of Israel, and it is from this kingdom that David apparently gets one of his wives (she is the daughter of the King of Maacah). This is the wife who bears him Absalom, which son later flees to the land of Maacah to his grandfather (this area is mentioned in 2Sam. 10:6, 8 1Chron. 19:6).

However, for the most part, there is no one from the family of Sleepy that we can point to as having had any sort of impact on history. In fact, only where Rebekah crosses over and

[90] *Marriage equality* is a movement which wants to (1) allow homosexuals to legally marry and (2) to give them a status equal to a man and a woman who are married.

marries Isaac is the only time that Nahor's family has some eternal impact—only because she separates from Nahor's family and willfully becomes a part of the line of promise.

What appears to be the case—we were never given the exact details before—is that Abraham (Abram) moved to Haran (Charan) with a large portion of his family (or, they moved up there later). Abram finally obeyed God and left his family and left Haran and went to the land of promise, which was Canaan. Abram took with him his wife, his nephew Lot, and the possessions and slaves which he had gathered up over the years. However, much of his family remained in the area of Haran. These are the people mentioned here. We are never told when they moved to Haran. They may have moved with Abraham; they may have moved after Abraham; and they may have moved there after Abraham had moved to the Land of Promise.

To a person with human viewpoint, *Sleepy* has been given a great wealth of children, whereas Abraham, *Father of a multitude,* only has Isaac as the son of his inheritance. According to human viewpoint, God has blessed Nahor and Abraham, but Abraham not as much.

Back in Gen. 11, when the family of Abraham is named, we did not hear about any of these people, apart from Nahor and Milcah.

Gen 11:26–32 And Terah was seventy years old when he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. These are the generations of Terah: Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. And death came to Haran when he was with his father Terah in the land of his birth, Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. And Sarai had no child. And Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, the wife of his son Abram and they went out from Ur of the Chaldees, to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran, and were there for some time. And all the years of Terah's life were two hundred and five: and Terah came to his end in Haran.

Given this narrative, it does not appear that Nahor went with them at first; but that Nahor later went to Haran (or at least Bethuel, Laban and Rebekah did). They will all be named in Gen. 24 and they will be living in Haran at that time.

Lesson 257: Genesis 23:1–12 — The Death of Sarah

At this point, we come to the end of Sarah's life. She is 127 years old. This would make Abraham 137 years old and their son Isaac would be 37.

Genesis 23:1 And Sarah was a hundred twenty seven years old, the years of the life of Sarah.

This is somewhat of an odd phrase, *the years of the life of Sarah,* and it is the first time in the Bible that we have this particular phrase; however, it will be repeated in Gen. 25:7, 17 47:9 Ex. 6:16, 18, 20 and it is apparently one way of indicating a person's age.

Interestingly enough, Sarah is the only woman whose age is recorded in Scripture.

This verse sounds like a title, although this chapter will have little to do with Sarah directly and will examine the business of buying a burial plot in the ancient world.

Sarah died in Kirjatharba.

Genesis 23:2 And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

Kirjatharba is in southern Judah (not as far south as Beer-sheba), about 30 miles south of Jerusalem and about midway down the Dead Sea. This city came to be known as Hebron, and this would be from where David began to rule over Judah and years in the future and where his son, Absalom, would go to foment revolution.

The **Map of Hebron** below comes from holylandarchive.com, and was accessed June 26, 2013.

Interestingly enough, Abraham is somewhere else at this time, and he comes to Hebron to mourn her. Abraham would be 137 at this time, and he will live for another 38 years. It is likely that he had route that he traveled with his herds. Or his servants moved about with his herds and Moses rode about overseeing the operation (recall that Abraham is a very wealthy man with a huge ranch).

Although some think that Abraham has taken on another wife by this time, I do not believe that to be the case. He will be involved in purchasing a burial plot for Sarah in this chapter and then getting a wife for Isaac in the following chapter. In Gen. 25, Abraham will marry again, apparently fulfilling the ancient saying, "142 is the new 60." Or, however that goes.

It is also possible that, Abraham lives there with Sarah, and is simply *going in* to the burial tent to mourn Sarah. And Abraham *went in* to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. This is another definition for the word bôw' (אוב) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance*. Strong's #935 BDB #97. There are details left

out of this narrative, as if the writer wrote a few words, paused, thought about Sarah, and then added a few more words. So the author knows whether he meant that Abraham *came to* Hebron to mourn or whether he *went into* the burial tent to mourn Sarah.

Genesis 23:3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,

Abraham was mourning his wife; and then he stood up. We do not know from what position Abraham came out of, but I suspect that he is laying on the ground, mourning his wife, as the Jews tended to be very demonstrative with their emotions.

The *sons of Heth* are Hittites. Therefore, at this time, they apparently had control of a major portion of the Land of Promise.

It is not clear whether they are with Abraham while he is mourning his wife, or if Abraham seeks them out. Again, like the last verse, there are details left out. Sometimes we will be able to fill in these details in this chapter, but here we do not know.

However, if this is not a formal meeting at the gates of the Hittite city; there will be a formal meeting there by the time we get to v. 10.

What is most likely—although this is not clearly laid out—that Abraham knew he needed to provide a burial place for Sarah, so he went to the Hittite city to the gates of the city, where legal business was transacted, and he made his proposal there. Furthermore, the person from whom he would like to purchase the land does not appear to be at the first meeting, but he will be at the second meeting.

Again, perhaps due to the emotions of the writer, important connecting events are left out and assumed. The verb which means *to stand, to get up, to rise up;* is often used to indicate that a person is about to do something. He has a clear mission, and this verb indicates that he is going to accomplish this mission. What is likely is, in between v. 3a and 3b is, Abraham travels to a nearby Hittite city and makes this proposal in a town courthouse (which is at the city gate).

Genesis 23:4 "I am a stranger and a visitor with you. Give me a possession of a burying place with you, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

Now, Abraham has lived in this land for some 60+ years. However, he moved here, and he is dealing with a group of Hittites—perhaps a town council. Abraham still presents himself as a newcomer, a stranger and a visitor in their land, despite having spent a half a lifetime in Canaan.

Interestingly enough, Abraham wants to bury Sarah away from his own ranch. Some people want their loved ones buried in a place where they can visit; Abraham did not want to see the burial place of Sarah on a regular basis. We know that their marriage was at

least 60 years in length; and it well may have been much longer. If Abraham married Sarah at age 40, then their marriage lasted 97 years.

The words *out of my sight* is not a literal rendering from the Hebrew, but a reasonable interpretation of what Abraham is saying.

Genesis 23:5–6 And the sons of Heth answered Abraham saying to him, "Hear us, my lord. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choice of our burying places. None of us will withhold from you his burying-place from burying your dead."

Although we appear to have this coherent quotation from one of the Hittites, that is not really what we find here. *To answer* is a plural verb, indicating that several Hittites are speaking. Therefore, this quotation here is actual a summary of what several different men said to Abraham.

What we will find in this passage is an unusual negotiation take place—unusual by today's standards. Abraham seems to have a good relationship with the Hittites here. You will recall that Abraham has a good relationship with the Philistines of Gerar as well, despite some early missteps on his part.

As an aside, there are several incidents throughout this section of Genesis which indicates that the people in the land were fine people. Many of them are clearly believers. Abraham seemed to have a good relationship with most of them. However, as we observed in Sodom and Gomorrah, there was a potential for great degeneracy (something which is true in every society). In Canaan, this would not happen overnight. It would take another 500 years before the people of Canaan will turn into nations of rabid dogs, which the Jews would have to destroy. However, at this point in their history, the interactions between Abraham and the Hittites are civil and indicate great mutual respect. The lesson that we should draw from this is, people change. When the people change, so does the nation. In the United States, the most recent generations have nearly nothing in common with the WWII generation, which is rapidly dying off now. That sort of thing can dramatically change our nation and the ideals upon which our nation was founded. The changes which will occur with the various peoples of Canaan—most of whom at this time are pretty nice and honorable—will result in their wholesale slaughter 500 years hence.

Genesis 23:5–6 And the sons of Heth answered Abraham saying to him, "Hear us, my lord. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choice of our burying places. None of us will withhold from you his burying-place from burying your dead."

The Hittite council has indicated to Abraham that they are willing to make a deal. As you may recall, Abraham does not own any land in Canaan, but these Hittites are willing to sell him a plot of land for the burial of his wife.

Notice that these men have a great deal of respect for Abraham. In this world, because we are believers, we do have enemies; and it is pretty much impossible for a person to go through this life without enemies. However, being a Christian does not mean that we are

going to be at odds with every person that we meet. In fact, if that describes you, then you are probably at fault.

Genesis 23:7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.

Abraham shows them reasonable deference here. What we are doing is looking into ancient history here and how business deals were struck in those days.

Whatever sort of bowing down shows them respect; Abraham, of course, is not worshiping them.

Genesis 23:8 And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and ask for me of Ephron the son of Zohar,...

Abraham has walked this land for most of his life, and he knows it quite well. He has a particular piece of land already picked out. Ephron ben Zohar means Ephron son of Zohar, and today, we have shortened that to Ephron Zohar.

Abraham speaks about Ephron in the 3rd person, and the way that this verse is worded suggests that he is not at this meeting. Again, we do not know where this meeting is taking place. The text is so sketchy about this that, these people may be outside of Sarah's burial tent discussing these matters or Abraham may have gone to this Hittite city and is speaking at the gate with several of the Hittite leaders and judges (which is what I believe to be the case).

Again, Abraham speaks of burying his wife out of his sight.

Genesis 23:9 ...that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is in the end of his field. For as much silver as it is worth he will give it to me for a possession of a burying-place among you."

Abraham is not looking for any plot of land anywhere; he has a very specific site picked out. My guess is, he is able to easily describe its location to family and that it is easy for him to find, if it is to be Sarah's grave site.

Genesis 23:10 And Ephron lived among the sons of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the ears of the sons of Heth, of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,...

Here, it appears that we have a second meeting. Or, Ephron is called to this meeting and talks are resumed when he arrives. Very likely, he is filled in as to what has occurred so far.

Furthermore, even though we were uncertain as to the location of the first meeting, this second meeting clearly takes place at the public courthouse (which is the gates of the city).

Genesis 23:11 ..."No, my lord, hear me. I give you the field, and the cave that is in it I give to you. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead."

Whereas, when we buy a house, we often offer a low price whereas the seller has listed a slightly high price. Our negotiations are such that, the seller comes down in price and we come up in price until we find a meeting place. These negotiations are exactly the opposite. Ephron shows up to this meeting and he tries to give this piece of land to Abraham for free. In fact, he says, "I will give you both the field and the cave which is in it. This will be at no cost to you. I cannot charge your for this. Bury your dead."

Genesis 23:12 And Abraham bowed before the people of the land.

Again, Abraham shows deference to these people. It very well could be that this was his way of indicating that he had something to say to them.

Lesson 258: Genesis 23:1–18 Abraham Purchases a Burial Place for Sarah

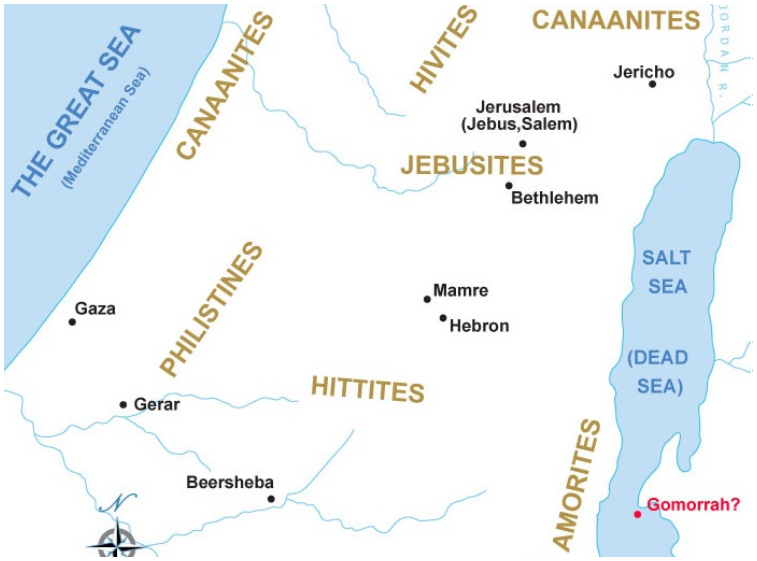
Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen. 23:1–12 And Sarah lived to be 127. When Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (later known as Hebron) in the land of Canaan, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her. Abraham rose up from over his deceased wife's body, (and then went to the Hittites) and said to them: "I am an immigrant in your territory lacking property rights. Nevertheless, sell me a plot of land for a grave that I may bury my wife there, away from my sight." The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying, "Listen, my lord, you are a prince of God in our midst. Please bury your dead in the choicest of our grave sites. There is no man among us who would withhold from you his grave site for the purpose of burying your wife." Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down before the people of the land, the sons of Heth. Then Abraham spoke with them, saying, "If you are willing to allow me to bury my wife here, then urge Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he will sell me his cave called Machpelah, which is at the end of his property line. I will pay him the full price in your presence so that I might take possession of this as a burial site." All this time, Ephron was sitting out in the crowd of Hittites, so he answered Abraham so that all the Hittites there as well as those entering the city, could hear him. He said, "No, my lord; please hear me out. I will give the field to you. I will give the cave, which is in the field, to you. In the sight of my people, I have given the cave and the field to you. Go and please bury your dead." Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. And he spoke to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land, saying, "Listen, I will give you the silver for your field; please take it so that I may bury my wife's body there."

Abraham's wife has died, and he wants to bury her in a place that he does not see daily. Abraham has chosen a plot of ground where he does not spend most of his time (which appears to be Hebron). He has a place which he has picked out, suggesting that he has given this some thought, probably over a period of time prior to Sarah's death. There is

this cave in a forested area where Abraham would like to bury his wife, on Hittite land, near Mamre (v. 17).

It is clear that Moses has a wonderful relationship with these Hittites and that they view him as a man of God.



Map of Hebron and Mamre. Hebron and Mamre are close to one another, as this map reveals. The map is from Bible-history.com, accessed October 2, 2013.

At this point, we are in the midst of the negotiations about this cave.

As we have seen, this is much different than the way people negociate today. The owner of the land attempts to give the land to Abraham for free, and Abraham insists on paying a fair market price for the land. The seller starts at the lowest possible price (free) and it is up to the buyer to persuade the seller to take a fair market price for the land.

Genesis 23:13 And he spoke to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying, "Only if you would hear me. I will give you silver for the field. Take it from me, and I will bury my dead there."

What is going on is public negotiations at the city gate. They will come to an agreement, and much of this city will know of the agreement which has been made. They will know that land which is conveyed and the price which has been negotiated. All of these people are witnesses to the negotiated price.

"Listen," says Abraham, "I have silver and I am more than willing to give you a fair price. I cannot take this land from you without paying."

Application: This records the way that Abraham and Ephron transacted business, and therefore reflects the norms and standards of their day. This does not mean that this ought to be the way that we must handle our transactions. However, it should be noted that, it is not necessary that you always win; it is not necessary that you believe that you have negotiated the lowest price by far from the seller (or that you have gotten the highest price that you can from a buyer). Our time here on earth is quite limited; we will live here 60–90 years and then we will leave this place. We are to be witnesses for Jesus Christ, so where it is reasonable to be frugal with your money and to invest wisely and give generously; this does not mean that you ought to squeeze out the cheapest price that you can in every transaction that you are involved in (if you are the buyer). Always bear in mind that you are

here on earth for a very brief time, and having to win in a financial transaction time-after-time is not always a good Christian witness. Since I have been involved in the buying and selling of many houses, I suggest that you ask yourself this: *can I sit across the table from the people with whom I've just done business and sit down as friends and leave as friends?* Or, to put it another, are they going to stare across the table at you at closing, and think, "That sonuvabitch took me for every single cent he thought he could take." If you see this person in the future—say you bump into them on the street—will they be happy to see you? Will they be glad that you transacted business together? Now, I realize that in the United States, it seems that almost everything is a business deal, and we have been trained, most of us, the get the very best deal that we possibly can, and that is a normal, cultural trait. Just do not do this at the expense of the people on the other side of the deal. Don't come to an agreement where they will remember you for months or years and think, "That lousy so-and-so; I hope we never transact business again."

Application: There are many professions where you act on behalf of someone else, and it is your job, in many cases, to get the best deal that you can. Again, I think of this like a real estate agent, but it certainly has other applications. Will the other realtor that you interact with, will they hope to interact with you again? When you call them on the phone a month later and say, "I've got a buyer for your property," will they think to themselves, "Oh, no, I have to work with Charlie Brown again!" Or do you have a reputation of doing your job and being honest and forthright, yet without violating your fiduciary relationship with the person you represent?

Application: In whatever business deal you are involved with, with whomever you have to deal, you should be honest and professional, without cutting corners and without misrepresenting yourself or your client. A lawyer will find himself in a variety of adversarial relationships—but will everyone hate you when it is all over? When you collect your commission, how will all the parties involved view you? Obviously, there are times and transactions where there is nothing you can say or do to make it easier—that these two parties hate one another and will do so until their dying day. That is when you need a lot of Bible doctrine and divine guidance to do that which is right and pleasing to God. Obviously, in this world, you cannot right every wrong, or bring together recalcitrant parties.

Application: There is a right time and a wrong time to communicate your thoughts. I recall one transaction where I apologized to the opposite side for the behavior of my clients, and I was wrong to do so (and I stupidly did this when my clients were right there). You will, from time to time, have to represent people that you lose your respect for. Still, you handle the transaction professionally. You might say to the other side, privately, "Look, this is the offer they are coming back with; they seem to be intransigent about this. I believe that the terms which your clients offered were fair and reasonable, but the people I represent do not. Here is their counter-offer, and, as you know, I am obligated in my profession to make this offer."

Application: And no matter where you are in this or that deal, it is not important that you have squeezed the very last dime out of that deal, or that you took the opposing party to the breaking point without quite getting there. Life is not always about money—in fact, it

is not about money at all. Life is about doing that which God approves while being filled with the Holy Spirit. And let's say that you have come to a point with someone who represents you or that you represent, and you do not like where this transaction is going, then you break free of the transaction while maintaining a fiduciary relationship to whom it is due. If there are laws, rules and customs, you must follow these, but with the idea that Jesus Christ is guiding you through the transaction.

Application: Quite obviously, you do not transact every business deal to pay the highest price or to be taken to the cleaners each and every time. You should be honest and act with personal integrity.

Application: I recently concluded a real estate transaction which was very beneficial to me. There were several points in the negotiations where things may have fallen apart, where I could have allowed pride and my natural hard-headedness to take over. Had I done that, this property would not have become mine. When involved in any sort of a business negotiation, the believer needs to remain filled with the Spirit. It is not wrong to engage in business transactions; it is not wrong to act in your own best interest. But it is wrong to be dishonest; and often it is wrong to be surly.

Genesis 23:14–15 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, listen to me. The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that between me and you? Now, bury your dead."

At this point, Ephron gives Abraham the price he is willing to accept for the land.

"Here is what the land is worth, but that is nothing in the light of our friendship." is essentially what Ephron is saying.

Note that Ephron has politely laid out the price that he is willing to take. The phrase "What is that between me and you?" appears to mean, "This is what I would charge someone else, but how can I take any money from you?" Or it may mean, "What is this small amount of money and this little piece of land between me and you?" I believe that is the sense of what Ephron is saying.

In any case, Abraham does not say, "You will give it to me for nothing? Gee, thanks; I really mean that." It is understood from the beginning that Abraham would pay something for the land, and that would be a fair market value. Abraham is not trying to get this land for the cheapest price possible, nor is Ephron trying to get top dollar for his property, seeing the state of mind that Abraham is in. The approach that they took to get to that place is obviously a matter of their culture.

Genesis 23:16 And Abraham listened to Ephron. And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, which passes with the merchant.

Abraham now measures out 400 shekels of silver. Some translators put this at 10 lbs of silver. Spot silver today is around $20/oz., so that would make this transaction around $3200, which, for an unimproved plot of land, is not out of line with today's prices. This sounds like a fairly large piece of property which includes a cave and trees.

You will take note that all of this bargaining is taking place in public. Everyone at this public meeting will know the agreed-to price and all of the terms of this transaction. They will know the location of the property, the boundaries of the property, the amount offered for the property, and the amount given for the property. So, they may or may not have recorded an official deed with a survey as we do today. But, there are enough people present at this meeting to witness the entire transaction.

It should also be noticed that Abraham could show up to this meeting of Hittites with a hand full of silver, and not feel concerned that he might be robbed. More than likely, there is a third meeting where this transaction is consummated. This would be witnessed to by many of the elders of the city.

As an aside, it ought to be apparent that, in the ancient world, it was not easy for a person to make his way through life. Working from sunrise to sunset appears to be the norm in order to eek out a living. But, on the other hand, we appear to have all of these people gathered here at the city gates witnessing a land transaction. So, what gives? Here is what I believe explains this. As a person becomes older, they gain both wisdom and resources. If you have lived your life well, then at age 60, you have far more than you had back at age 30. At age 60, you are able to slow down your life somewhat. Now, I do not recommend to retire at age 60 or 65 or even at age 70. God put us on earth, in part, to work; and working is honorable and healthy. I don't recall the Bible saying anything about retirement.

We will study Abraham and one of his servants in Gen. 24, and it will become apparent that most of Abraham's day-to-day operations are under the control of this head servant—he oversees much of what Abraham has and he appears to be more closely involved in Abraham's businesses than Abraham himself.

So, there is a point where you are able to cut back. A person in the ancient world who is nearing old age may have more slaves or more employees; and/or is able to cut back on his own working hours. Some of these elders, apparently (and this was a cultural thing) made it a point to go to the city gates to act as witnesses or to even offer opinions and testimony regarding the legal transactions which might take place on that day. This would be in service to their own community; and they would have more flexible hours so that this can be done. Think of it as akin to a voluntary jury duty. They were witnesses more than they were a jury, but it is the same principle.

Although this is simply a cultural norm, how could we apply this to today? I would suggest that jury duty draw disproportionately from an older group of people. That is, a 60 year-old might be called upon once or twice a year to serve on a jury; whereas a 30 year-old might

be called upon once every 2 or 3 years. Ideally speaking, the 60 year-old has more free time and greater wisdom upon which to base a verdict.

Genesis 23:17–18 And the field of Ephron was certified, which was Machpelah, which was before Mamre; the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees in the field, in all the borders round about, to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

The exact boundaries of this land sale are determined. Furthermore, this was done in front of many witnesses, so all know the cost of the land and the boundaries of the land. That is the exchange which takes place.

The verb translated *certified* above is the Hebrew word qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow*. Remember in v. 3 when Abraham *stood up,* and I suggested that he was going to involve himself in a purposeful action? It is the same word. Strong's #6965 BDB #877.

This is how business was done in the ancient world. There may have been a land deed written out, but all of this was done before witnesses of that area, so that they all knew the terms of the sale as well as the new owner of this piece of property. It sounds, from the description as if this is a fair sized piece of land—there is a cave, and field in which the cave sits, and there are trees in this field. It would not be surprising to me if this were an acre of land or more for Sarah's burial place.

In our transactions of property transferral today, we have a very similar situation. Because of the more complex legalities when dealing with a piece of property, a neutral 3rd party usually handles the transaction. This is usually a title company which researches the property to make certain that the seller can sell this piece of property unencumbered by liens to a buyer willing to pay an agreed upon price; and that the people signing the paperwork are actually that seller and that buyer. In a town meeting, as Abraham attended, if there was a lien on Ephron's property, the lien-holder would have stood up and said, "But you borrowed 5 lbs. of silver from me, and put up that piece of land as collateral for the loan." However, this property was apparently free of all liens against it.

Genesis 23:19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave at the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.

Now, in case you are particularly morbid and are wondering about the body of Sarah and its state, as she has no doubt been lying in state for several days to possibly a few weeks; you can rest assured that her body was preserved by spices and linen, to retard the purification and to mask the smell.

After the land transaction occurred, then Abraham laid the body of his wife to rest in this cave. The whole idea here, I believe is, that she will just sit up from her place for the resurrection (as will Abraham, as they are laid to rest in the same cave—Gen. 25:9).

Genesis 23:20 And the field, and the cave that is in it, were certified to Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the sons of Heth.

It sounds, by this translation, that there was a record made of this transaction, and it is possible that copies were made of the transaction. This is again the Qal imperfect of qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means, *to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow*. There is nothing in this word which indicates that something was actually written down. Strong's #6965 BDB #877. There are witnesses present; the land area completely described; the sale price is agreed upon, and the parties to this sale are specified. The idea is that, at least for the lifetimes of these people, this sale is final, and all of the details of the sale are witnessed to.

> Robbie Dean: *When Abraham dies the only land that he possesses is this grave site. There is this emphasis on death throughout this chapter. In fact, the word is used about eight or nine times in the chapter, and that is a reminder to us that where we are today is not where God is taking us. And we are still living in the devil's world, a fallen environment, and our orientation needs to be, as the writer of Hebrews says, on the future destiny that God has for us; that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth*.[91]

Lessons 259–261: Genesis 24:1–67 — A Wife for Isaac

This is a long and fairly repetitive chapter. For that reason, we will cover all of this in one lesson. Because of the length of this lesson, you may want to take it in over a period of 2–4 readings.

Gen. 24 is all about Abraham sending his servant back to Charan (Haran) to find a wife for his son Isaac. We have seen very little of Isaac's life so far. Isaac was born (most of Gen. 21); there is some information about Ishmael, Isaac's half-brother; there is a dispute over possession of a well (the latter portion of Gen. 21); God has Abraham offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22), and Sarah (Abraham's wife and Isaac's mother) dies (Gen. 23). So, nearly no time at all has been devoted to anything about Isaac's life until now.

It is quite fascinating that so many verses are given to this incident in Isaac's life compared to the amount of text given to Isaac's life overall. As I have asserted on many occasions, the book of Genesis was not written by Moses, but by those who actually experienced these incidents. No doubt Rebekah (Rebecca) was the most important aspect of Isaac's life, after God and the promises to Abraham; therefore, it is not unreasonable that this should occupy a great deal of narrative.

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[91] From Dean's Notes, accessed September 30, 2013.

Further, what we should gather here is how much God works behind the scenes. We have no idea what occurred that day, or how it came about that Rebekah (Rebecca), Isaac's right women, was the one to come to Abraham's servant and fulfill what he had requested to God in prayer—well, we have no idea, but, hopefully, in heaven, we will find out what occurred behind the scenes as well. How many young women came out to draw water from the fountain of water at that time of the day, just as Rebekah did? 20? 100? Yet she is the one with whom Abraham's servant will meet and speak to. Where were the other women when Abraham's servant comes to this place?

One of the things which is striking about this narrative is the repetition of the narrative as well as the point-of-view of this narrative. It seems as though most or all of this story is seen from the eyes of the servant of Abraham; but as it comes across as if this were a bedtime story (a bedtime story does not have to be fiction). What seems most likely to me is that this story was told to Jacob and Esau when they were infants and very young children, before they dropped off to sleep. The story-teller would have been Rebekah's nurse or Rebekah or even Abraham's servant.

This story has many of the characteristics that we would expect to find in a bedtime story. It is fairly simple. It is long enough so that the children would drop off to sleep long before the story is over. The story could be adapted for a family gathering, where it could be expanded upon. And a great deal of this story is repetitive. This is a very different style of writing than we find in previous chapters or in later chapters. For this reason, this narrative is unique in the book of Genesis.

In my estimation, this narrative is either spoken by the servant who is at the center of this narrative, or it is based upon his account of this story. It would not surprise me that this servant also repeated this story on several occasions—this story could have been spoken at family gatherings or, as I suggested, given as a bedtime story for Jacob and Esau, the twins which Rebekah will bear to Isaac.

This chapter is not an analogy or a parable, but a true story. There is nothing in this chapter to make us doubt the veracity of this narrative.

Genesis 24:1 And Abraham was old, going on in age. And Jehovah had blessed Abraham in all things.

Abraham is said to be old. Isaac will marry at age 40. The things which take place in this chapter of Genesis might take a year or two. So Abraham would be about 139 at this time and he will live to be 175.

Abraham is the ideal for all Jews and all believers. He was faithful to God; he believed God; and he did what God asked him to do. God also blessed Abraham greatly.

There are always Satanic and political forces at work, and, if you go to any website with far left leanings, they will both denigrate the Bible but they will very likely, at some point, speak of the rich young ruler, to whom Jesus said, "Sell everything, give the proceeds to

the poor and follow Me." Liberals only know a few passages of Scripture, and this is always one of them. They love that passage. Liberals seem to think that Jesus went around to rich guys all the time and told them to give away all that they had. To them, that is the central message of Jesus, and they attempt to parlay that into higher taxes for the rich, as if it is the government which represents the poor and as if that was the theme of Jesus ministry.

When it comes to Scripture, on many occasions, socialists and communists have found out that the approach, "The Bible is wrong and we are right" does not work very well. When they took this approach, they were stymied on many occasions. The people were not with them. So their other approach has been to coop the Bible—find a few things in the Bible which appear to support their position, and push those things, as if they are central to the message of the Bible. When people do not know much about the Bible, but believe in it, this has the potential to sway them to some degree.

People who run such websites have no interest in Who Jesus is, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the cross, or anything like that. In fact, they will, out of the other side of their mouth, denigrate Scripture and some of the things which they find in the Bible.

Whereas, socialism and communism took power in the 20th century through violent revolution, they have found that it is hard to sell this ideology when their greatest leaders are also the greatest mass murderers from the 20th century (Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse Tung). They have found that massive control by government can also be accomplished by democratic elections and piecemeal taking of power, by making promises to the largest number of people (the 99%; the middle class), which is very much a war of propaganda. Christians are often the most difficult people to get on board with their utopian society, so this is done by distorting Scripture. I have been to many politically liberal websites where they can expound on Jesus and the rich young ruler and they can tell you how many times God talks about the poor in the Bible, and they can make a very compelling case that God is all about taking care of the poor. But the end game is to get more money and more power in the hands of a few autocrats, who, ostensibly, have the best interests of the poor at heart.

And all of this is based upon a great lust for power and money in the hearts of some men. That will always be a part of politics and of government. They will talk about the poor, the middle class, about income inequality, global warming, but, when all is said and done, they simply want to convince a population that more money and more power needs to flow from the people to the government. This is why the solution to global warming is, more taxes and more government power. This is why the solution to poverty is, more taxes and more government power. And this is sold on television, in the movies, in newscasts, in newspapers, and, of course, in schools.

And why do they attack the rich? There are fewer rich; it is easy to make poor people jealous of their wealth; and money represents power and influence—and politicians want this power and influence. Most of them do not want to share it.

I realize that there are times when this examination of the Bible seems to be a little too political. Satan uses politics and Satan distorts Scripture. Most people only understand one side of Satan, this he is this vicious being who brings great harm to millions of people. But that is only one side of Satan. Satan would also like to establish "heaven on earth" (although that would not be how he would phrase it). Satan is a utopian. This is why there are so many ideologues who have this fantasy of establishing a perfect society (which is what socialism and communist are, besides being ideologies used to grab power and money). This ideal society is Satanic evil. Attempts to establish a human paradise is not of God, but of Satan. The Millennium, where Jesus rules, will feature perfect environment, but, more prominently, will feature perfect justice and righteousness. A utopian nation under Satan is not about justice and righteousness. It is all about power and control. It is not about removing income inequality—it is about removing the money (and therefore the power) of their political and social enemies (aka, those who will not go along with their programs).

You may wonder, *where are you going with this?* So, let's go back to our narrative. Abraham is a very rich man and God *never* comes to him and says, "You know what, Abraham, you just have been blessed with too much material things; I need for you to sell your stuff and give it to the poor." Abraham, because of his riches, was able to employ a huge staff of people—in the hundreds. Probably most of these men were slaves, but slavery in those days was much different than the slavery which we practiced in the United States (and different from how it is practiced in most places).

Slaves generally came from two places: extreme poverty, which required them to sell themselves into slavery (or their parents sold them into slavery); and from victories in war. When a country was conquered, sometimes its people would be taken in slavery (and sometimes they would be left in their land to pay tribute to those who conquered them).

At no time did God come to Abraham and say, "You make way too much money, and your slaves make only a small percentage of what you make. There is far too much of an income gap here. You need to spread your wealth around." God never told Abraham that; and God never told that to any man who was wealthy and owned slaves (with the exception of the rich young ruler, but that is a whole different story with a very specific context, which is unknown to the liberals who speak of Jesus and the rich young ruler in reverent terms[92]).

A part of what Abraham did was, he provided for his slaves. They had food, shelter and clothing provided, and this was his responsibility. I have seen liberals protest a variety of *fast-food* restaurants because they did not pay a living wage. In slavery, a good slave owner *had to pay a living wage*. He may not have paid his slaves, but he had to provide for all of their needs. *That* turns out to be, if my calculator is accurate, *a living wage*.

In this dispensation, we are slaves of Jesus Christ. As we grow spiritually and act as His slaves, then He is obligated to make certain that our basic necessities are provided for. We are all in full-time Christian service, and this may take a variety of forms (a believer is

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[92] They do not speak of much else in the Bible in reverent terms, however.

not confined to only being a preacher, an evangelist or a missionary); and God has promised to take care of our basic needs (however, this does not mean that we get to quit our jobs).

Genesis 24:2 And Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "I pray you, put your hand under my thigh.

You will note how Abraham treated his most faithful servant. This man ruled over all that Abraham had. He controlled Abraham's wealth and he was a faithful steward to Abraham. Because he had been faithful to Abraham in so many things, Abraham had given him great responsibilities.

Here, Abraham is going to give this servant (slave) one of the most solemn responsibilities of his life—he is going to send this servant out to find a wife for Isaac.

This begins with the servant taking a vow to Abraham.

Genesis 24:3 And I will make you swear by Jehovah, the God of Heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell.

The servants to Abraham were believers as well. They all believed in the God of Abraham, the Revealed Lord. Therefore, swearing an oath before this God is meaningful.

It is time for Isaac to have a wife—he has shown himself to be responsible and able to take the responsibility of caring for a wife.

The reference to *Canaanites* was very much a geographical reference. Abraham lived in the land of Canaan, along with many other peoples. However, here, they are referred to as *Canaanites,* not because they were all descended from Canaan, but because they all lived in the land of Canaan. Often, this was a blanket term given to the disparate groups of peoples living in Canaan.

Genesis 24:4 But you will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife to my son Isaac."

Abraham had originally come from the fertile crescent; that land through which two rivers ran: the Tigris and the Euphrates. We do not think of this land as being fertile, but, at one time, it was beautiful and lush (not as nice as the land of Canaan, but it was not then the desert that it is today).

We discussed this earlier. This is where Noah and his descendants were after the flood, in the mountains to the east and north of the fertile crescent. If the water from the flood is drying up, and the Tigris and the Euphrates are roaring rivers, this would be a very fertile area indeed. It would look nothing like it does today; and the same can be said for the land of Canaan, which was even more lush in this period of time.

Abraham still has family in that area of the fertile crescent. It appears that many of them, either with Abraham or at a later time, moved out to Haran (Charan). We do not find this out in Gen. 24, but in Gen. 27:43 and 28:10. This appears to be the country to which Abraham is referring, even though he was originally brought up in Ur of the Chaldees.

Finding a woman with the proper breeding is something which has been a part of human history, going back to at least this time and before. One of the themes of *Downton Abbey* is finding proper marriage partners, and when one goes outside of her station in life, there is great concern.

Genesis 24:4 But you will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife to my son Isaac."

You will notice what is on Abraham's mind. He does not talk to his servant about a better wealth redistribution. He does not discuss whether or not his slaves ought to be able to unionize. Abraham is concerned that his son Isaac has a wife; and Abraham does not want the heathen influences of the women in their general area.

We have studied already that many people in Canaan worship the same God that Abraham does; but there were obviously some distortions which were seeping into their practice of Y^{e}howah worship. Abraham believed that there was a purer form taught to him and his family (by a *more purer form,* I mean an understanding which is more doctrinally accurate). Abraham does not ever say, "Find a Canaanite woman who believes in Y^{e}howah; if she believes in Y^{e}howah and Isaac believes in Y^{e}howah, then it's all good."

Let me also point out that, in all of this, God allows for us to live a normal life here on earth, which includes a family and work. Although some people function without these things, both are generally a part of every person's life; and it is God's plan for family and work to be great blessings to all men. Although there are a few people who appear to be involved in God's work for most of their working hours, that is not necessary for all people, despite the fact that all believers are in full-time Christian service. God gives us time to live a normal life. God does not deny us marriage or family or good food or work—things which take up a great deal of time. But God expects for us to have balance and priorities in our life; and, for most people, this means an hour of Bible teaching a day (which is your bulwark against human viewpoint thinking, which surrounds you and envelops you for the rest of your waking hours). That hour of Bible teaching provides you divine viewpoint and guidance. The more doctrine that you have in your soul, the less difficulty that you will have with divine guidance.

Abraham is going to send his servant back east to speak with Abraham's family members to bring back a wife for Isaac. The servant is logical and has a few concerns.

Genesis 24:5 And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I necessarily bring your son again to the land from which you came?"

This servant is quite logical. He is going to go a very long distance and speak to people whom he has never met before. They don't know him from Adam.

The servant did not have an array of photographs of Isaac to take with him. He did not carry an ipad filled with high resolution photos of Isaac growing up. He is going to go to meet a family of strangers and try to talk one of their daughters into coming back with him on a long journey to meet someone she has never seen before. "Better I should take Isaac along, so she can look over the goods first," is what he is saying.

Notice how cleverly the servant puts it. He is going to make this great journey and what if the family says, "You want us to send our daughter all the way to Canaan to meet someone, and without even seeing photos of him on your ipad?" So he asks, "On the second trip, that's when I take Isaac along?" But that isn't really what he is asking. By asking if he should be prepared to take Isaac for the second trip, the servant is implying, "Look, this is silly, me traveling all of that distance without taking the bridegroom with me. Why don't I save us a lot of trouble and take Isaac with me the first time?" This is what he means, even though this is not what he says. The servant cannot say to Abraham, "Look, this is a good idea, BUT,..." and then tell him how it ought to be done. So, he talks about a second trip, after he is rebuffed by the young woman's family on the first.

To the servant, this makes a lot more sense to let the future wife and her family actually meet the bridegroom. Interestingly enough, even though this seems logical, this is not Abraham's plan and it is not God's plan.

Application: There are times in your life when you will make a decision in accordance with God's will which profoundly affects your life, but a decision where you have no way of knowing the repercussions of that decision. Moving, changing jobs, getting married—these are big life-changing decisions. Quite obviously, most of the things which will result from such decisions are not known to us up front. However, if we are in God's will, then we can be assured that He has worked out all of these future details. This thing for Isaac and Rebekah—they have never met before, and yet they will marry, based on a handful of decisions made by Abraham and his servant. The greatest blessing of Isaac's life, apart from God, will be Rebekah.

Genesis 24:6 And Abraham said to him, "Take care that you do not bring my son there again.

Abraham gives the servant an unequivocal *no*. Abraham does not want to take this chance. God has given him the land upon which he stands, and this will be passed down to Isaac and to his descendants. Abraham does not want to confuse the issue. Abraham stands where he stands based upon the promises of God.

Remember, Abraham left the land to go to Egypt because of a drought, and there were all kinds of problems which occurred because of that. Furthermore, God did not tell Abraham, "Look, why don't you send Isaac to Charan to get himself a wife." Therefore, the servant goes to Charan; Isaac does not. Abraham will trust God to work out the details.

Genesis 24:7 Jehovah, the God of Heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and Who spoke to me, and Who swore to me, saying, 'To your seed I will give this land;' He will send His angel (Angel?) before you. And you will take a wife to my son from there.

Abraham's seed is Isaac, and the land is passed on to him. So, logically, Isaac stays on the land which God has given him. God would prepare the way for Abraham's servant.

God has set aside the land of Canaan for Abraham and his seed. God will take care of the details in the east when it comes to finding a wife for Isaac. Just as God sent an angel before Abraham to prepare the land for him; God will send an angel before Abraham's servant, to prepare the heart of his future bride.

As an aside, we do not know the exact mechanics of this. How exactly do angels work? What do they do in preparing the way for Abraham's servant? How do Satan and his demons work? Just exactly how are they allowed to obstruct the plan of God. None of this is clearly laid out. The most information we have ever received about this topic was in Gen. 19, where angels to into Sodom and fetch Lot and his family (Job 1–2 also give us an idea). In Gen. 19, Lot and his family can obviously see and touch these angels (remember, the angels grab the members of Lot's family and literally pull them along to get them out of there). But, as for the rest of it, we have no idea. What exactly was done to bring a rain of burning sulphur upon Sodom, we don't know. Similarly, we do not know how angels will prepare the way for this servant to run into Rebekah. We are simply told that this is done.

Genesis 24:8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow you, then you will be clear from this oath of mine. Only do not bring my son there again."

The servant is concerned that he will not be able to convince any woman to come back with him, and this is a reasonable concern. Abraham tells the servant that he is freed from his oath if that is the case.

Why is Abraham so adamant about this? He has learned, by experience, that God has a geographical place where He wants us. For Abraham, that is the land of Canaan. For his son, who will inherit all that he has, that is the land of Canaan. Isaac's future wife will be brought to him.

In a later chapter, Jacob, Isaac's son, himself will leave the Land of Promise and go to the east to find this same family and to find a bride for himself. Because of this, he will be out of the Land of Promise for 14+ years.

So Abraham stepped out of the land of Canaan once, and that was a bad idea. Therefore, he will make certain that will not be the case for Isaac.

Why is Abraham so certain about this angel thing? Insofar as we know, God has not come to him and said, "Look, you need to get Isaac a bride. I've got a couple of angels preparing

the way for your servant to go to Charan." The deal is, Abraham knows that all of his promises are fulfilled through his genealogical line. Therefore, Isaac need to have children; and therefore, Isaac needs a wife. So, of course God is going to provide for him in this way.

Genesis 24:9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning the matter.

This is agreeable to the servant and he swears to Abraham to do what has been asked of him.

A lot has been made out of this hand under the thigh stuff—details I have no interest in delving into. However, throughout Scripture, we have a mixture of God's norms and standards and cultural norms and standards. Whatever occurred here was simply a way that men took oaths back in that day. It was certainly not some act of perversion, but simply a way of indicating that two men have come to an agreement on something. Today, we would lay out a deal and shake hands to seal the deal. Or, more likely, sign a long contract to seal the deal.

Genesis 24:10 And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed. For all the goods of his master were in his hand. And he arose, and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor.

The servant will travel with several other servants and ten camels, and they will be loaded down with presents (although we are not told this here). It appears that he will travel with 10 camels, half of which are carrying presents for his master's family in Charan.

Mesopotamia means *region between the two rivers*. This is actually much of the land which is watered by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. It includes Ur, which is close to where these rivers meet in the east; and Haran, which is on the west side of these rivers. This is a huge area which includes most of modern-day Iran and a piece of modern-day Syria.

The *city of Nahor* refers to the place where Nahor settled along with his family.

V. 10 covers a great deal of planning, gathering of presents, getting together some trustworthy servants, and then they will all travel several weeks, if not months, to get to Charan.

Nothing about the actual trip to Charan or back will be covered in this narrative.

Genesis 24:11 And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, the time that women go out to draw.

Everything we read from this point on would only be known to the servant. The repetitive nature of this narrative suggests a different author than what is found elsewhere in the

book of Genesis. Therefore, it makes sense that the servant recorded this information. That does not mean that he wrote it down, but that he retained this narrative in his head, or one of the younger servants, probably told this to Jacob and Esau as they were growing up. As mentioned before, this is the perfect bedtime story.

During his ride east, the servant, no doubt, made plans as to how to approach this matter. It was common, in that era, for the young women still living at home to draw water from whatever water source there was for a city. Therefore, the servant believed that would be the perfect place to meet young, unmarried women. The undeclared singles bar of that era was a little watering hole outside of town, know as *the well*. This was the place to go to meet unattached, available women.

Genesis 24:12 He prayed, "Y^{e}howah, the God of my lord, Abraham, please cause me to meet a woman today [for Isaac], and by this, You will manufacture grace toward my lord, Abraham.

The servant, obviously a man who believes in the Revealed Lord, prays to Him. He tells God that, by bringing a woman to him for Isaac, that God will be making grace for Abraham. Therefore, we know that this servant has not only believed in the Revealed Lord, but he understands some doctrinal principles.

Bear in mind, this man is a slave, and he has a great deal of wealth with him right now, and he is far, far away from his master Abraham. And yet he is completely faithful to Abraham and to his mission.

Genesis 24:13 Behold, I stand by the well of water. And the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water.

This very much sounds like a prayer that was spoken aloud—so that the servants who traveled with him could hear this prayer—although we do not know that for certain. The term *daughters of men* refers to young, marriageable women still living at home, performing one of the more mundane tasks of the ancient world of transporting water.

Genesis 24:14 And let it be that the young woman to whom I will say, 'Let down your pitcher, please, so that I may drink;' and she will say, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.' Let her be the one that You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by it I will know that You have shown grace to my master."

The servant determines a test. He will speak to one of these young women and ask for a drink. If she provides water for him and also offers water for his camels, then he will know this is the woman for Isaac. This would suggest that she is a kind and thoughtful young woman who notices the situations of others, and responds kindly to strangers.

So that there is no misunderstanding, this was a prayer delivered back in a day before all of God's Word had been revealed. A young single Christian male today does not pray, "When I go to the Kroger for my groceries, I pray that I will meet a woman wearing a yellow

dress and she will have several produce items in her cart. And that will be the woman I will marry." What the servant prayed then, in an era before God had revealed *everything* that we need to know, was a legitimate prayer. In the era that we live in, where all of God's Word has been revealed to us, the key to guidance is the Bible doctrine which is in our heads. We fill our brains with God's Word, and God's Word guides us. We still pray, of course, but more often for God's Word to be done and for us to recognize it and go with it. You may personally like the servant's approach more, because it is sort of mystical. But all of that was because of God's relationship with Abraham which was based still on Abraham's faith in God.

Having been a believer for a little over 40 years now, I can testify that figuring out God's will is not very difficult. I have had to make a few big decisions and millions of small decisions, and knowing God's Word has made determining God's will fairly simple. It is not a lack of knowledge which has ever held me back; but bad decisions which I have made when not filled with the Holy Spirit (and I don't mean in some mystical sort of way where I can feel it). It really is not difficult to figure out what is right and wrong, and what you ought to do at any given time, when you know God's Word.

Genesis 24:15 And before he had finished speaking, it happened, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

Abraham has a brother, Nahor, who is likely deceased by this time. His wife's name is Milcah, and she has 8 sons, one of whom is Bethuel. He has a daughter named Rebekah, and she is the one who will marry Isaac. So Isaac, born very late in Abraham's life, will marry the granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother. It appears that she is the daughter of Nahor's youngest son (in the cluster genealogy, he is named last).

Genesis 24:16 And the young woman was very beautiful to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her. And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

The servant can tell, at this point, that this young women is very beautiful. He obviously cannot tell whether or not she is a virgin; but this is information which he comes to know subsequently.

Genesis 24:17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, "Please let me drink a little water of your pitcher."

The servant senses that this is the woman that God is leading him to speak with, so he requests a drink of water. We have no idea if she is the only woman at the well or if there are dozens of young women there.

Genesis 24:18 And she said, "Drink, my lord." And she hurried and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave a drink to him.

This young woman hurries to oblige the stranger. So the servant knows immediately that she is kind and willing to go out of her way for others.

Bear in mind that Abraham's servant is not there alone, but off in the background are these ten camels which have next to them perhaps 4 or 5 other servants and lots of stuff.

Genesis 24:19 And when she had finished giving him drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking."

By this, we know that this young Rebekah is observant and will go out of her way to do a kindness to a stranger. The servant's plan seems to be brilliant. He knows by this that this is a woman of great character. She sees to the needs of others; she does not require any nudging by the servant to notice his camels.

Genesis 24:20 And she hurried, and emptied her pitcher in the trough, and ran again to the well to draw water. And she drew for all his camels.

Apparently near the well there is a trough for the animals so that they could drink. This trough is going to be far enough from the well water so that, when sloppy camels are drinking, the water won't run back down into the well. It also has to be in a level area easily accessible to camels. For this reason, someone would have to fill a jug, carry it a moderate distance, and then pour that water into the trough. So Rebekah is filling up her water jug, and then carrying it over to the trough and filling the trough. This is going to take several trips because there are 10 camels. I would guess 1–2 trips per camel.

Although nothing is said about this, it is likely that the woman offers water to the other servants as well.

I would assume that there are two possible things in play here. If the servant has a jug for fetching well water, it may be put out of sight. However, it is also possible that, a stranger cannot just go to the town well and get water for himself. Protocol may require some sort of permission, even if it is from a young woman like this. For all I know, there might even be a cultural protocol involving men and women and drawing water from a well. That is, if there is a woman around, then a man would not draw water for himself. I don't know this to be true; I am just saying that the servant standing there, asking the woman for water is probably not weirdly out of place in that social context.

Genesis 24:21 And the man was watching her, keeping silent, in order to know whether Jehovah had prospered his journey or not.

The servant still carefully observes this woman, probably in part, to see how she is when faced with this task. That is, does she fetch this water out of obligation; or does she appear to be a happy person as she goes about fetching this water for him. This woman is faced with a lot of extra work that she did not expect to do. How does she deal with this? Is she unhappy or put out? Or does she give no thought to such things?

I am sure that part of the servant's reason for concentration is, he cannot believe that he has found this woman for Isaac already. I am sure that you have prayed for something, and then were surprised that God answered that prayer with a resounding and sudden "yes." That does happen, you know.

Genesis 24:22 And it happened, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hand, weighing ten shekels of gold.

It is unclear how long this took. I have no idea how much camels drink or how far she is traveling from the well to the trough; or how far down the water is that she must fetch. My guess is, this took more than 20 minutes, but probably less than an hour or two.

What the servant gives to her is far more generous than the water which she has provided for him. He gives her golden jewelry. This is quite out of the ordinary to give such a gift to a stranger.

Genesis 24:23 And he said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there room in your father's house for us to stay?"

Now the servant begins to inquire about this young woman, as to her background and family, and if there is a place for him and his fellow servants to stay.

Because of this gift, the woman knows that this is not some homeless vagabond, but a man of substance. That is also quite evident, as he has several servants and camels with him. Rebekah may realize that this is more than simply a chance meeting and that he is more than this random guy who wants water.

Genesis 24:24 And she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor."

Nahor had a wife and a mistress, so his wife is mentioned in this brief family tree. The mention of her mother first suggests that Milcah had lived a long time beyond Nahor and was more well-known than Nahor.

Genesis 24:25 And she said to him, "We have both straw and fodder enough, and room to lodge in."

Even more than this servant could imagine was provided for him.

Application: I am sure that, throughout this narrative, you are thinking, *that is all very nice, but what does this have to do with me? When will we talk about me?* This is God's will and God's plan for the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah and this servant. God worked this all out. Remember, Abraham spoke of angels being sent before him and preparing the way. I know that you think of angels as floating around on clouds with harps, but they appear to take a more active part in our lives, even though their activities are unseen. We

do not know exactly what they do or how they act, but I tend to think of them as blockers on a football team, and they move a lot of obstacles out of our way. All this stuff that we are observing—things which are going to greatly impact the life of Isaac—are essentially done without Isaac lifting a finger. This does not mean that we, as believers, simply sit on a park bench and wait for crows to bring us food, but that there are a great many good things in this life that God provides. In fact, when God can bless us in the devil's world, this is a marvelous victory.

And this is something that we have studied in great detail? What does it take for God to bless us? Capacity for blessing; and capacity is built up with spiritual growth.

Genesis 24:26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshiped the Lord.

It is clear that this servant had faith in the same Revealed God as did Abraham. And the people in that era tended to be very demonstrative.

Genesis 24:27 And he said, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, Who has not left my master destitute of His grace and His truth. Jehovah led me, I being in the way to the house of my master's brothers."

Abraham's servant knew Abraham's family tree. When he heard those names given, they matched up with the family which he had memorized. Therefore, he expressed thanks to God for leading him as He did.

Also, note what this servant is thankful for: grace and truth (Bible doctrine). What comes after grace and truth? Y^{e}howah led me. God's will comes from His grace and truth.

Meanwhile, Rebekah runs to her home (you will notice that she does a lot of running in this chapter, indicating that this is a young woman with a great deal of energy).

Genesis 24:28 And the young woman ran and told her mother's house these things.

Rebekah runs ahead to seek permission. It is not up to her to determine which strangers can come and stay at their home.

Genesis 24:29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban. And Laban ran out to the man, to the well.

We will meet Laban twice in the Bible; once here as Rachel's brother, and then again, when Jacob comes to meet him to find a wife for himself.

Laban is a man who is impressed by wealth. When he saw what Rebekah was wearing, he ran quickly to meet the strangers at the well. They were obviously very important people.

Genesis 24:30 And it happened when he saw the earrings and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, “So spoke the man to me, he came to the man. And behold, he stood by the camels at the well.”

Laban certainly notices the jewelry that his sister is wearing and he runs to the well. Who knows what this stranger might give to him?

Genesis 24:31 And he said, “Come in, blessed of Jehovah. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.”

Actually, Laban has not done any of those things. He saw the jewelry and ran out to meet this man. However, undoubtedly before he left, he gave orders for these things to be taken care of.

Laban was motivated by personal wealth, and, no doubt, Rebekah described to him the number of camels and the number of men who were with Abraham’s servant, and possibly that there were a lot of things being carried by the camels. These sorts of things interested Laban.

When Rebekah acted, it was from the kindness of her heart. There is no suggestion that the servant said, “You get this water for me, and I have jewelry for you.” The servant merely asked for water and Rebekah provided it. However, her brother Laban is very likely trying to figure out a way that he might get in on some of this wealth being spread around.

Genesis 24:32 And the man came into the house. And he unloaded his camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men that were with him.

Although I have mentioned that Abraham’s servant traveled with a group of men, I believe that this is the first time that this is confirmed in this chapter.

There appears to be great hospitality afforded men who have traveled a great distance.

Genesis 24:33 And food was set before him to eat. But he said, “I will not eat until I have told my errand.” And he said, “Speak on.”

Either Laban or Bethuel tell him to speak.

This is interesting. This would have struck me as poor manners, to stop a meal to speak for awhile. The Hebrew suggests that this is exactly what the servant did. Usually, when there are a series of imperfect tenses separated by wâw consecutives, we are dealing with successive or coterminous actions. This actually reads, And so food is set before him...and so he [the servant] says...and so he [Laban or Bethuel] says. What is suggested here is, these things are done in that order.

My assumption would be that, there is a flurry of activity in preparing the meal, but, at this point, everyone has stopped, everyone is sitting down, so that the servant can address everyone. Prior to this, it might seem as if idle conversation, or conversation which might be missed by those who are busy in the preparation of the meal.

Genesis 24:34 And he said, "I am Abraham's servant.

I would assume that all of them know Abraham (he was known to them before as *Abram*). We see the genealogical line of this and that relation to Abraham, so that indicates that, from time to time, they either exchanged letters or someone visited or somehow, information about one family was conveyed to the other (we have already seen information on the genealogical line of Abraham's relatives). My point is, this is not just some random name being thrown out there, but the people there know who Abraham is and how they are all related.

Bethuel, for instance, is the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother. Therefore, Abraham is his uncle whom he has probably never met.

Genesis 24:35 And Jehovah has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great. And He has given him flocks and herds and silver and gold, and male slaves and slave women, and camels and asses.

They may not know how prosperous Abraham is. So the servant lays it out. He is very prosperous, and it is because God has greatly blessed him. There are no apologies for his wealth; there is no guilt for his wealth. The fact that Abraham has slaves is a sign of wealth, not some badge of shame (again, slavery practiced then is much different than slavery practiced in early American history—that sort of slavery was outlawed by Scripture).

Genesis 24:36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old. And Abraham has given his son [lit., *he has given to him*] all that he has.

Abraham essentially wills everything to Isaac, so Isaac is the heir to Abraham's great fortune.

It is quite likely that they all know more about Abraham than simply how they are related to him. They probably know of the unusual birth of his son, his possessions and his location. Information about their respective families was no doubt shared. And they all worship the same Revealed God.

Genesis 24:37 And my master made me swear, saying, 'You will not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live.

Abraham was very specific about the woman, and the servant here tells these people, so they understand why Isaac does not just marry some local girl of Canaan.

Genesis 24:38 But you will go to my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife to my son.'

You will note how repetitive that this is. We have already studied that Abraham said this; and now we are studying that the servant tells these people what Abraham said to him.

Genesis 24:39 And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.'

This seems a logical outcome, for a servant to show up out of nowhere, and say, "Let me take one of your women to someone she has never met to marry him." That might be somewhat difficult to sell that.

Genesis 24:40 And he said to me, 'Jehovah, before Whom I walk, will send His Angel with you, and prosper your way. And you will take a wife for my son from my kindred, and from my father's house.

Abraham had assured the servant that God would take care of everything and that He would send His Angel before him, to clear the path. The use of the 3rd person masculine singular suffix here suggests that this is Jesus Christ, in His preincarnate form, Who goes before the servant to prepare all things.

How does Abraham know this? God has made great promises to him and to his descendants through Isaac. This means that Isaac must have children (or at least one child) in order for these blessings to be passed along through him.

Genesis 24:41 Then will you be clear from my oath when you come to my kindred, and if they do not give you one, you will be clear from my oath.'

In v. 41, the servant continues with what Abraham said to him. The servant leaves out the part where Abraham firmly tells him not to take Isaac along with him.

Now this servant recounts to them the prayer which he had made.

Genesis 24:42 And I came this day to the well, and said, 'O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, if now You prosper my way in which I go,

The interrelationship between Abraham and his people and his God is presented as very natural. God revealed Himself to Abraham; and Abraham spoke to Him face to face.

Genesis 24:43 behold, I stand by the well of water. And it will be when the young girl comes forth to draw water, and I say to her, *Give me, please, a little water from your pitcher to drink,*

The word *young girl* above is ʿal^{e}mâh (הָמְלַע) [pronounced *ǵahl^{e}-MAW*], and it means *virgin; girl of marriageable age;* [possibly] *a newly married woman, a young woman*. Strong's #5959 BDB #761.

So the servant is speaking, and he is recounting his prayer to God, during which prayer he tells of what he will say to the young woman he might meet. So, not only do we have a quote within a quote within a quote, but all of this is spoken by the servant himself. The servant is still speaking to the family of Rebekah, and he is telling them what he prayed, and, as a part of his prayer, he has set up a test of sorts, for this young woman and what he would say to her.

Genesis 24:44 and she says to me, *Both you drink, and I will also draw for your camels,* may she be the woman whom Jehovah has appointed for my master's son.'

The servant prays that, he will meet a young woman and that she will give both him and his camels water to drink. That will indicate to him that he is speaking to the right woman.

And there had come Rebekah toward him and toward the spring.

Genesis 24:45 And before I finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. And she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'

The servant speaks to her just as he had planned. And she responds to him just as he had hoped. He has hoped that she would offer to give water to his camels. This is what he had been praying to God. This fulfills the promise of Isa. 65:24 "And it will be, before they call, I will answer. While they are speaking, then I will hear."

Genesis 24:46 And she hurried and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will give drink to your camels also. So I drank, and she made the camels drink also.'

Rebekah does exactly as the servant had prayed. She agrees to give him water and offers water for his camels.

Genesis 24:47 And I asked her and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' And I put the earring upon her nose and the bracelets upon her hands.

You will notice that this dinner conversation takes a good 5 or 10 minutes, as he lays everything out methodically.

Genesis 24:48 And I bowed my head and worshiped Jehovah, and blessed Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter to his son.

The servant tells them at dinner that he then bowed and thanked God for this answered prayer.

Genesis 24:49 And now if you will deal kindly and truthfully with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me so that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

And with v. 49, he throws it into the lap of his hosts. What do you think? Should I stay or should I go? Does Rebekah go with or no? So, the servant has put a lot on the table as well.

Genesis 24:50 And Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come forth from Jehovah. We cannot speak to you bad or good.

Both Bethuel and Laban speak; we are not told which person says what, but we are given a brief rundown here.

Probably Laban said, "This thing has come forth from Y^{e}howah, don't you think?" turning to his father, and his father says, "I agree, this is from Y^{e}howah. So it is not up to us to judge this as right or wrong."

Laban and his father Bethuel answer that, based upon what the servant has told him, this is all from the Lord. They cannot speak ill of it. They cannot say no, based upon what they have heard. So they give their sister (daughter) to the servant to take with him.

Genesis 24:51 Behold! Rebekah is before you; take her and go. And let her be the wife of your master's son, even as Jehovah has spoken."

Then one or both men give their approval to this arranged marriage (which was apparently quite common at one time). Notice that Rebekah is not consulted in this matter.

The servant again responds by praying to God.

Genesis 24:52 And it happened, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth to Jehovah, bowing himself to the earth.

This servant tends to be quite demonstrative, which appears to be common in the ancient world.

As tradition goes, the family of the bridegroom would shower gifts upon the family of the bride.

Genesis 24:53 And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.

The servant distributed many gifts throughout the family. Then they eat and drink. Again, much of what we find here are wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, which simply suggest that this is the order in which things were done.

Genesis 24:54 And they ate and drank, he and the men with him, and stayed all night. And they rose up in the morning, and he said, “Send me away to my master.”

As a guest in the home of Laban and Bethuel, it is up to them to properly dismiss the servant and those with him.

Then, the servant is in for a little surprise.

Genesis 24:55 And her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman stay with us perhaps ten days. After that she will go.”

Laban and his mother suggest that they wait for 10 days and then Rebekah would go with him. This would be unacceptable.

Genesis 24:56 And he said to them, “Do not hinder me, since Jehovah has prospered my way. Send me away, that I may go away to my master.”

The servant is polite but forceful; it is clear what he expects. He wants to be properly sent away, which would include taking Rebekah with him.

Genesis 24:57 And they said, “We will call the young woman and inquire at her mouth.”

This is the first time that Rebekah appears to be questioned about this.

Genesis 24:58 And they called Rebekah, and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.”

They ask her if she is willing to go with this servant, and she is willing. We do not know the extent of the conversation; I assume that it was much lengthier than what we find here. However, bear in mind that this entire narrative is told from the view of the servant, so he would not have been privy to much of the conversation between Rebekah, her father and her brother.

Genesis 24:59 And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

Rebekah herself has a servant, who was probably her nanny originally. This is feminine singular, Hiphil participle of yânaq (קֹנֶנְיָ) [pronounced *yaw-NAHK*], which means *nursing, nursing woman, nurse; nanny* (root word means *to suck*). The Hiphil stem means *to give suck, to suckle; to cause to taste, to give to eat*. Strong’s #3243 BDB #413. Therefore, this woman is Rebekah’s nanny.

Rebekah’s family will then give her a blessing:

Genesis 24:60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said to her, “Our sister, be the mother of thousands of millions, and let your seed possess the gate of those who hate them.”

Finally, Rebekah leaves with the servant.

Then you will notice that little thing that is said at the end: "Let your seed possess the gate of those who hate them." You may recall back in Gen. 22:18, God made this promise to Abraham after Abraham was willing to offer up his son to God as a sacrifice. That took place 30 years ago, and it sounds as if this has become a popular exchange when giving a blessing to another. However, I think that it is more likely that Rebekah's family is aware of God's promises to Abraham.[93] What they say here is exactly in line with God's promises to Abraham.

Genesis 24:61 And Rebekah rose up, and her young women, and they rode upon the camels and followed the man. And the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

Apparently, the eastern family of Abraham was quite rich as well, and she has at least 3 female servants who travel with her (the Hebrew plural is used here).

As before, nothing will be said of the intervening trip, although it must have been lengthy.

Genesis 24:62 And Isaac came from the way of the well, The Well of the Living One, my Beholder. For he lived in the south country.

The *Well of the Living One* is in southern Judah, between Kadesh and Bered (Gen. 16:14). This is where Isaac had lived for awhile. (Gen. 25:11) and where he was apparently living at this time.

Genesis 24:63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the beginning of the evening. And he lifted up his eyes, and looked. And behold, camels coming!

We do not actually know for certain what this word *meditate* really means. It only occurs here in the Old Testament. Most believe this act has a spiritual connotation.

Genesis 24:64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and she saw Isaac. And she dismounted from the camel.

Isaac can see the camels coming; Rebekah sees Isaac off in the distance.

Genesis 24:65 She said to the servant, "What man is this that walks in the field to meet us?" And the servant said, "It is my master." Therefore she took a veil and covered herself.

Veiling the face in the ancient world was a long-standing tradition. This is a tradition for that time and place. There is no indication that God expects women to go about veiled in modern society.

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[93] The alternative explanation is, God took a common saying of that day and made it a promise to Abraham. That seems less likely to me.

She appears to know that this was Isaac, and dismounted. Then she asks the servant for confirmation, at which point, she veiled herself. Nearly all of the verbs found are imperfect verbs held together with wâw consecutives, which generally suggests successive actions.

Genesis 24:66 And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

Knowing this servant, everyone probably stood around for 30 minutes while he told every detail of this story to Isaac.

Genesis 24:67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. And he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

This suggests that Isaac had just recently lost his mother. So, in referring to the Abrahamic Timeline, Sarah dies when Abraham is approximately 137 years old (making Isaac 37 years old); and Isaac is married around age 40. So, give or take a couple years, this all fits together chronologically.

It is quite fascinating that an arranged marriage like this will last for decades, whereas, many marriages in the United States, where so much is known in advance about the other person, and such marriages might last 1 to 5 years.

Lesson 262: Genesis 25:1–4 — Abraham's Second Family

God promised Abraham, before Abraham had fathered a single child, "I will make your seed like the dust of the earth, so that if a man can count the dust of the earth, then your seed also will be counted." (Gen. 13:16). With Genesis 25, we will see the beginnings of God's fulfilling this promise. We will see Abraham's second family (vv. 1–6); Ishmael's descendants (vv. 12–18); and Isaac's sons (vv. 21–26). These are all descendants of Abraham. Today, almost the entire middle east is populated by the children of Abraham.

Also in this chapter, Abraham will take his last bow before leaving the stage of life. However, in the middle of our study, we will pause partway through this chapter—after Abraham's death—and see how Abraham is presented in the New Testament (where he is mentioned by name more than 70 times).

When it comes to this second family of Abraham, there are a lot of theories as to when he married this woman and at what point in his life did he father these children.

Let's first look at this question on the basis of the Hebrew. The final verse of Gen. 24 is filled with wâw consecutives and imperfect verbs. Generally speaking, that would suggest that, if what follows is a wâw consecutive and an imperfect verb, then we are observing a set of consecutive actions. Now, when there is a change of scene or a change of subject, this does not necessarily mean that we have consecutive actions. However, it seems to make the most sense that this takes place after Abraham's servant finds a wife for Isaac. There is the distinct possibility that Abraham wanted to get married again, but recognized

that his son Isaac had not yet found a wife, and so he took care of this for him back in Gen. 24. This would have given Abraham cover, so to speak, to remarry.

However, with regards to these sets of actions being consecutive, it ought to be clear that we are viewing two very different circumstances when going from Gen. 24 to Gen. 25 (even though there were no chapter divisions in the original Scriptures). Therefore, we cannot conclude on the basis of the Hebrew that Gen. 25 follows chapter 24 in time.

Genesis 24:67 **And** Isaac **brought** Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, **and** he **took** her, **and** she **became** his wife. **Furthermore**, he **loved** her. **And** [because of Rebekah], Isaac **was comforted** after his mother's death.

Genesis 25:1 **And again**, Abraham **took** a wife, and her name [was] Keturah.

Every single verb in both verses is an imperfect and every single conjunction is a wâw consecutive (until the very final phrase). I bolded these wâw consecutives and the imperfect verbs. Generally, this suggests that we have a consecutive set of actions. However, since there is such a change of scene, that is not necessarily the case.

Most commentators do not place this chapter in time where we find it here, after Isaac's marriage, because it is about Abraham having another wife after Sarah and then fathering more children. The main reason commentators object to this is, they assume that Abraham is too old to have children. He is about 140 years old (he will live for 175 years). So, let's crunch some numbers here. Men will notice a lessening of their sperm somewhere before 50–70, although they remain potent. Some men who live into their 70's or 80's are still able to produce children throughout 75% (or more) of their life spans. Abraham is 140 and he will live 175 years, so he has lived 80% of his life. Looking at it from that perspective, it is not out of the question for him to be able to have children. When God reinvigorated Abraham, there is no reason to assume that this was a one-shot deal. Quite obviously, he and Sarah had no more children, but that could be a matter of Sarah's reproductive system more than Abraham's (recall that she was, from the very beginning, called *barren*). Furthermore, Isaac was the son of promise, so there was no need for Abraham and Sarah to have another child.

The other option is, Abraham had another wife while he was married to Sarah and other children. This would be problematic in several ways (1) God would not necessarily need to revitalize Abraham if he is having children by another woman; (2) fathering a child by Sarah would not necessarily have been that big of a deal; (3) Sarah is clearly upset over Hagar the Egyptian girl (who was Sarah's idea); but, somehow, she would not be upset over Abraham having another wife? (4) There is no doubt that Abraham doted on his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Therefore, there is no reason to think that Abraham needed another family while they are children to fill in the gaps in his life while Isaac was young. Finally, (5) in one previous passage, Abraham complains about going childless and having no natural heirs (Gen. 15:2). He will have 6 children in this passage. That sounds a lot like natural heirs to me . In other words, the preponderance of evidence is, Abraham remarries after Sarah dies and, even though he is an old man, he has children by his new wife.

Therefore, for these reasons, we must assume that Abraham is still potent at age 140 and he still likes women. This is not unusual for a man.

Genesis 25:1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

The first verb is yâçaph (יָסַף) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*], which means *to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again; to continue to*. It is an odd but common verb and often translated like an adverb *again, another,* even though its form is like a normal imperfect verb. Strong's #3254 BDB #414. The second verb is the common Hebrew verb for *to take, to seize*. Often this second verb refers to taking a woman in marriage. Literally, this would be translated And so Abraham adds and so he takes a woman. And her name, Keturah.

Abraham's new wife will bear him 6 children, all of them Arabs, and some of whom would continue to have a relationship/antaongism with Israel even to this day.

Genesis 25:2a And she bore him Zimran, and Jokshan....

Abraham is said to have 6 male children by Keturah. This does not mean that these are the only children that Keturah had, or even the only male children. However, If I were to guess, I would say these are likely all of Abraham's male children by her.

These children would have made up the Arabic tribes, many of whom gave grief to the Jews for many centuries. Now, this brings up the question: was Abraham out of line to have these children? Should he have toughed it out and not remarried? He already had his child of promise; isn't that good enough? Abraham is responsible for himself and his immediate family. No doubt that his sons by Keturah got the same teaching and were exposed to the same God that Abraham told Isaac about. What they did with this information is another matter. We do not control the volition of our children; we can influence it and train them, but when it comes to the gospel and the importance of the Word of God, we are limited as parents. Furthermore, we do not control the volition of their children or their children's children.

This influence works both ways. I have a friend of mine who is an unbeliever and who is confused that her daughter became a believer in Jesus Christ. She did nothing to encourage this; she did not even expose her daughter to going to church, and yet her daughter believed in Jesus Christ. Like many unbelievers, she simply assumed that people become Christians because their parents brought them up that way.

God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with him remarrying and having more children.

Furthermore, God has told us, through Adam and Eve, to fill up the earth with children. We do not stop with child #2, saying to ourselves, the great, great grandchildren of #3 and #4 might give the great, great grandchildren of #1 and #2 a hard time. Therefore, there is

nothing in Abraham's life and nothing in the promises of God which tell Abraham that he had better not father any more children.

Application: It ought to be clear that Islam is on a collision course with the United States, Israel and believers in Jesus Christ. There is not a lot that we can do to stave this off. If this is not setting the stage for the Tribulation, then this will be the ingredients for the great wars of the 21st century. The Islam mindset is for world-domination; and what we see in our era, the spreading of Muslims throughout the world is the first stage of this (one could see this as Satan's counterfeit of Jews being spread throughout the world). When Muslims are appeased, it encourages them and strengthens their resolve; when Muslims are opposed, it angers them and strengthens their resolve. My point is, there is no easy solution of appeasement or limited resistence that will stave off this conflict. No politician will have the magic words to take to this or that Islamic state and establish peace between us. This ought to be clear in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today. Presidents have tried to involve themselves in different ways between these two peoples, and, although peace treaties have been hammered out on occasion, the Palestinians continue to lob rockets into Israel and Israel has come to live with that, responding from time to time with a greater force. What has really kept Israel at peace throughout most of the past 60+ years is, the antagonistic countries surrounding Israel have found out that, if they are aggressors, Israel will respond militarily. This is how it is possible to have 20 or more antagonistic nations surrounding Israel, and yet, Israel enjoys relative peace and quiet most of the time.

Application: We currently have a president who spent time in a Muslim school; he is even accused of being a closet Muslim. However, his relationship with radical Muslims throughout the world is worse than George W. Bush's relationship with them, even though he was sold to us as a man who could work with Muslims. Muslims feared and respected Bush; they do not have this same attitude toward our current president. Because of the nature of our own culture, we often do not realize that strength and unpredictability are our capital in the rest of the world. Not many of these Muslim nations look at our "willingness to talk" as anything to be taken seriously.

Application: However, far more important than who is president is, is the spiritual state of our nation. Do you see our churches filled with children and young people eager for the Word of God? Do you see an evangelist like Billy Graham going about the land, gathering crowds in the tens of thousands, desiring a relationship with Jesus Christ? Remember, Billy Graham's crusades used to be broadcast on television (not on some cable channel but on one of the network channels, as there was no cable television back then). It was not unusual, in the 1950's, to see Billy Graham on prime time, for several nights running, giving the gospel to this or that city. Millions were saved by viewing these broadcasts or going to his meetings. Is that going on today? In all of the various stations that I have seen, I have only seen the gospel of Jesus Christ presented on FoxNews, and that rather infrequently.

Application: There are a few mega-churches in the United States; and there are a number of doctrinal churches (which, insofar as I know, tend to be small). Although we have

religious channels on cable now, we no longer have the gospel of Jesus Christ permeating our society's consciousness. That is problematic for our country's future.

Application: Black America is the same way. In my youth, the church was an essential part of the Black culture; and a huge percentage of African Americans believed in Jesus Christ. However, many of their churches turned toward social change in the 1960's, and the gospel of Jesus Christ was changed for the gospel of activism in many of these churches. Today in many predominantly African-American churches, the exact opposite of the gospel of Jesus Christ is being taught (which would be the gospel of a large, paternal federal government).

Application: Atheism is growing in America; there is evangelism, but not on the scale of the 1950's. So, how does God get the attention of our nation, a nation which is learning to become more and more dependant upon government and less so upon God? War and economic hardship and the failure of government to provide everything it claims it can provide. A society cannot sustain itself, where have of the people are enslaved to the other half. A society has a difficult time when half pull the wagon and the other half sit in the wagon. There may come a time in the not-to-distant future when not only is our government unable to provide a safety net, which has become a welfare hammock, but it may not be able to provide even the most basic services. We are already seeing today that some cities and states lack the resources to provide law and order within their own borders. Not only does the state of California threaten to let their criminals go; they make good on this threat on a regular basis. And yet, California continues to employ a huge bureaucracy, who have the need to inspect nearly everything that Californians do; and then to tax them for it. Each generation receives the leaders and the environment that they bring to themselves. In other words, we get what we deserve.

Back to Abraham's children.

Genesis 25:2a And she bore him Zimran, and Jokshan....

Zimran means *singer, musician; music; celebration*. Smith puts his birth around 1855 B.C. We know nothing about his descendants or whether he founded any tribe of people.

Jokshan's line is given, if only a portion of it, and Fausset[94] identifies him with the Cassanitae on the Red Sea, citing Ptolemy 6:7, sec. 6. Other sources did not identity him with any group.

Genesis 25:2b And she bore him...Medan, and Midian....

The latter tribe is found throughout the Bible.

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[94] Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary;* from e-Sword, topic: Jokshan.

> Fausset[95] writes: *[Medan] Identified with Midian in Gen. 37:28, 36. The Keturahites early merged into the Ishmaelite tribes*. However, ISBE says: *The tribe and its place remain unidentified, and the conjecture that the name may be connected with the Midianites is unlikely from the fact that in the list of the sons of Abraham and Keturah Midian is mentioned alongside of Medan*.[96]

Medan is only named here and in 1Chron. 1:32, both genealogies.

Midian, on the other hand, is a better known tribe, being found about 60 times in the Bible. However, there is no clear connection between this man Midian and the tribe of Midian, apart from the name.

Notice that their names are *strife* and *contention*. This foreshadows the relationship between the Jews and Arabs for many years to come. I believe that many of the names found in the Bible are not necessarily the names given to these people, but a derivation of that name which describes them or their relationship with the Jews.

Genesis 25:2c And she bore him...Ishbak, and Shuah.

Ishbak and Shuah are only found here and in 1Chron. 1:32; both are genealogies.

> Fausset tells us of Ishbak: *From him sprang the Northern Arabians. There is a valley "Sabak" related to the name. The Keturahites extended from the borders of Palestine to the Persian gulf. Ishbak, as his name implies, left behind his brethren, having gone forth first. His dwelling was probably far away toward the Persian gulf, and also reaching into the peninsula*.[97] ISBE claims[98] that this man is not clearly identified with any Arabic tribe.

Genesis 25:3a And Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan.

This particular pair of sons, Sheba and Dedan, are only found here and in 1Chron. 1:32. However, there are another pair of brothers with these same names found in the line of Cush (Gen. 10:7 1Chron. 1:9). There are two possibilities: these are simply two brothers with the same names as two other brothers or these names refers to places or cities, and both sets of sons are associated with these two places or cities.

Genesis 25:3b And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim...

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[95] Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary;* from e-Sword, topic: Medan.

[96] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Medan.

[97] Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary;* from e-Sword, topic: Ishbak.

[98] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Ishbak.

The Asshurim (Asshurites) are only connected with the Dedan and appear to be unrelated to Asshur. However, the morphology of this proper noun suggests a people rather than an individual here.

The Assyrians appear to have been descended directly from Shem, as per Gen. 10:22, rather than Dedan. We have no idea as to the interplay between the two peoples. Given the time frame here, the Assyrians would be a thriving people in the east, at this time.

> According to Ancient Cyclopedia History, *In the Old Assyrian period (20th to 15th centuries BCE), Assyria controlled much of Upper Mesopotamia. Assyria grew out of the economically powerful city-state of Ashur, which established merchant colonies (called karum, Akkadian for "port") in Cappadocia. Ashur was an oligarchical city state, with the power divided between the ruler ("Steward of Ashur"), the assembly of elders, and the high priest. Shamshi-Adad I (1813-1791 BCE) conquered Ashur, made it his capital, and conquered the wealthy kingdom of Mari. His empire now encompassed northern Mesopotamia. Hammurabi (of Ammorite descent) King of Babylon, soon after defeated Shamshi-Adad's successor and made Assyria a vassal state. As the Amorites were thought to have contributed to the destruction of the great empire of Akkad, Hammurabi very purposefully called his region `Mat Accadi' - the country of Akkad - in an attempt to link his reign to the legendary grandeur of the past*.[99]

Although the gentilic adjective found here is not found elsewhere; but it is very closely related to the proper noun *Assyria* which is ʾAshshûwr (אַשּׁוּר) [pronounced *ahsh-SHOOR*]. Strong's #804 & #838 BDB #78. This gives us two sets of people with nearly the same name, essentially. Were the sons of Dedan's son absorbed into the Assyrian kingdom? That is certainly a possibility. This could be why Dedan's son is called *Asshurim*.

There also seem to be a group of people with this same name spoken of in 2Sam. 2:9 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Given the time frame of 2Samuel, this could be these Asshurim, Arab ancestors to come from Abraham through Dedan. This would also eliminate any confusion with that passage in 2Sam. 2:9.

Genesis 25:3c And the sons of Dedan were...Letushim and Leummim.

The Letushuim and Leummim peoples are only found in this passage. ISBE[100] associates them with northern Arabic tribes.

Genesis 25:4a And the sons of Midian: Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah.

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[99] From http://www.ancient.eu.com/assyria/ accessed February 23, 2013.

[100] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Letushim and Leummim.

> Easton tells us that Ephah is *one of the five sons of Midian, and grandson of Abraham (Gen. 25:4). The city of Ephah, to which he gave his name, is mentioned Isa. 60:6, Isa. 60:7. This city, with its surrounding territory, formed part of Midian, on the east shore of the Dead Sea. It abounded in dromedaries and camels (Judges 6:5)*.[101]

Epher is the second son of Midian, descended from Abraham by his wife Keturah (Gen. 25:4 1Chron. 1:33).

There are several men in the Bible with the name Hanoch. This man only occurs here and in 1Chron. 1:33, which is the parallel genealogy.

Abida is only found here and in 1Chron. 1:33.

Like his brothers, Eldaah is only found here and in 1Chron. 1:33.

Genesis 25:4b All these were the descendants of Keturah.

These would be all of the sons born to Abraham through Keturah and some of their descendants who are listed in this passage.

Lessons 263–264: Genesis 25:1–10 Abraham's Second Family and his Death

The Other Sons of Abraham:

So far, we have studied the first 4 verses:

Genesis 25:1–4 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bore him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. And the sons of Midian: Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.

These are the descendants of Abraham by Keturah. This is a cluster genealogy, and we will not revisit this people to see where their genealogies go. Only the *line of promise* is followed completely through Scripture, all of the way from Adam to Jesus. Unless a cluster genealogy is a part of that line, we *never* return to it. I would not be surprised if those named are the believers in that line, and that they are named for that reason.

As we studied, two of the descendants have familiar names (the Asshurim and Midian). We do not know if there is a relationship or not between them and the Assyrians or Midianites. The Assyrians are already an established people. Midian, although it will not be spoken of as a people until Gen. 36, this is only 100 years later (both mentions are

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[101] M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary;* 1897; from e-Sword, topic: Ephah.

associated with genealogical lines, so putting dates to those mentioned is quite difficult to do). Now, can Midian become a small people in 100 years time? It is certainly possible. It would not be unheard of for there to be in excess of 1000 males in the 4th generation from Midian (although that would indicate unusual growth). So, the Midian here may or may not be related to the Midian people of Gen. 36.

Genesis 25:5 And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

The bulk of Abraham's considerable fortune was given to Isaac. Despite having this whole other family, Abraham recognizes that Isaac is the heir of promise. He is the one through whom God will bless all mankind. Like most things in the Old Testament, Abraham did not fully appreciate what that meant. Throughout the centuries, more and more information will be revealed about the line of promise and all that it means; Abraham only knows the promises which God has given to him (these will all be summed up in a future lesson).

By the way, it is legitimate to leave a fortune to your child; the Bible does not speak against it, as long as your focus is right. God never comes to Abraham and says, "You need to start spreading your wealth around; you have too high of a percentage of the wealth." Abraham, through his wealth, employed a great many people—some of them slaves and some of them employees. There is not even the slightest hint that there is something wrong with this. Later, Isaac will inherit this wealth, and at no time does God indicate that there is something wrong with his inherited wealth.

There are a lot of socialists and communists and people on the left side of the political spectrum who will lecture Christians about the rich young ruler and how Jesus told him to sell everything and follow Him (he was to give the proceeds to the poor; not to the government, by the way). But these same people do not seem to be aware of just how rich Abraham is and how God *never* tells Abraham that he is too rich. Isaac will inherit his wealth, and even the Bible tells us that Isaac was a very rich man. Jacob will inherit Isaac's wealth as well (Jacob will be born later in this chapter). Not only was Job very rich, but, after enduring all the suffering that he endured, God made him quite as wealthy. Jesus has at least two rich friends that we know of, and He never criticizes their wealth.

The Bible is not anti-rich nor does it view the poor as being just a little more noble than the rich. Every person has a sin nature. Some of those who are rich became rich through evil means; and others earned their wealth legitimately. Some people are poor through no fault of their own; others are poor because of the many mistakes that they made in their lives (or because they are lazy).

On the other hand, the Bible does speak of providing for the poor; and, in nearly every case, this requires that the poor do some of the work themselves. For instance, there is an ordinance of the Mosaic Law where farmers are to leave the corners of their land unharvested. The poor were allowed to come in and harvest this food for themselves.

There is absolutely nothing in the Bible which suggests that a government should encourage their poor to sit at home and wait for a check from the government in the mail;

or wait for their newest load on their EBT card. I am not encouraging selfishness here nor am I saying that those who are rich should hoard their wealth. Wealth is a great responsibility, and the wealthy Christian needs to bear that in mind.

Capitalism has been a great force for good in the world, and millions upon millions of poor people have come to the United States and have, through hard work, made themselves financially independent; and some of them have even become wealthy. And for the enterprising immigrant who comes to this country and embraces our values, very often the second generation has a level of wealth which is above average.

There are people who reach a point where they are unable to take care of themselves. Then families should step in; and if there is no family, then private charities and individuals should step in.

I know a person who is retirement age who has been living off the government for sometime now—probably over a decade. Ask her why she is collecting money for disability, and she will spout of a litany of health concerns, none of which actually would prevent her from working. There are millions of people like this in the United States who live off disability insurance; and in nearly every case, when you ask about that, they will give you a list of their physical problems. These same people are able to maintain a residence, they can go shopping, they can make food for themselves, they can see that their lawns are mowed, and many of them have gym memberships. Yet, when pressed, they will portray themselves as nearly helpless and unable to be employed. This is not God's plan for the believer or the unbeliever. We are not designed to live off the hard work of other people, and such a mentality not only is a stain on our nation, but could bring our nation down, both financially and spiritually.

Whereas, I am not in favor of more government jobs (the government coming in and making work for such people), I am in favor of taxpayers being able to make use of such people. The increasing number of elderly in our country need help, and this population ought to be helping the elderly who live near to them. The person I mentioned is able to see to her own personal needs and to take care of the environment around her (she keeps her lawn mowed, etc.). She is exactly the sort of person, this woman on disability, who ought to be looking for opportunities to help those who are less fortunate. They can be fed, shopped for, kept company, etc. Nearly every person on disability is able to provide these services for others who actually need them.

Anyway, I have gone far afield, the main point being, God does not hate wealthy people; nor does repudiate such persons—Abraham and Isaac being notable examples of men blessed by God with wealth.

Genesis 25:6a But to the sons of his [lit., *the*] mistresses which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts [or, *bribes*].

Abraham had at least two mistresses: Hagar and Keturah. It is possible that he took on other mistresses who are not named here (although I doubt that). Although it says that

Abraham gave gifts to his sons, this word can also be a bribe; and the gift could be conditional upon these sons, once they reach adulthood, to take whatever Abraham gives them (say, $10,000) and skedaddle. The idea was, the land in which they are born is promised to Isaac. That is a done deal. Therefore, to keep the family from feuding over his wealth, Abraham would send each of his sons east with a stipend to get them started in life.

This is not a wrong thing; nor are these sons being given the short shrift here. They receive enough money to make it worth their while to get started in the world. Furthermore, what enterprising kid at age 20 or so wouldn't prefer a large initial capital investment as opposed to maybe getting some inheritance another 10 or 20 or 30 years down the line?

Genesis 25:6b And he sent them away from Isaac his son while he still lived, eastward to the east country.

Abraham would send these sons away so that they would be separate from Isaac. Abraham had clearly become a very wealthy man, and if any of these young men remained with him, they could have potentially vied for Isaac's birthright (this will be a theme which plays out with Isaac's twin sons).

Abraham did not set up a will, that this or that son would receive an inheritance, and then he must move eastward. Abraham oversaw this process himself. He did this because he believed in the Word of God, which promised a great inheritance to Isaac. He knew what God had promised Isaac, and he was not going to do anything to screw that up.

In the previous lesson, we talked about Abraham having more children, and that the result is, there are millions of people alive today, descended directly from Abraham, who have great animus toward the Jews. Abraham could not foresee this; nor did God require of Abraham to lead some sort of a monkish lifestyle after having one child. The Jews, being God's people, are going to have trouble wherever they are. Germans, the sons of Japheth, tried to destroy the Jews in WWII.

All a father can do is properly raise his children. For the children who were not those who would inherit the promises made to Abraham, Abraham no doubt explained the whole thing to them and their future. This is not a big deal to a child who is grace oriented. I am not a Jew; I was not born a Jew. I do not concern myself with that fact. It is a neutral fact to me; it is not great, good or bad. So, a child of Abraham's, who is told about Abraham's God and God's promises to Abraham, can live a great life, in accordance with the plan of God. They can still have a relationship with Abraham's God as well.

Abraham knew that he had an inheritance that was important to give to Isaac alone. This does not mean that Keturah's children were dispatched to the far, far east, to the region where Abraham was born and raised. Probably, most of them were sent to the other side of the Jordan and the other side of the Dead Sea. Although Abraham's descendants through Isaac were to be given a sizeable inheritance of land, that does not mean that Abraham needs to demarcate these boundaries right at this point in time. In the

Millennium, Israel will be one of the largest nations on earth (but there will be other nations).

There is something else likely at play. These young men would have had a relationship with the God of Abraham. Therefore, they would have potentially been ancient evangelists for the God of Abraham and Isaac. God must reveal Himself to anyone who has positive volition at the point of God consciousness. If the gospel message would be accepted by any person, regardless of his geographical location, then God's righteousness demands that this person hear about the Revealed God, so that he may believe in Him. As we have studied many times, faith in the Revealed Lord is necessary for salvation, no matter what dispensation one lives in. So, when these men went abroad, as it were, they were also witnesses to the God of Abraham. Some of them may have been evangelists and some of them may even be very prominent in heaven. God may have used them to spread the message of the Revealed God.

Genesis 25:6 Abraham gave all that [was] his to Isaac; but to the sons of his mistresses, Abraham gave gifts [or, *bribes*]. Then Abraham sent them away from Isaac his son, while he was yet living [lit., *in his yet living*], eastward to the land of the east.

We actually have some options of how to interpret this entire verse. *Mistresses* is in the plural, and we know of two: Keturah and Hagar. My best guess is, all of their sons were sent away; and most were sent away to the east (Hagar and her son being the exceptions). This could be interpreted that we are speaking of Abraham's mistresses after the death of Sarah, suggesting that Keturah was one of them—but that there was at least one more mistress. I do not think that is the case, and it is only recorded that Hagar and Keturah are Abraham's mistresses. The Bible does not mention any other children to come from Abraham. I simply believe that their names and a brief history would have been included if there were women besides Keturah and Hagar. After all, that would have been in further fulfillment of God's promises.

There is also that very interesting phrase in this verse, *while he was yet living*. If you understand this, it might but a smile on your face. Abraham sent away his sons to the east with a pocketful of money while he (Abraham) was still alive. This implies that he had one or two sons who were still young that Abraham did not attend to personally in this way, because they were too young. The implication is, Abraham continued to have sons to the last 10 or 15 years of his life.

Genesis 25:6 But to the sons of his [lit., *the*] mistresses which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts [or, *bribes*]. And he sent them away from Isaac his son while he [Abraham] still lived, eastward to the east country.

The Land of Promise was to be inherited by a particular line of people, which would go through Abraham, Isaac and eventually Jacob. God never made these other children a part of this promise, so Abraham accordingly shipped them out east.

We know from current history just how much strife and war can result from this plot of ground. Abraham is acting in such a way as to reduce strife.

God's Promises to Abraham:

Before we get to Abraham's death, let's sum up the promises which God made to him.

Let's add to this a summary of the promises that God has made to Abraham.

A Summary of God's Promises to Abraham

1) God promised to make a great nation from Abraham. Although there will be many nations the primary focus of the Old Testament is on Israel. Furthermore, when God's people are gathered into a large enough group, as we have in the present nation Israel, there will be problems—not because of anything they do themselves, but simply because they are God's people.
2) God promised a specific piece of real estate. The Bible lays out these boundaries, which designate a land much larger than Israel has ever been. Gen. 12:7 13:14–17 15:7–21 17:8.
3) God promised that Abraham was to be blessed. This began in Abraham's life immediately. In Gen. 15, Abraham is revealed to be one of the wealthiest men in the world.
4) God promised that Abraham's name would be great. Abraham would be famous. More people know Abraham's name today than any name of any king of that same era.
5) Those who bless Abraham would themselves be blessed. Those who recognize and appreciate that God has a great future for Abraham's descendants are be blessed. Nations which ally themselves with Israel are blessed.
6) Those who curse Abraham [treat him lightly] will be harshly punished. The could have the additional meaning that, treating Abraham lightly would suggest that they treat the God of Abraham lightly as well. As a result, such a person would receive some cursing in time; but clearly cursing in eternity.
7) In Abraham all nations will be blessed. This promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the seed, according to Galatians 3. Therefore, it is through Abraham that everyone is blessed.
8) Abraham is promised that Sarah in particular will have a son. This son of promise would not be by a mistress or by a surrogate. Gen. 15:1–4 17:15–21
9) God promised that Abraham's descendants will spend 400 years in bondage in Egypt. Gen. 15:13–15
10) God promised that there would be other nations which would come from Abraham, apart from the Jews. Many Arab nations can trace themselves back to Ishmael or Abraham's second wife Keturah (which has been the focus of our study so far in this chapter). Gen. 17:3–6
11) God changed Abraham's name from *Abram* (*Exalted Father*) to *Abraham* (*father of multitudes*). This makes Abraham clearly the recipient of these promises. Gen. 17:5
12) Sarai's name was changed to *Sarah,* from *My Prince* (which is somewhat of a

A Summary of God's Promises to Abraham

masculine name) to *Princess*. Gen. 17:15

13) The token or sign of the covenant is circumcision. As we have studied previously, circumcision refers to the new birth. Originally, circumcision takes that which is dead and gives it new life. Its later use indicates identification with the God of Abraham (Jews who are circumcised are given this sign of identification with Abraham and with his God).

You will note that, on each occasion that God spoke to Abraham, He either expanded upon His original promises or He gave additional promises. The principles involved are, progressive revelation and doctrine is built upon doctrine. In Gen. 12, God laid out the most basic promises to Abraham, which were, nonetheless, quite important; and then He built upon those promises in each meeting which followed.

This list is from Dean lesson 067, accessed June 11, 2013.

Abraham's Death:

Genesis 25:7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life, which he lived: a hundred seventy-five years.

There is almost a sadness in all of this, going through 3 plural constructs to get to Abraham, and then adding in the adjective chay a second time at the end. In literature, this simply means that we are drawing out the words to indicate a full life. Abraham had far outlived his two brothers (one of them died when they were all still living in Ur).

Abraham lived to be 175 years and it was a full life. As we studied, even after the death of Sarah, his wife, he still remarried and had more children. So he was active, even as an older man.

Terah, Abraham's father, had lived to be 205. As had been the case with the human race in general, each generation lived successively a shorter lifespan than the previous, where, at one point almost every ancestor died off at the same time.

Genesis 25:8 And Abraham expired and died in a good old age, old and satisfied. And he was gathered to his people.

From the earliest time, there was a concept of people having an eternal future, which involved the other members of their family. These would have been Abraham's parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and further back. To 10 generations back, to Shem, there was overlap with Abraham's life. However, pretty much during his lifetime, all of these men died, from all of these 10 generations, all during Abraham's time, unless we have some missing generations. This likely missing generation was discussed back in **Gen. 11** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), which suggests that there was one additional generation who dropped out of the Hebrew manuscripts. However, that would still have allowed for these men to die during Abraham's lifetime.

At death, Abraham was gathered to his ancestors for eternity.

This fact suggests that the testimony of Y^{e}howah God must be continued, but in a different way. For a very long time after the flood, there were witnesses to the flood and there were the immediate descendants of the witnesses to the flood. Therefore, there was a fairly lengthy period of time when everyone on earth potentially could have known Shem, Ham or Japheth, witnesses to the flood. For many generations, evangelism could have been closely related to the flood, and that, by faith in the God of the Flood, salvation was gained. In this way, these generations would have spoken of the Revealed God.

From Adam to the flood, Adam, who knew God, live through much of that time period and he was a witness to God. After the flood, we have 3 men (Noah's sons) who were witnesses to God's wrath and to the flood. However, we have almost come to the point where those people who knew Shem, Ham and Japheth had died out.

Almost all at once, these men and their children and children's children all died out—and, interestingly enough, nearly all of them died our during Abraham's lifetime. So God developed a new program by which man would be evangelized—the line of Abraham would be God's witness. Before, God was revealed by the Great Flood, testified to by several generations of men whose generations overlapped. However, during the time of Abraham, this witness ends. The witness of the Revealed God, revealed through the great flood, has come to a close, and God will now be revealed through Abraham and his descendants. And the line of Abraham would become nation Israel.

God reveals Himself in many ways—as the Creator of all mankind; as the Destroyer of those who rebelled against Him; and now, He becomes known as the God of Promise, the God Who made a covenant with Abraham. In these 3 time periods, God is revealed in a unique way, even though salvation is by means of the same method—believe in the Revealed God, and you are saved. However, when Jesus revealed Himself in His public ministry, this changed everything. Whereas, in much of the Old Testament, people were saved by believing in the God of the Jews; we are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, the God of the Universe. He is the same God. He created the universe and all mankind; He also destroyed corrupted flesh with the flood; and now He revealed Himself as the God of Promise and the God of the Covenant, beginning through Abraham.

Genesis 25:9 And Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre,...

As we know, Ishmael was not sent far away; he and his mother were simply sent away from Abraham and his family when Isaac was an infant. As we found out in the previous chapter, Isaac actually lived quite near to the well where Ishmael and his mother were about to die, after being sent out of the Abrahamic compound. This was possibly the very same well that God showed to Hagar, Ishmael's mother, so that they could survive. This all took place in **Gen. 21** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). I expect to post this chapter during the first half of 2014.

At this point, both Isaac and Ishmael are grown adults—older men, in fact—and they get together on this. It appears as if they do not live too far apart, although there is not much in the Bible about their paths crossing, except for this passage. There is a lot left unspoken about their relationship as adults, apart from agreeing to this. These verses, along with the recording of Ishmael's line in this chapter suggests that there was at least some limited reconciliation between them. We know this because there is a cluster genealogy of Ishmael recorded in this chapter (and much of Genesis was likely recorded by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

Genesis 25:10 ...the field which Abraham bought from the sons of Heth. Abraham and Sarah his wife were buried there.

Nearly 40 years earlier, Abraham purchased this field from the Hittites. **Gen. 23** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). I expect to post this chapter during the first half of 2014. However, this is covered in previous lessons of this study.

Recall that when Isaac was born, they were not living in Mamre, but on the land of the Philistines.

The plan of God always goes forward, from one generation to the next. However, Abraham will remain an important person, even though gone from this earth, for at least 2000 more years.

Lessons 265–266: Genesis 25 Part I: Abraham in the Synoptic Gospels

The Synoptic Gospels are the first 3 gospels of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark and Luke. They are very similar in their approach to the life of Jesus. We will examine Abraham's name each time that it occurs in the Synoptic Gospels.

Abraham's name occurs around 70 times in the New Testament. By comparison, Moses' name is found nearly 80 times, David nearly 60 times, Jacob 25 times, Isaiah 21 times, Isaac nearly 20 times, Solomon 12 times, Joseph (the son of Jacob) 9 times, Jonah 9 times, Adam 8 times, Sarah 4 times, Lot 4 times, Esau 3 times, Jeremiah 3 times, and Hagar twice. Ishmael is never mentioned in the New Testament.

Since we have come to the end of Abraham's life, we need to see just how his life impacts the New Testament writings. Even though both the gospels and the epistles reveal a turning of God from the Jews to the gentiles (but the Jews have not been wholly abandoned nor have they *morphed* into the church); it ought to be a matter of interest as to how often Abraham is spoken of in the New Testament, and what is said. In the epistles, which are essentially Church Age documents, Abraham's name still occurs many times (30–33 times, depending upon the translation).

These next few lessons will be longer than previously given. These lessons will allow for the covering of a great many passages with only a limited amount of exposition. The idea

is, you will see how your knowledge of Abraham now provides a much greater context for and a better understanding of these passages which you may have quickly read over before.

Abraham in the Gospels/The Coniah Curse/The Types of Baptisms in the Bible

In the previous study we have come to the end of Abraham's life. However, Abraham shows up in the New Testament on numerous occasions (we find his name 70–75 times[102] in the New Testament—although usually spoken of in an incidental way).

In Matt. 1, we have the **legal** line of Jesus. This is the line that goes from Abraham to Jesus, including the royal line which goes through David the king. This line ends with Joseph, the husband of Mary, the legal father of Jesus, but not the genetic father of Jesus.

Matt. 1:1–2, 17 Luke 3:34 **The Genealogies of Jesus**

Matt. 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of **Abraham**.

Notice who Jesus is connected to by birth: David, the greatest king of Israel; and to Abraham, father of the Jewish race. Note who Jesus is not genetically connected to: Moses, who is associated with the Law. We are saved by grace, not by the Law. We are saved because of God's promise, not because of anything which we have done. Abraham represents the promises made by God, which promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. David represents being saved by grace—few men understood or exploited grace any more than David did. But Jesus is *not* descended from Moses, who represents the Law. We are condemned by God's Law; we are not saved by it.

We will find this same thing illustrated in the book of Deuteronomy as well. Moses, who is closely associated with the Law, will not lead his people into the Land of Promise; who does lead the people into the land? Joshua, whose name is the Old Testament version of *Jesus*. What do those names mean? *Savior*.

Matthew has more Old Testament references than the other gospel writers. Although he was a tax collector and shunned by other Jews, he had a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, and over and over again, he pulled together parallels between the Old Testament and to what he saw and heard when he was with the Lord.

It is not clear how much knowledge of the Old Testament Matthew had as a disciple of Jesus. He may have studied the Old Testament much more after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. It is very possible that he had a reasonable understanding of the Old Testament before he was called by Jesus, which study would not have been distorted by the pharisees, as Matthew would have been persona non grata with the religious crowd.

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[102] Depending upon which Bible you are using.

Because Matthew was a Jew and because he was very knowledgeable about the Old Testament, it is logical that he would begin his genealogy with Abraham, the father of the Jewish race.

Matt. 1:2 **Abraham** was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers

Abraham had a brother (Nahor) and a nephew (Lot); however, the line of the Jews went through Abraham. Abraham had two sons of prominence, one by Hagar and one by Sarah: Isaac, the son by Sarah is the Jew; Ishmael, the son by Hagar, is a gentile (an Arabic gentile).

Isaac had twin sons, one was a Jew and the other a gentile; Jacob is the Jew and Esau is the gentile. Jacob has 12 sons and they are all Jews. Esau is not a Jew and none of his sons are Jews.

The genetic line of Jesus—the line that goes to Mary—is given in Luke 3, and it is presented in the tradition of the Greeks. It starts with Jesus and works backward, one generation at a time, all the way back to Adam. This is because this line presents Jesus as a man Who will die for the sins of all mankind. Therefore, this line emphasizes the humanity of Jesus (the book of Luke is often titled the *Son of Man*).

The woman does not pass along the sin nature. You may have your mother's eyes, her hair color and her body type, but you do not get your sin nature from your mother. The woman has a sin nature; but she does not transmit it genetically. This is why Jesus is continually spoken of as the seed of the woman, the son of the virgin. Jesus is born without a sin nature because His Father is the Holy Spirit. These exact mechanics are not made known to us. In this way, Jesus is fully divine and fully human, and born without inheriting the sin nature.

Luke 3:34 ...the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of **Abraham**, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,...

The Jewish line above begins with Abraham; but since Luke, a gentile, emphasizes the humanity of Jesus, his line reaches further back than Abraham, going all the way back to Adam.

Many of the mentions of Abraham are incidental as in the passage below.

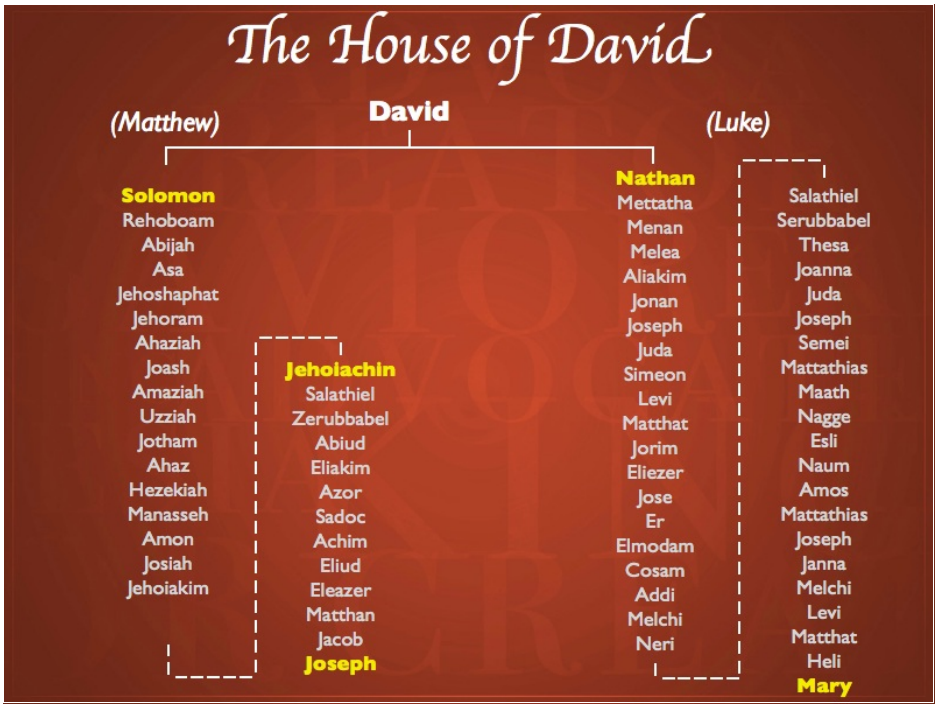
Matt. 1:17 So all the generations from **Abraham** to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

We have gone as far as Abraham in our study of the Bible (although we have made many excursions into books other than Genesis in this study). Matthew, the presumed author of the book of Matthew, shows the symmetry in the line from Abraham to Christ. 14

generations from Abraham to David, and then 14 generations to the deportation (the 5th stage of national discipline)—the king at that time was Coniah, and he was so bad as a king and the people were so bad, that God allowed a foreign military to defeat them and then He allowed the physical removal of the Jews from the Land of Promise. God allowed the people of Israel to be taken into slavery.

Very likely, dividing these names into groups made it easier to learn them, as Bibles were not as abundant in those days as today.

In the first grouping, with Abraham as the first and David as the last, we have 14 generations. In the second grouping, there are 14 generations from David to Josiah, which is about the time of the captivity (they actually went into captivity with his son, Jeconiah). Josiah was the last chance the Jews had for national repentance (turning away from false gods and turning toward the True God). Once Jeconiah became king, their fate was sealed. They had chosen their pathway. Josiah to Joseph is 14 generations as well.

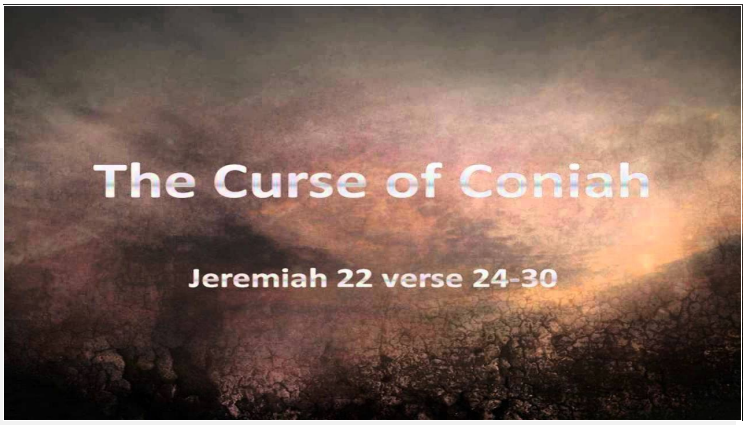


The Lineage of Jesus; His Legal Line and the Line of His Humanity (a graphic); from Creation Revolution.com; accessed December 11, 2013.

Although the Jews are returned to the Land of Promise after the captivity, they never have full autonomy, as they had previously has as a nation (see the **Basic History of Israel** HTML PDF; with no links[103]: PDF). They had rejected their God, and so He rejected them. "You have rejected me," declares the LORD. "You keep on backsliding. So I will reach out and destroy you; I am tired of holding back." (Jer. 15:6; NIV). And so the people were disciplined with the 5th stage of national discipline, which is their removal from their homeland.

[103] So that you can print this out and keep it with your Bible.

The Coniah Curse (a graphic) from TheNey03 on YouTube; accessed December 11, 2013.



The sin nature is passed along by the human father; and this is illustrated by the Coniah curse. Throughout the Bible there are a number of real things which also are illustrative. Coniah is a real person, and he illustrates a real thing (the sin nature).

The Coniah Curse

1. God made many promises to Abraham which were continued to David; David was promised that a King from his line would sit on the throne of Israel forever (this is known as the Davidic Covenant). Psalm 89
2. This Eternal King is Jesus Christ, also called the Son of David. Matt. 1:1 9:27
3. However, in David's line there was a king so horrible and God cursed him for all time. This is Jeconiah, also known as Coniah. Jer. 22:24–30 "As I live," says the LORD, "though you, Coniah son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, were a signet ring on My right hand, I would tear you from it. In fact, I will hand you over to those you dread, who want to take your life, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and the mother who gave birth to you into another land, where neither of you were born, and there you will both die. They will never return to the land they long to return to." Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered pot, a jar no one wants? Why are he and his descendants hurled out and cast into a land they have not known? Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: Record this man as childless, a man who will not be successful in his lifetime. **None of his descendants will succeed in sitting on the throne of David** or ruling again in Judah. (HCSB; emphasis mine)
4. So, we have Coniah, in the line of David, and in the line of Christ in Matt. 1:11. At first, that would seem problematic, as God certainly made it sound as though he is cut out of the Davidic Covenant.
5. So, how is this man kept out of the line of Christ? Matt. 1:11 is the legal line of Christ, going from Abraham to Joseph. Joseph is Jesus' legal father, but not His genetic father. Jesus is not actually descended from Coniah, even though His legal father, Joseph, was.
6. Coniah represents the sin nature. The sin nature cannot be in the line of Christ. Jesus cannot inherit a sin nature. No one with a sin nature can die for our sins.
7. Therefore, Joseph, in the line of Coniah, is not the genetic father of Jesus. Matt. 1:18–19
8. The genetic line of Jesus does not proceed through David and his son Solomon to Jesus; but through David and his son Nathan and eventually to Jesus.

The Coniah Curse

Compare Matt. 1:6 with Luke 3:31.

9. So Coniah, representative of the sin nature, is kept out of the genetic line of Jesus Christ; just as the sin nature is not passed along to Jesus, because there was no contribution from a human father. It is the human father who passes down the sin nature.
10. Adam sinned knowingly; but his wife sinned because she was deceived. So they are both fallen, but the nature of their original sins is different. 1Tim. 2:13–15
11. Thus the importance of the virgin birth, which is more than a sign. The virgin birth is the means by which Jesus is born without an indwelling sin nature. Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:23 Luke 1:35 John 1:14 Heb. 4:15 7:26 1John 3:5
12. This is also why Jesus is known as the *Seed of the Woman*. Gen. 3:15
13. Therefore, Jesus is born without a sin nature and outside of the line of Coniah, who represents the passing along of the human sin nature.

For those who like to speculate, if the humanity of Jesus sinned, then there could be no salvation. At that point, Jesus could only die for His Own sins. No idea how the Hypostatic Union could have held together. However, as noted above, Jesus was without sin—He did not have a sin nature nor did He personally sin—and therefore He could take upon Himself our sins.

Luke 1:46–55 **The Song (Magnificat) of Mary**

There are several Mary's in Scripture; this is Mary, the mother of the humanity of Jesus.

Luke 1:46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies [extols, celebrates] the Lord,

This song appears to be the New Testament counterpart to the song of Hannah in 1Sam. 2:1–10.

This song is spoken by Mary to Elizabeth, her cousin; and Elizabeth is pregnant with John the Baptizer. Mary has received promises that she will bear the Savior.

Luke 1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,...

The Old Testament Jews viewed God as their Savior. They saw God as delivering them out of troubles; but Jesus presents a slightly different view of this, where we are delivered by Jesus from God's judgment. The God of the Jews Who saved them from trouble and national destruction illustrates Jesus, the Savior, Who saves us all from God's judgment.

The soul is the part of our unseen humanity which interacts with people; and the spirit is the part of our unseen humanity which interacts with God. Mary's spirit rejoices in God her Savior.

Luke 1:48 ...for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;...

Mary is blessed (made happy) in her pregnancy. She sees herself as God's servant.

Luke 1:49 ...for He Who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

These are obviously references to God, and God has blessed Mary in her life; and this pregnancy is a great blessing to her. God's name is His reputation and His essence; His name being holy refers to God's righteous and justice (= the principle and the execution of God's integrity).

Luke 1:50 And His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation.

In the Old Testament, *fearing God* meant that you understood God's power, that God can remove us at any time, and that our concentration is upon Him.

Let's say, you are afraid of snakes, and a snake has gotten into your house, but has slipped away from you, but you are not sure where. What are you thinking about all the time? That helps to illustrate the concept of fear of the Lord. See the **Doctrine of the Fear of the Lord in the Old Testament** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

In order to fear the Lord, you must first believe in Him.

Luke 1:51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the arrogant in the thoughts of their hearts;...

Sin always begins in the soul; evil always begins in the soul. One of the great conflicts on this earth is between the humble (grace oriented) and the arrogant.

Luke 1:52 ...He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and He has exalted those of humble estate;...

This is seen in two ways. We will have the example of Joseph (in the book of Genesis) who will rise up from being a lowly slave to becoming prime minister of Egypt. There is also the example of Jeconiah (Coniah) who was king over Israel and he became a slave because of the evil in his thinking.

Also in view here are the saints of God in general, who will be exalted above the angels in the end. We will judge the angels (1Cor. 6:2–3). Jesus is above the angels (Eph. 1:20–23 Heb. 1:10), and therefore, we, being in Christ, are positionally above them; and we will eventually be placed above them (2Tim. 2:12 Heb. 1:14).

Luke 1:53 ...He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

The hungry are those who are hungry for salvation and God's Word; the rich are those who believe that they have everything that they need. This is not a diatribe against rich people and somehow implying that being poor is somehow innately superior. The hungry person recognizes his need for Jesus; the rich person does not.

The person who believes in Jesus Christ is accepting that he is not good enough to earn his way into God's approval; and that we must stand upon Jesus Christ. We have no hope apart from Jesus.

Luke 1:54 He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy,...

God has been with the nation Israel from the time of Abraham. Many times, because of the evil acts and thinking of Israel, God has been merciful towards them.

Luke 1:55 ...as he spoke to our fathers, to **Abraham** and to his offspring forever."

Abraham is the first Jew, and it is to Abraham that God made all of the promises which we have studied. It is from Abraham that the nation Israel came.

Also, we have studied the categories of Abraham's offspring: (1) saved Jews (those who have believed in the Revealed Lord; (2) racial Jews who did not believe in the Revealed Lord (and later did not believe in Jesus); (3) the many Arabic races who are related to Abraham through Ishmael, Esau or through Abraham's other children by Keturah; (4) believers in the Church Age, who are Abraham's spiritual children. At some point, I will put together a chart of Abraham's offspring and show how the Bible connects each of these 4 groups to Abraham.

The passage above refers to the saved Jews and gentiles as Abraham's offspring.

Luke 1:67–80 **Zechariah's Song**

Zechariah (also spelled Zacharias in some Bibles) is the father of John the Baptizer; and he said this after the birth of John.

Luke 1:67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,...

To prophesy does not simply refer to future events; it means to speak truth; it means to speak the Word of God.

Luke 1:68 "Praised is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people...

The birth of John (not the apostle) is a sign that God has visited His people and has redeemed (purchased) them.

The word used here is the adjective eulogêtos (εὐλογητός) [pronounced *yoo-log-ay-TOSS*], which means, *blessed, praised*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2128. So, when it is used where God is the subject and man is the object, it means *to bless;* but when man is the subject and God is the object, it means *to praise*.

God visiting His people means that Jesus Christ has come (John the Baptizer will be the herald of the Messiah). Jesus will purchase His people by dying for their sins (and dying for ours as well).

Luke 1:69 ...and has raised up a horn of salvation [= deliverance] for us in the house of his servant David,...

Horn, in the Bible, is a symbol of strength, power or authority. God has the power and the authority to deliver all Israel. This will be done in a temporal way, when God intervenes in the Battle of Armageddon. Also, this will be done in an eternal way, so that all those who put their trust in Him are delivered eternally.

Most think of a physical deliverance from an enemy—and that is applicable—but we will be delivered from Satan in Christ.

Luke 1:70 ...as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old,...

Believers in the time of our Lord's birth understood that the prophet spoke the truth of God, which truth we know as Bible doctrine. God spoke through these men.

Also, the ancient prophets spoke of the coming of God's Messiah.

Luke 1:71 ...that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;...

There would be temporal deliverance for all of Israel. We have seen almost inexplicable hate directed toward the nation Israel—because they are God's people and God will keep them alive as a people until the end. Because of this, the Jewish race will be hated by many.

Luke 1:72 ...to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant [= contract],...

God made promises to Abraham, to David, and throughout the history of Israel to eventually redeem His people and exalt them. This is the covenant which he has made with all of redeemed Israel.

Luke 1:73 ...the oath that He swore to our father **Abraham**, to grant us...

We have studied the oath of God to Abraham in Gen. 22:16 (see also Heb. 6:13–14).

Luke 1:74 ...that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,...

This is true, and this is what many in Israel believed. But they saw the Messiah primarily as being political; and there will be an ultimate national deliverance in the Tribulation. However, the cross must precede the crown. There cannot be ultimate national redemption until the people of Israel are personally redeemed. Just being a Jew or simply attempting to follow the Law of Moses does not redeem anyone. We can only be purchased by Jesus.

Luke 1:75 ...in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

Holiness refers to being set apart to God; and righteousness is the principle of God's integrity.

The righteousness which we possess comes from imputation. God imputed righteousness to Abraham and it has been imputed to us as well—we who have believed in Jesus Christ. Just like Abraham, we have been credited with righteousness which we did not earn or deserve. This method of salvation is universal across all dispensations.

Luke 1:76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways,...

John the Baptizer, who is an infant at this point, would go before Jesus as His herald.

Luke 1:77 ...to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins,...

Salvation refers both to a military deliverance as well as to the soul being saved. All of this is based upon the forgiveness of sins.

Salvation is based upon knowledge. We must hear and understand the gospel (to some limited degree) in order to be saved.

Luke 1:78–79 ...because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

The sun represents truth, as all things are seen in light. So this refers to the revealing of all things.

On earth, we are in darkness, as this is the devil's world. However, Jesus has overcome the world, so that we escape darkness and death by being in Him.

The way of peace refers to peace with God; not world peace. Many times we read about peace in terms of peace with surrounding nations, but this is often the promise of false prophets (Jer. 6:14 8:11). Many people try to distort the word *peace* in the Bible, and act as if Jesus is some prophet of disarmament. This is a misrepresentation of the Word of God by people who denigrate Christianity and Christians. Furthermore, this view is evil.

Peace in the Bible refers both to peace with surrounding nations and peace with God (the latter use being found the most often). This passage in Luke refers to peace with God.

Matt. 3:1–11 **John the Baptizer**

Now we turn to the public ministry of John the Baptizer for the next mention of Abraham.

Matt. 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,...

John did not go where crowds of people were. He went out into the wilderness—to the unpopulated forested areas of Judæa, and the people were drawn to him.

John the Baptizer out in the Wilderness (a graphic); from Free Bible Images; accessed December 11, 2013.

Matt. 3:2 "Repent [= *change your mind; change your thinking*], for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Repentance has to do with a *change of mind;* the Jews were trapped by their legalistic traditions, which is a religion based upon merit rather than upon God's grace. They needed to turn away from that religion of merit to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the King promised to David; Jesus is David's Greater Son, who would sit on David's throne forever (Psalm 89). Since John was the herald to the king, he was proclaiming that the King was here; and the King would offer Himself to His people.

Matt. 3:3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.' " (Isa. 40:3)

When a king arrives to a city, his passageway must be made clear; all obstructions must be moved out of his way. A king cannot be led down Main Street, yet, when he gets to the

middle of the street, there is a broken carriage and he cannot go past this carriage. Those who go before the great king must see that there is nothing which would stop this procession. Kings don't do traffic jams. This is the case for the Savor, except these obstructions are in our thinking and in the actions of those who reject Him.

Matt. 3:4 Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

John was baptizing men at the Jordan river out in the unpopulated areas. So, where he was could be described, but John himself stood out, whether in a crowd or alone. John was a very unusual man. Therefore, he was an easy man to describe. "How do I know that I have found this John the Baptizer fellow?" "He will be wearing a garment made of camel's hair, a leather belt, and he eats grasshoppers and honey. You can't miss him."

Matt. 3:5–6 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

John is out in the desert-wilderness, and the people were drawn to him, much as potential believers are drawn to Jesus Christ.

This is the baptism of repentance at the hand of John.

There are at least 7 baptisms in Scripture.

Baptisms in the Bible

1. The word "baptize" (from the Greek baptidzo—βαπτίζω), which means *to identify with, to be made one with*. In early Greek, the word had both religious and secular meanings. In general, it refers to the act of identifying one thing with another thing in such a way that its nature or character is changed, or it represents the idea that a real change has already taken place.
2. There are at least 4 real baptisms—real identifications which take place—which are *dry* baptisms.
    1) The Baptism of Moses: where 2 million believers were identified with Moses, as a type of Christ, and with the revealed Lord, which was a cloud above them. The Jews therefore crossed over the Sea of Reeds completely dry. They Egyptian army, who did not identify themselves with Moses, or with the God of Moses, were drown by the water. Therefore, all of the people who were *immersed* here were unbelievers. 1Cor. 10:1–2 Ex. 14:19–22
    2) The Baptism of the Cross (or Cup). Jesus would become identified with our sins; God the Father would pour our sins out on God the Son, and He would take upon Himself the punishment for our sins. Luke 12:50 Mark 10:38
    3) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit. All believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit; this is the instantaneous identification of the believer with Jesus

Baptisms in the Bible

Christ. We are placed into Christ. This is not something that we feel and it occurs at the moment of salvation. Acts 1:5 11:16 1Cor. 12:13 Gal. 3:26–27

4) The Baptism of Fire. All unbelievers will be identified with the judgment of God at the end of the Tribulation. Matt. 3:11–12 Luke 3:16–17 2Thess. 1:7–9

3. There are at least 3 ritual baptisms in Scripture, where the baptism represents something else. These are baptisms which involve water and they are symbolic, unlike the baptisms listed above, which are real.
   1) The Baptism of John. This is the baptism of repentance, where the participants are rejecting the religion of merit and identifying with John as herald of the king. Matt. 3:1–10 Mark 1:4–5 John 1:25–33 Acts 13:24
   2) The Baptism of Jesus. Jesus' baptism by John was unique, where the baptism represents full and complete identification with the plan of God. Mark 1:9–11 Matt. 3:13–17 Luke 3:21–23 cp. Lk.12:50
   3) The Baptism of the Christian Believer. We as believers are identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Matt. 28:16–20 Acts 2:38 Rom. 6:3–4 Col. 2:12
      (1) As an aside, it is debatable whether this ritual of baptism survives the 1st century as a part of the Christian experience.
      (2) Clearly, no one is ever saved by water baptism.
      (3) Clearly, there are deathbed conversions and people who are saved who are never baptized (the thief on the cross, for one).
      (4) And clearly, there have been great divisions among churches as to the time, manner and meaning of ritual baptism.
      (5) If a church chooses to baptize, then it is incumbent upon the pastor to explain exactly what is being taught by this ritual.
      (6) The Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) is the only ritual which is mandated for the entirety of the Church Age. Even here, it is incumbent upon the pastor to teach the meaning of the Eucharist when it is observed. Otherwise, it is a meaningless ritual.

Sources:
http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/baptism.html
http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/baptisms.html both accessed June 4, 2013.

Matt. 3:7 But when he [John the Baptizer] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

This is interesting, that John the Baptizer recognized even then the corruptness of the religious class. This is because they taught a salvation of merit; a religion of works.

These religious types came out to see John, not to be baptized and to reject their own religion of merit, but to see what was going on and who this John character was.

Matt. 3:8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

Bearing fruit is Christian production. That is what comes from being filled with the Spirit and applying Bible doctrine. Bible doctrine works through the soul of the believer and produces divine good. Here, believers are mandated to bear fruit which is consistent with them changing their mind about dead works. You cannot simultaneous perform dead works and bear fruit (that is, produce divine good). These things are mutually exclusive.

Matt. 3:9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have **Abraham** as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for **Abraham**.

The Jews believed that their genetic relationship to Abraham was the key. "Abraham is our father." But the key is to have faith in Abraham's God. God is able to raise up better children from the stones than those who believe in a religion of merit or a religion based upon a genetic line.

Matt. 3:10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Jews who are not regenerated (John 3) are the trees which do not bear good fruit. They are thrown into the fire. These trees are producing bad fruit (dead works); and they will be chopped up and thrown into fire (= judgment). This is the baptism of fire spoken about previously.

Matt. 3:11 I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John the Baptizer baptized with water to represent a change of mind about the religion based upon works and tradition.

When Jesus comes, for Whom John is herald, He will baptize believers with the Holy Spirit and He will throw unbelievers into Lake of Fire, which is the baptism of fire. The baptism of fire is the judgment of unbelievers and fallen angels, where they will all be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Abraham in also mentioned in the parallel passage in Luke 3.

Lessons 267–269: Genesis 25 Part II: Abraham in the Synoptic Gospels

We are quickly examining all of the places where Abraham is mentioned in the Synoptic gospels.

Matt. 8:5–13 Jesus and the Roman Soldier Who Understands Authority

This next is a fascinating narrative, where Abraham is mentioned; but many things are taught.

Matt. 8:5 When He [Jesus] entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to Him, appealing to Him,...

A centurion is a Roman soldier; a gentile. Although we associate this word with *100,* he might have a company of anywhere between 200 and 1000 men.[104]

Matt. 8:6 "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly."

A servant is the same thing as a slave in the ancient world; and there were legitimate forms of slavery and illegitimate forms of slavery in the ancient world (we practiced one of the illegitimate forms in the United States). See the **Doctrine of Slavery** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Because of our own notions about slavery, it might be that the designation *servant* is more accurate, as there are fewer negative connotations with that word.

Matt. 8:7 And He said to him, "I will come and heal him."

Jesus of course knows what this centurion is thinking. However, He says this for the benefit of those who are with Him. Jesus had a very short public ministry; therefore He used each and every incident as an opportunity to teach the truth.

Jesus could have easily snapped His fingers and the servant is healed; end of story. He could have said, “Done” and the centurion would have been pleased. However, Jesus does not do that. He offers to come heal the servant in person.

Matt. 8:8 But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.

This centurion knows that power that Jesus has. He has faith in this Messiah from God. It does not matter that he is a Roman; anyone could exercise faith in Jesus. The Roman understood this.

Matt. 8:9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

A centurion is a Roman soldier with a high rank; many other soldiers are under him. He can give orders and these orders are obeyed. He understands authority; and he also understands the authority which Jesus has.

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[104] From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centurion accessed November 25, 2013.

This centurion also has a number of servants—some private slaves at his home and some by virtue of his office (a Senator today might have a staff for his office and also a maid service for his own home, to give a modern-day example of this).

The Centurion (a graphic) from Pastor Greg's Blog; accessed December 11, 2013.

It is worth noting the centurion's attitude toward his own servant. Obviously, if this servant was no good to him, he could manumit him and obtain another servant. However, the centurion has real concern for his servant; enough concern to search out Jesus to make a request.

The centurion recognizes that Jesus does not have to go to his home and touch the servant in order to heal him. He knows that Jesus can give the order, and his servant will be made well.

Matt. 8:10 When Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who followed Him, "Truly [=point of doctrine; true fact], I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.

Many people have the mistaken notion that Jesus is anti-war in every way. However, this is a high-ranking soldier to whom Jesus is speaking and Jesus does not tell this soldier to put down his sword, become a pacifist, and to follow Him. Instead, Jesus praises this man. He praises him above all others, in fact, for his great faith.

Matt. 8:11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with **Abraham**, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,...

Herein, Jesus teaches that, Jews are not the only ones who will be saved. Those who come from the east and the west to recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are those who will also be redeemed. This means that gentiles will come into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matt. 8:12 ...while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Sons of the kingdom refer to those who are Jews, but who have rejected Jesus Christ. Outer darkness means that they will be separated from God. Their weeping and the

gnashing of teeth mean that they know that they were offered a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and they rejected it out of arrogance.

Matt. 8:13 And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Jesus nearly always made *faith* an issue when it came to healing. Not because the individual needed enough faith to be healed, but because faith is intimately associated with the ultimate healing of the body and soul, which is eternal salvation, which is appropriated by means of faith in Jesus Christ. Physical healing was illustrative of spiritual healing.

Matt. 22:23–33 The Sadducees' Question about Marriage in the Resurrection

Abraham is mentioned in another narrative about Jesus.

Matt. 22:23 The same day sadducees came to Him (the sadducees say that there is no resurrection); and they asked him a question,...

This is actually quite humorous. The sadducees do not believe in the resurrection from the dead; but one of them thought of a great question about the resurrection that they could use to ask Jesus, in order to give Him a question that He could not answer. These men were not interested in the truth; they were interested in tripping up our Lord. They wanted to make a point by making Jesus look foolish.

Let me give a contemporary illustration of this. How many liberals have you heard that say, "Clinton gave Bush a balanced budget and Bush spent us to oblivion"? Or words to that effect. However, these exact same people, who sound as if fiscal responsibility is important to them, will say nothing critical about President Obama and his spending, which was 3x and 4x the deficits of President Bush (in fact, the highest deficits of Obama are about 10x the average deficits of Bush). What sense does it make for a liberal to praise President Clinton for a balanced budget when this is not really a concern of the liberal? A Sadducee with a burning question about the resurrection is like a liberal who sounds overly concerned about the deficits in the Bush administration.

These sadducees do not believe in the resurrection. However, they think that they have come up with a great question which involves the resurrection, which they think will confuse Jesus. So they are suddenly concerned about ramifications of the resurrection.

Matt. 22:24 ...saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.' (Deut. 25:5)

These men set up a preposterous situation. A man dies, has no son; so his brother marries the wife, in order to raise up seed (a child) on his behalf; but that brother dies, so the next brother is brought in; and so on and so forth. This was an ancient tradition, and

apparently common even before the Bible speaks of it. These pharisees take it to the extreme, but they do this because they are trying to make Jesus appear ridiculous.

Matt. 22:25–28 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

This is a goofy question because the person asking this of Jesus does not even believe in the resurrection. On top of this, they propose a ridiculous scenario. They are not seeking information; they ask this because they think this question will stump the Lord. They know that, on earth, there is a clear mandate for one man to marry one woman for life. They know that this mandate is from God. However, there is also a tradition, which is recognized and even codified in the Bible, where a close relative can raise up a child by a bereaved widow in the name of her deceased husband (and this close relative would marry her as well). Therefore, what about this particular marriage in heaven? Will God approve of a marriage between 7 men and 1 woman in heaven?

I see this all of the time on the internet. People will argue points of doctrine and the interpretation of this or that passage, when they do not even believe in the Bible. I see that a lot of gay-marriage proponents who will, on the one hand, argue about the silliness of the Bible with all of its silly rules and regulations; but on the other hand, take all of the passages on homosexuality and attempt to show by a “careful” exegesis that these passages are really not about homosexuality but about some weird practice from that day and time. Truth is, these people don’t care what is in the Bible. They are not going to study those passages on homosexuality, finally admit that it does refer to homosexuality, and then change their ways. They don’t believe in the Bible in the first place; yet they still want to use it in an argument. They don’t know anything about the Hebrew language, but then, somehow, they have come to a keen understanding of several key words used in a passage about homosexuality—which understanding has eluded all other Hebrew scholars until this day and time—and they make the argument—in opposition to actual Hebrew scholars—that the words found in these passages do not refer to homosexual behavior, but to something else. In case you are not aware of this, homosexual groups have taken every passage in the Bible dealing with homosexuality and have reinterpreted every one of those passages to mean something different, through their twisting the truth of the passages. Peter wrote of such people in 2Peter 3:16 He [the Apostle Paul] spoke about these things [the end times] in all of his letters, which contain some parts that are difficult to understand. [Because of this], ignorant and unstable people twist [his writings], just as they also do to the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. (AUV–NT)

I don’t believe in the Koran, so I am not going to spend even 3 minutes of my life arguing about this or that passage in the Koran, and its true meaning. I may quote a passage which seems clear; but I certainly would not spend time exegeting that passage. I might as well be exegeting *Alice in Wonderland*. I believe that the Bible is the Word of God, so I therefore spend much of my life trying to interpret and explain the Bible. Trying to

extrapolate truth from the Koran or from *Alice in Wonderland* is like squeezing blood out of a rock.

So Jesus fires back at the sadducees, who tried to make Jesus and the things which He believed seem foolish.

Matt. 22:29 But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

Notice Jesus' answer: "You are wrong." They ask Him a question, and rather than go to the answer, Jesus tells them from the very beginning that they are wrong.

The sadducees rejected the Scriptures and the power of God, because they rejected the end-time resurrection. But they still want to trip up the Lord Jesus by using the Bible. It is exactly like the gay marriage proponents who do not believe in the Bible, but they will certainly use the Bible to attempt to trip up believers in Jesus Christ.

One example of this is a graphic which has been posted all over the internet, which offers up weird marriages in the Bible, with the implied conclusion, "How can you Bible believers accept these goofy marriages in the Bible, but not accept gay marriage?" In most cases, the types of marriages they took from the Bible are not advocated by Scripture; and in other cases, they put the worst possible spin in a passage, interpreting one passage to mean a rapist can pay the father of his rape victim a specified sum of money and then take that victim as a wife (which is a distortion of the actual text). All of this is covered in **Marriage Alternatives in the Bible** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). These gay marriage advocates could care less about what is really in the Bible. They do not believe the Bible. But, they want to make arguments from the Bible. They could be shown that their spin on these marriages is false, and they would never remove their graphic (they might remove all of your comments disputing the graphic, however).

The communists did the exact same thing in South and Central America. There, Catholicism had a strong hold on the people, so that they would not reject it for communism (a window sticker which I saw in several homes here was "Christianity Sí, Communism No" —or words to that effect). When it became clear to the communists that they could not destroy the people's faith in Jesus Christ and in the Bible, they studied the Bible to find passages which appeared to support communism. They did not believe in the Bible; they simply sought to use the Bible for their own evil purposes. Furthermore, at that time, understanding the Bible thoroughly was not a part of Catholicism (they have improved in this area somewhat), so many people, seeing a few passages of their own Bible distorted, began to support communism. This was the Liberation Theology movement, which became Black Liberation Theology in the United States (both movements distort the Bible considerably). Communists did not believe in the Bible. But they used the Bible as a means to an end. Their minions do that same thing today; they take a passage like Jesus telling the rich young ruler to sell all he has and follow Him, and somehow put a socialist spin on that narrative.

So here we have people arguing with Jesus Christ about Bible doctrine from the Old Testament, but they don't believe in it themselves—they are just trying to trip Him up, as in the examples given above. So Jesus tells them what their problem is: But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God."

Then He explains:

Matt. 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Which indicates that, in heaven, there will be no special till-death-do-you-part relationship in life like marriage. As Church Age believers, we will be married to the Lord. 2Cor. 11:2–3. This is an extension of the union we are in right now. We are in union with Jesus Christ (we are *in Christ*), and therefore, we receive the benefits of this relationship.

Matt. 22:31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God:

It appears that the Sadducees would pick and choose which Scriptures that they liked (much like liberals, who really have little use for the Bible, but they will quote certain passages from time to time that they believe support their liberal causes, which they claim are the poor and the downtrodden, but their solution is always more government and more taxes for people who make more money than they do).

Matt. 22:32 'I am the God of **Abraham**, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." (Ex. 3:6)

Jesus goes to the heart of one of the beliefs held by the sadducees—that they did not believe in the resurrection. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not alive, then how could Y^{e}howah be their God? God is not God of the dead; He is God of the living.

It is illogical for sadducees to believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob if these men are dead and gone.

Matt. 22:33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

Jesus taught with authority and He knew what He was teaching. This set Him apart from all of the religious types of that day and time (they would teach, "In the opinion of this rabbi, this is thought to be what this law means; and in the opinion of another rabbi, this is what he thought about this law.")

Interestingly enough, the narrative above is the only time Abraham is mentioned in the gospel of Mark (Mark 12:18–27). This narrative is also paralleled in Luke 20:27–38

Luke 13:10–16 **Jesus Heals on the Sabbath**

Luke 13:10 Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

On Saturday, the Jews set aside this day to worship God, and this included the reading and the teaching of the Word of God (which was the Old Testament) in the local synagogue.

Luke 13:11 And there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself.

Although this woman came to hear Jesus, she did not apparently come forward and ask for healing.

Luke 13:12–13 When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." And He laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.

The healing of this woman is an illustration of us being healed in salvation, which will result in ultimate sanctification (where we are freed of the sin nature). Healing in Scripture had two main purposes: (1) they showed Jesus Christ to be from God; and (2) these healings illustrated salvation. We are made whole by faith in Jesus Christ.

Suffering was, of course, alleviated, but Jesus did not alleviate all suffering on earth; nor did He even alleviate all suffering in His immediate geographical area. There are some healings that, if you read them carefully, Jesus heals one person, but there is no indication that He heals those sickly people around Him on every occasion. However, so that there is no misunderstanding, Jesus healed *everyone* who came to Him. That illustrates salvation and the power of God. "Any man who comes to Me, I will in no way cast out." is a statement about salvation, but we may apply this to healing as well. Since healing illustrates salvation, anyone who came to Jesus to be healed would be healed.

Luke 13:14 But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

It appears as if this man quotes straight out of the Bible, but this passage is not found in the Bible. What the man says takes portions of the Old Testament and interprets them. Ex. 20:8–10 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy; six days you shall labor and do all your work; and the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God; you shall not do any work, you, and your son, and your daughter, your male slave and your slave-girl, and your livestock, and your stranger who is in your gates. (Green's literal translation)

So the ruler of the synagogue first says that "There are six days in which work ought to be done;" and that is in keeping with the Old Testament. What he says after that is not a part of any OT passage. Furthermore, all that Jesus did was lay hands on this woman and she

is healed. The head of the synagogue is saying that this is works—that Jesus has violated the Sabbath by healing because He must have worked to heal her.

Luke 13:15 Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?

It takes far more work for Jesus' accusers to water their animals, which they all apparently did on the Sabbath—which was right for them to do, by the way.

Luke 13:16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of **Abraham** whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Jesus is saying, "You hypocrites; you will water your own animals on the Sabbath, but you object to this woman being healed on the Sabbath."

We will confine this study to the Sabbath of the 4th commandment.

The Doctrine of the Sabbath Day

1. The fourth commandment reads: (God is speaking to His people) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall 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; ESV)
2. The Sabbath is Saturday, the 7th day of the week. Although there were several *Sabbath's* in the Law of Moses, this is the only one that God instituted a commandment for.
3. The Sabbath is not to be confused with Sunday, which is the first day of the week. Matt. 28:1 John 20:1 Acts 20:7
4. The Sabbath for the Jews commemorates creation. God created all things necessary for human life in 6 days, and then He rested on the 7th. God did not rest because He was tired; He rested because He was finished. At that time, God blessed the 7th day and set it apart from the other days (Gen. 2:1–3). In this way, the 7th day represents a recognition and an appreciation for what God has done for us.
5. There is no clear observation of the Sabbath day prior to the establishment of the Mosaic Law. All we are told is, God set this day apart and sanctified it.
6. Some try to trace observance of the Sabbath back to Babylonia, because the word occurs in some Babylonian inscriptions; however it was not a seventh day observance (the Babylonians had a 5 day week); and it did not refer to a day of rest.
7. God did not stop work on the 7th day because He was tired. He did not get up at 5 am on the 8th day, make Himself a pot of coffee, and then go back to work on

the earth and the universe. He was done on day 6; there was nothing left for Him to do (until man sinned).

8. Although the sanctifying of the 7th day is mentioned early on, legal requirements concerning this day did not occur until Ex. 16:26, where God provided manna for the children of Israel. They were to gather manna 6 days a week, but on the 6th, gather up a double portion to cover them for the 7th day, when they were not supposed to go searching for manna. This is the first passage where we have the word for *Sabbath* (our word is a transliteration from the Hebrew word). Ex. 16:22–30
9. This was codified in the Ten Commandments, as quoted above.
10. The Sabbath was seen as a specific sign between the Jews and God. Ex. 31:12–17
11. However, even though the Sabbath day was not codified until perhaps 2000 years after creation, the 7-day week is nearly universal. There are so many reasons to prefer a 6-day or an 8-day week (or even 9-day or 10-day week). But men throughout the world mostly kept to a 7-day week. The reason for the 7-day week is the creation and restoration of the earth. People who do not believe in the Bible have decided that there are 5 visible planets, + the sun + the moon, so that makes 7, and so ancient man decided on a 7-day week for that reason. Interestingly enough, even though there are a variety of civilizations have had a week of 4–10 days, these pretty much stand out as the exceptions. The Soviets had a 7-day week, then changed it to a 5-day week (1929) and later to a 6-day week (1931); and then eventually returned to the 7-day week (1940). Although my source for this did not mention religious (or anti-religious) precepts as being the reason for these changes, I suspect that was at the heart of their thinking.
12. Keeping the Sabbath was a Law from the Ten Commandments; but it is not applicable to Christians in the Church Age. The legalistic Jews had distorted the Sabbath and had developed hundreds of regulations concerning the Sabbath. What I recall from my Jewish history course is, if you were walking along the street on the Sabbath, and a coach went by you and splashed mud on your outfit, then you were allowed to wait for the mud to dry, and then take it in your fist and squeeze it one time in order to remove the dried mud on the Sabbath. Col. 2:16
13. The Sabbath day was provided for man to lay aside the burden of his daily work and to be able to enjoy a day of worship and a day of rest. This was distorted by the rabbis over the years to an onerous burden of regulation following. Jesus called this *a heavy burden*.
14. The idea behind the Sabbath is grace. God has provided all that we need in 6 days; and we celebrate this and His provision by resting on the 7th day. The Jewish religious hierarchy transformed this into legalism.
15. The rest for all people is to enter into the rest offered by Jesus, to believe in Him and take His offer of rest. Matt. 11:28–29 John 6:37 7:37
16. There is a passage in Hebrews which is misapplied by Sabbath-keeping Christians.

The Doctrine of the Sabbath Day	
Heb. 4:1 Therefore, let us fear lest perhaps a promise having been left to **enter into His rest**, that any of you may seem to come short.	There are three *rests* which a person can enter into. (1) A person can believe in Jesus, entering into the rest of salvation. (2) The believer can enter into faith-rest, where they claim promises and principles of grace in time. (3) In death, the believer enters into an eternal rest.
Heb. 4:2 For, indeed, we have had the gospel preached to us, even as they also; but the Word did not profit those hearing it, not having been mixed with faith in the ones who heard.	The key is hearing the word of truth and then believing it. There are those who have heard the word of truth, but did not mix that truth with faith. Academic knowledge about the Bible is not enough.
Heb. 4:3 For we, the ones believing, enter into the rest, even as He said, "As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest," though the works had come into being from the foundation of the world. LXX-Psalm 94:11; MT-Psalm 95:11	The Exodus generation (specifically, Gen X) heard the words of truth, and yet rejected them time and time again, so that they never entered into the rest God had promised them. Although the Exodus generation believed in the Revealed Lord, they did not enter into the life of faith-rest after their salvation.
Heb. 4:4 For He has spoken somewhere about the seventh day this way, "And God rested from all His works in the seventh day." Gen. 2:2	For salvation, we are to enter into a rest analogous to the rest which God entered into. We stop all of our striving and believe in Him Who died for us. We rest from our own works, because salvation is not based upon our works.
Heb. 4:5 And in this again, "They shall not enter into My rest." MT-Psalm 95:11	Although Gen X did believe in the Revealed Lord, they did not exercise faith in God's direction for them after that. Because they did not exercise faith in God's leading, they did not enter into His rest (which would have been illustrated by entering into the Land of Promise).
Heb. 4:6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter into it [the rest], and those who formerly had the gospel preached did not enter in on account of disobedience,	Some have had the gospel (good news) proclaimed to them, but they did not obey the mandate (believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved).

The Doctrine of the Sabbath Day

Heb. 4:7 He again marks out a certain day, saying in David, Today (after so long a time, according as He has said), "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." MT-Psalm 95:7, 8	When you hear the word of truth, do not reject it. Do not harden your hearts against the truth. When it comes to faith in the truth, this is, for the unbeliever, salvation; and for the believer, the spiritual life.
Heb. 4:8 For if Joshua gave them rest, then He would not have afterwards spoken about another day.	Joshua brought the people into the land, but this is not the final rest. Entering into the Land of Promise was illustrative of the rest provided by God.
Heb. 4:9 So, then, there remains a sabbath rest to the people of God.	There is a sabbath rest for believers in the Church Age. That is, there is both faith-rest after salvation and the eternal rest at the end of life. Salvation is not the be-all, end-all. In time, we need to enter into God's rest, which is His plan for our lives.
Heb. 4:10 For he entering into His rest, he himself also rested from his works, as God had rested from His own. LXX-Psalm 95:11; Gen. 2:2	In salvation we rest from our works and in the Christian life, we rest from our works as well. Only divine good is important in the Christian life. No amount of human good leads us into salvation; and no amount of human good does anything for us as believers in Jesus.
Heb. 4:11 Therefore, let us exert ourselves to enter into that rest, that not anyone fall in the same example of disobedience. (Green's literal translation throughout, a few notes added; and emphasis mine)	Since Hebrews was written mostly to Hebrews (believers and unbelievers both), this message is both evangelistic and an encouragement to the faith-rest life. See Lessons 105–106 for a review of the Doctrine of **Faith-rest**. This is also found in **Genesis 12** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

17. Believers will observe the Sabbath in the Millennium. Isa. 66:22–23
18. Closing summary points on the Sabbath for believers in the Church Age:
    1) Observance of the Sabbath was abolished at the death and resurrection of Christ.
    2) The church has never been under the Sabbath.
    3) We can help ourselves and others to understand the purpose of the Sabbath in Bible history.
    4) We have a spiritual rest, or spiritual Sabbath, when we believe God's promises to us; and to trust in the principles of the Word of God in time.

See also:
The Westbank Bible Church Doctrine of the Sabbath.
Tod Kennedy's Sabbath Summary Doctrine.
Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries Lessons from The Sabbath.
Some points were taken directly from these studies.

Back to our text:

Luke 13:16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of **Abraham** whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Healing represents salvation. People can be saved by God on any day. These legalists had completely lost the concept of the Sabbath (to which we, as believers of the Church Age, are not bound). The concept of the Sabbath day was that God has provided all that man needed, and so He rested, because there was nothing more for Him to do. God did not rest because He was tired. And the Sabbath was not designed to be a day of a multitude of regulations.

These religious types would rather have seen this woman suffer another day rather than to allow Jesus to heal her on the Sabbath.

Luke 13:22–30 **Gentiles Will Be Saved Instead of Jews**

This is another narrative, where Abraham is mentioned, but only incidentally. The focus should always be on Jesus Christ, and not upon any man.

Luke 13:22 Jesus went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Although Jesus was always on the move, His ministry took place in a very small area and over a very short time frame. He came to reveal Who He is, and then to die for our sins. He revealed Himself to enough men who would carry the gospel message throughout the world. Jesus did not have to do any more. Besides, He preferred that other men witnessed of Him, supported by the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus were just a man, then we would have never heard of Him. His ministry was simply too short and confined to a very small piece of land.

Luke 13:23a And someone said to Him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?"

Jesus received all kinds of questions—legitimate and those designed to trip Him up. This appears to be a legitimate one.

Luke 13:23b–24 And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

The narrow door is Jesus. We do not enter into a relationship with God except through Jesus. You do not enter into a relationship with God through Confucius or through Mohammed or through Buddha. You do not enter into a relationship with God by meditating or by doing works. You enter in through the narrow gate, which is Jesus. He is the one gate; He is the narrow door.

Luke 13:25 From the time the Master of the house shall have risen up, and He shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. And answering, He will say to you, I do not know you, from where you are. (Green's Literal translation)

Jesus teaches this concept with a parable. The *master of the house* here is Jesus. The master hears them outside and He says that He does not know them.

Luke 13:26 Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'

Just as Jews believe that they have a relationship to God through Abraham, here, some believe that they have a relationship with God because they saw Jesus. They must exercise faith in Jesus Christ in order to be cleansed.

The modern-day equivalent are people today who make Jesus out in their own image. Some liberals try to sell Him as being a long-haired hippie who demonstrated against war and gave away free healthcare. All of those descriptors are inaccurate and misleading. A liberal who presents Jesus like this will not have a place in heaven (unless they have placed their faith in Jesus Christ—the True Jesus).

Luke 13:27 And He will say, I tell you I do not know you, from where you are. "Stand back from Me all workers of unrighteousness!" (Green's Literal translation)

Those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as He presented Himself—the Son of God and the Savior of man—will not be saved. Someone from today who looks back at Jesus as being a great advocate of world peace will not be saved, and Jesus here calls such a one a worker of unrighteousness.

Luke 13:28 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see **Abraham** and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.

We are not saved by means of human relationship. Jews will not be in heaven because they are descended of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

On several occasions, Jesus speaks of the ability of the unsaved to see those who are saved. We do not know this for all dispensations, but this is spoken of particularly with unsaved Jews.

Luke 13:29 And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.

This simply indicates that gentiles will believe in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is not a genetic relationship to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob which saves, but a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Luke 13:30 And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

There will be a hierarchy in heaven—and physical proximity to Jesus on earth does not give anyone an edge in this future inequality.

Luke 16:19–31 **Lazarus and the Rich Man**

Although many teach the following narrative as a parable or a religious story, the assigning of names suggests that this is real.

Luke 16:19 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.

The Bible is not anti-rich. When money is your primary focus in life, that is problematic. If you would compromise your ethics for money, that is problematic. If you set aside Bible class in order to make more money, that is problematic. However, replace "making money" with "being actively involved in liberal causes", "skirt chasing", "drinking" or even "playing sports" and you understand the teaching of the Bible. It is legitimate to work for a living; in fact, this is required by Scripture; but it should not supplant learning divine viewpoint. There are even times when it is legitimate to work on Sunday. However, your time to learn Bible doctrine must be made up.

Luke 16:20–21 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (a graphic), painting by Bartholomeus van Bassen, ca. 1620-30. From FatherYoung.com, accessed December 11, 2013.

We have two men: one who has enjoyed all of the great pleasures of life; and one whose life has been horrible.

Luke 16:22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to **Abraham's** bosom. The rich man also died and was buried,...

First of all, being carried to *Abraham's bosom* suggests close contact with Abraham. We know that Abraham is with God at this point in time, so that this man would also be with God. The poor man was not carried to Abraham's bosom because he had a lousy life; he was taken to Abraham's bosom because he had believed in the God of Abraham (Gen. 15:6). I know that is not said here; but *nowhere* does the Bible tell us that poor people are saved and rich people are damned. However, it is more difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven if his mind is on his money all of the time.

Luke 16:23 ...and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw **Abraham** far off and Lazarus at his side.

The rich man, being in torment, could look up and see Abraham, and he could see Lazarus as well.

Luke 16:24 And he called out, 'Father **Abraham**, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

This is quite interesting. This rich man did not have any photographs of Abraham; there were no statues of Abraham. He knew who Abraham was, historically, but had never seen any image of Abraham. However, he is able to recognize Abraham in heaven.

As an aside, no one spoke more of hell and the anguish of hell than Jesus Christ.

Luke 16:25 But **Abraham** said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

In Scripture, we do have a responsibility toward those who have fallen upon hard times, and we should not turn from such. This is not the same as saying, we should have a socialist government. Some of the greatest poverty and cruelty known to mankind is found in communist and socialist countries. Soviet Russia and China are infamous for killing more dissidents during peacetime than men who are killed in war. They also made great attempts to crush Christianity, which they discovered was futile.

Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you [there has been] a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

Abraham is explaining that there is a great chasm between the saved and the unsaved, and that there is no way that one may pass from one side to the other. Once we have

died, our end is determined; there is no off ramp from hell. In this, we know the finality of our end.

Luke 16:27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers--so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

The rich man now speaks to Abraham, calling him *father,* and asking that Lazarus be sent to his family and to warn them.

The rich man is in torment and he worries for his 5 brothers. He does not desire for them to come into this place of torment.

Luke 16:29 But **Abraham** said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'

Abraham answers that his brothers have *Moses and the Prophets,* indicating that they had access to the teaching of the Word of God, and through this teaching, they could find eternal life.

The gospel message is found throughout the Old Testament.

Luke 16:30 And he said, 'No, father **Abraham**, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent [= change their minds].'

The rich man pleads for Lazarus to be returned to life, as risen from the dead, to speak to them—to speak to his brothers. If that happens, they will change their minds, he says.

Luke 16:31 He [Jesus] said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.' "

This would be proven when Jesus rises from the dead after His crucifixion. Some would believe and some would not. Many unbelievers were aware that Jesus was not held by the tomb. The disciples and at least 500 others saw Jesus after His resurrection, which is what gave them the great boldness with which they spoke, proclaiming the name of Jesus despite the great persecution (you may recall that, when Jesus was crucified, the disciples all ran or denied Him—with the lone exception of John).

Luke 19:1–10 **Jesus and the Rich Tax Collector**

My guess is that, when some of you read this title, you thought, “What?” That is because this is a narrative which is not often taught or cited.

Luke, who presents the most thorough biography of Jesus and His public ministry, speaks of Jesus going into Jericho. Jericho is a city just west of the Jordan River, the first city

conquered by the children of Israel when they entered the land under the command of Joshua.

Jericho was on the border of Benjamin and Ephraim throughout the history of Israel.

Luke 19:1 He entered Jericho and was passing through.

People have distorted the previous narrative of Lazarus and the rich man, to indicate that there is something noble about being poor and something evil about being rich; and so the rich man goes to torments, but the poor man goes to Abraham's bosom. So, in this narrative, Jesus goes to the home of Zacchaeus, who was a tax collector and he was rich and successful. And he was short.

Luke 19:2 And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.

So that we are not confused and think that monetary possessions determine our future, we have this historical incident. Interestingly enough, even though liberals love the story of the rich young ruler, or of the rich man and Lazarus, they don't often mention this narrative (my guess is, never).

Luke 19:3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature.

Zacchaeus was small man, but he wanted to see Jesus. This indicates positive volition.

As an aside, this is not a narrative telling us how good it is to be short; and how evil it is to be tall. I realize that sounds like a ridiculously obvious thing to say, but bear in mind, people do that which the rich young ruler. They make that story all about being rich and how bad that is.

Luke 19:4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was about to pass that way.

The Tree of Zacchaeus (a graphic) from The Potter's Jar; accessed December 11, 2013.

He figured out the route that Jesus was going to take, and Jesus was surrounded by so many people, that Zacchaeus would not be able to see Him. Therefore, he determined a vantage point from which he might see the Lord as He passed by.

This actually tells us a great deal about Zacchaeus. He was able to look ahead; he was able to anticipate; and he was able to act decisively on future events which he could logically predict. This suggests that he may have also invested his money in many successful ventures. This is what an investor does. He makes an attempt to determine what is in the future, and then invests money accordingly.

Luke 19:5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

And then the most amazing thing happened—Zacchaeus is in the tree, having found a place from which he could see Jesus, and then Jesus looks up to him and says, “I am bunking at your home today.”

Luke 19:6 So he hurried and came down and received Him joyfully.

Zacchaeus is happy about this, and receiving Him joyfully means that he welcomed Jesus into his home. Obviously Zack has believed in Jesus and understands this to be a great honor to welcome into his home.

Luke 19:7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."

People of that era hated tax collectors, even though it was a legitimate profession, and they grumbled about Zacchaeus, calling him a *sinner*. I will admit that IRS agents are not my favorite people in the world; but this is just as if Jesus found a righteous IRS agent and went to his home to stay. There are honorable people who work for the government and for the IRS.

Luke 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

Zacchaeus was not a liberal who voted to make rich Charley Brown to give his excess monies to supplement the income of poor Lucy Van Pelt. Zack gave his own money to the poor; and under most systems of government, there are a great many poor in the land.

Now, why does God allow some place like the United States, with all of our degeneracy, to have very few truly destitute people; and other places like Africa to have millions of destitute people? Liberals often moan and groan about the poor and about how the rich just aren’t doing enough (while they, the liberals, do almost nothing). But, in reality, those whom we designate as poor in the United States live like rich people compared to the poor in other countries. Our welfare poor and working poor usually live in a home, own a car, a large television, DVD’s, have a phone or two, have electricity and water and sewage, and

a refrigerator filled with food. My guess is, about 80%[105] of the world does not have any of this. So, why does God allow this inequity to occur?

In the United States, many people believe in Jesus Christ. About 80% of Americans believe in God, and a huge percentage of those believe in Jesus Christ. Now, I am not prepared to tell you just how many Mormons or Catholics or Jehovah's Witnesses are saved, only that, those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ are saved and they cannot lose that salvation. What happens after they have believed is something else entirely.

We do not have these kinds of numbers elsewhere. Europe, at one time, did. At one time, there were many believers in England, in Spain and in Germany. Even in parts of Africa, there have been great periods of revival, where many have turned to Jesus. However, as a country's spiritual impact is reduced, so is the blessing that country receives. This is why being poor in the United States is much different than being poor in Mexico or Zimbabwe or Venezuela. They key is response to the gospel and then, once a person is saved, response to the teaching of the Word of God (and not all believers respond favorably to the teaching of the Word of God, even though it is in the same Bible which contains the gospel).

Luke 19:9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of **Abraham**.

Jesus is salvation. We are saved through faith in Christ. Zacchaeus had believed in Jesus or would believe in Him, and so would those in his household.

Essentially, in the days of Jesus, they used the phrase *son of Abraham* where we might use the words *Jew, Jewish, Hebrew*.

Zacchaeus represents the believing Jew that Jesus came to save. The Jews should have recognized Jesus and how He matched up with their Scriptures, and believed in Him. Therefore, Jesus came to the house of such Jews, which indicates fellowship. Unfortunately, this was not the response of all Jews during this time.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Jesus went to the home of Zacchaeus either because he or some in his home were lost, and meeting Jesus would cause them to believe in Him.

God provides the gospel message for anyone who has indicated an interest in God in his soul some point in time after God consciousness. Because God is perfect justice, we know that each person will receive such an opportunity.

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[105] I don't know the actual percentages.

Remember in the previous narrative, that the rich man wanted Lazarus, the poor man, to return from the dead and speak to his family, and Abraham told him, "They have Moses and the Prophets." So, actually meeting Jesus is not necessary for salvation. Thousands of people saw Jesus and saw Him perform miracles and healings, but they did not believe.

You may wonder how you would have reacted to Jesus, had you lived in that day and time. That is easy to determine. Your response to the gospel and your response to the teaching of the Word of God is how you would have responded to Jesus and His teaching at that time. Our positive volition is the same, no matter what period of time we happen to find ourselves in.

However, personally, I am glad to be alive right now, in this time period, despite the potentials for great political unrest as well as a potential loss of freedom. God has an exact purpose for every one of us at this time in this place. The more that you know about the Word of God, the more that you understand what God has for you. It is a day-by-day discovery where your focus should always be upon the truth.

Lessons 270–271: Genesis 25 via John 8:20–59 Abraham in the Gospel of John

In the next 2 lessons, we will examine the gospel of John, and take a look at the one passage where Abraham's name is invoked.

John 8:20–59 **Jesus' Message in the Treasury**

The only example is a narrative where both Jesus and the Jews who question Him speak about Abraham quite a number of times.

Jesus is speaking in the treasury, which was a section of the Temple (Mark 12:41).

The Temple, like the tabernacle, spoke of Jesus. In fact, that is a nice historical analogy. The tabernacle was a temporary place of worship which moved around from city to city. The tabernacle and its furniture (particularly the Ark of the Covenant) spoke of Jesus Christ. The Temple was a permanent structure built in Jerusalem which had the same furniture and also represented Jesus to come.

Interestingly enough, the tabernacle was designed by God and He required the Jews to construct it and to use it. King David thought about building a permanent house for the Lord, as the land of Israel was fully occupied by the Jews. This was an original idea, which God approved, but God said that David's son, Solomon, would build this temple. This is because David represented Jesus Christ in His 1st and 2nd advents. Therefore, he would be analogous to the Tabernacle, which was a temporary structure. David was a man of war, and Jesus, in His 1st and 2nd advents comes to a world beset by war. In fact, in the 2nd advent, Jesus will return and destroy the armies moving into Jerusalem; and then He will destroy all of the unbelievers on this earth.

Solomon was analogous to Jesus Christ in his reign over this earth in the Millennium, which is like a permanent reign (Jesus will reign on the earth for 1000 years of peace and prosperity). Therefore, God associates Solomon, who reigned in peace and prosperity, with Jesus in the Millennium; and with the permanent structure, the Temple. David is associated with Jesus when He first came as a man in our midst and when He returns to destroy the forces of evil (as David did as the Commander-in-Chief of Israel). David, when young, had nothing about him which suggested royalty or leadership (1Sam. 16); and Jesus was also quite unassuming in appearance (For He grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor majesty; and when we see him, there is no appearance that we should desire Him.—Isa. 53:2, Updated Bible version 2.11; capitalized). His visage is never described as kingly (He is *never* physically described, except in His glorified state); and after a 3 year public ministry, even the pharisees could not distinguish Him from His disciples.

Compared to the Temple, the tabernacle is also quite unassuming.

So Jesus is speaking in the treasury which is in the Temple:

John 8:20 These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; but no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come.

Jesus was not yet arrested, so He continued to teach, even in places where the religious crowd opposed Him. There would be a confluence of events much later on which would take Him to the cross. But, at this point, Jesus was free to teach, although He was challenged on many occasions.

John 8:21 So He said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come."

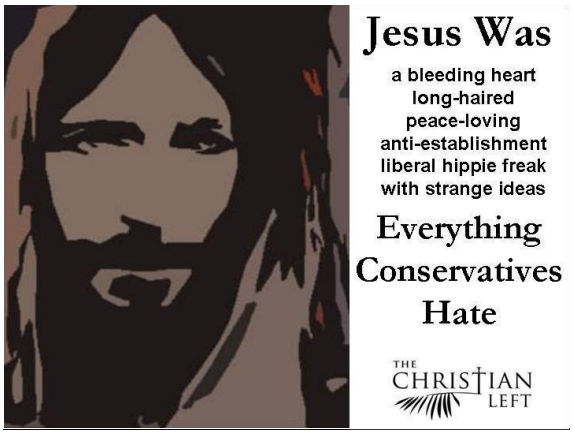
In the Temple treasury, Jesus was speaking to the unbeliever. Dying in one's sins means that one dies without exercising faith in Christ. Exercising unbelief for all one's life means that the unbeliever will not spend anytime in fellowship with God in eternity, so that they will not be able to go where Jesus will go.

Jesus Speaking in the Treasury (a graphic); an opaque watercolor over

graphite on gray wove paper by James Tissot circa 1890; from Wikimedia; accessed December 11, 2013.

John 8:22 So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"

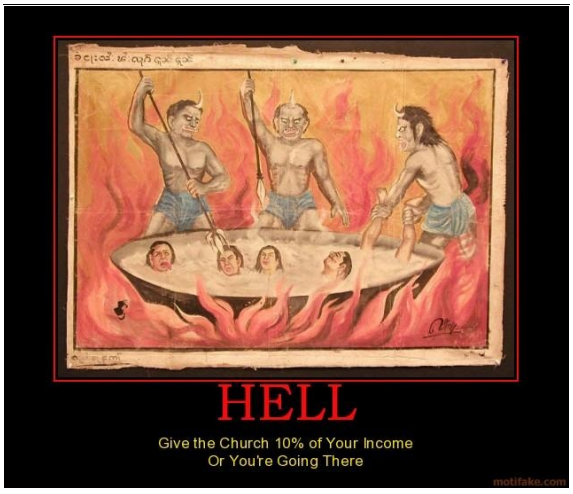
Those who did not have faith in Him often misunderstood what He taught. The unbeliever is unable to gather up spiritual information and put it all together. One of the things which we find in the gospels is, Jesus will say something, and then someone will give their [wrong] interpretation of what Jesus said. This should not be surprising, as we find this today, where liberals portray Jesus as a long-haired, sandal-wearing, redistributionist who gave away free healthcare to all. The only thing which is true in that description is, Jesus did wear sandals. For those who doubt this, read **Jesus is not a liberal** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). I see graphics by liberals all of the time trying to tie Jesus to some aspect of liberalism as well as graphics by liberal atheists which attack something that Jesus said or did. In both cases, whatever Jesus said or did is inevitably misunderstood.



Jesus was a liberal (a graphic) is a typical graphic and represents the sentiments of many liberals (those who believe that Jesus existed). Graphic from Religion against the ropes blog, accessed January 1, 2014.

This graphic is typical of the liberal who believes that Jesus really existed; and they somehow think that Jesus would today participate in union demonstrations, would be pro-abortion, would favor increasing the size and scope of government, so that free healthcare can abound to all.

Atheists, most of whom are liberal, cannot use Jesus are emulating their ideas, as they mostly believe that He did not exist. Therefore, they have their own graphics, many of which cannot get even the concept of salvation right.



Graphic about hell. This was taken from TN Valley talk, which appears to be a Christian website (accessed January 1, 2014). If that is the case, the graphic (like most graphics) is not really original with them. This graphic is an example of atheists who make the complaint that you will go to hell if you do not tithe, something which is not taught in the Bible.

Based upon what we read in the gospels, we should expect people to misunderstand and/or misrepresent what Jesus taught.

John 8:22 So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"

So, in this context, those listening to Jesus either misinterpreted what He said, or just did not understand what He said.

John 8:23–24 He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins."

And then Jesus explains, differentiating between the saved and unsaved, those who die in their sins and those who believe in Him.

John 8:25a So they said to him, "Who are You?"

So they outright ask Him, “Who are You that we should believe in You?” This is actually a reasonable question. My guess, based upon the context, is, the person asking this question was not eliciting information, but saying this in a sarcastic way; but Jesus will eventually give them a clear answer.

John 8:25b–26 Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to judge, but He who sent Me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from Him."

After a person has believed in Jesus Christ, the key to the Christian life is knowledge and positive volition toward this knowledge. What Jesus said comes from God the Father. Jesus declares the Father’s words to the world

John 8:27 They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.

As was often the case, what Jesus said was not understood. They did not realize that Jesus was speaking of God the Father.

John 8:28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on My Own authority, but I speak just as the Father taught Me.

At many points in Jesus’ very short ministry, He spoke of the cross, and this is what He is speaking of here. When He speaks of being lifted up, this is Him being placed on the cross. He will do this in obedience to God the Father.

John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

Jesus *doing the things which are pleasing to the Father* simply means that God the Father has the plan and God the Son executes this plan.

John 8:30 As He was saying these things, many believed in Him.

Despite not fully understanding all that Jesus was saying, many believed on Him at this time. When it comes to the gospel, we do not have a complete picture of Jesus or what He has done on our behalf when we believe. Surely, none of the people there fully understood that He was speaking of the cross, as none of them understood that was an event that would occur in their future. However, some of the men there still put their trust in Jesus, knowing very little about Him.

Ideally speaking, after salvation, the believer learns much more about what he has done by believing in Jesus. Ideally, the new believer discovers, after awhile, just what it is that he has signed himself up for. Given this narrative, it is clear that many there did not fully understand what Jesus is saying; and yet, many believed in Him.

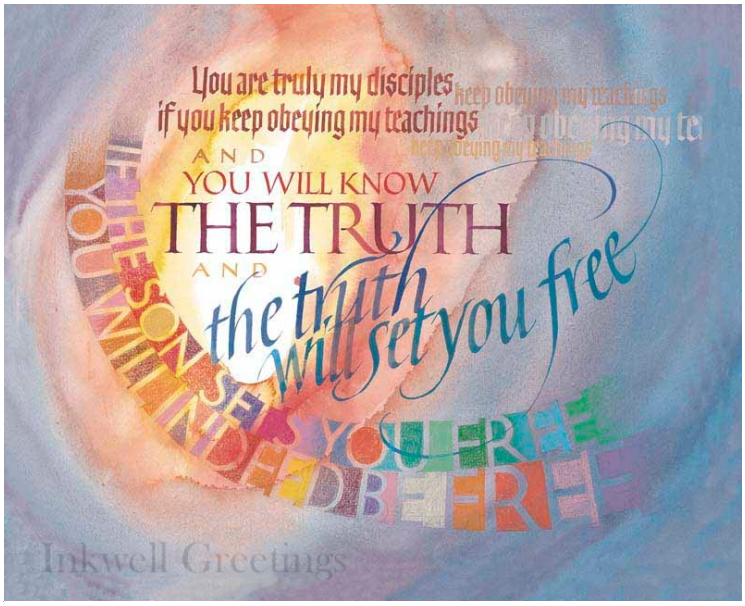
Personally, at the time that I believed in Jesus Christ, I did not fully understand that He had been resurrected. I did not know where He was after the crucifixion. And this is after attending many Easter services and similar celebrations, as well as Easter egg hunts. Whatever I heard as an unbeliever, I either did not take in or I forgot immediately.

Now, Jesus explains that, to truly be His disciple, they need to learn Bible doctrine. They have believed in Him and they are eternally saved from this point on, but to follow Him means they need to understand His Word.

John 8:31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples,...

The word *abide* is aorist active subjunctive of ménô (μένω) [pronounced *MEH-noh*], which means *to remain, to abide, to dwell, to live*. The Thayer definitions are as follows: *1) to remain, abide; 1a) in reference to place; 1a1) to sojourn, tarry; 1a2) not to depart; 1a2a) to continue to be present; 1a2b) to be held, kept, continually; 1b) in reference to time; 1b1) to continue to be, not to perish, to last, endure; 1b1a) of persons, to survive, live; 1c) in reference to state or condition; 1c1) to remain as one, not to become another or different; 2) to wait for, await one*. Strong's #3306. The aorist tense, although it usually refers to a past action or to a completed action; it can also refer to successive and discrete acts (that is the iterative aorist). Abiding in the Word refers to the periods of time when a person is in fellowship and he is learning Bible doctrine. It also refers to the times in a person's life where they think Bible doctrine.

Abiding in Christ's word is the key to the Christian life. We are all saved through faith in Him. But we advance in the Christian life by living (abiding) in the Word. What that means is, we simply expose ourselves to the teaching of the Word of God, perhaps an hour each day; we believe that Word (which is, in part, entering into His rest); and we think divine viewpoint. When we are out of fellowship, we are not abiding in the Word.



John 8:32 ...and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

The Truth Will Set You Free (a graphic); from Sweetened Condensed Milk; accessed December 11, 2013.

When Jesus spoke, the truth was what He said. Today, truth is found in the Bible. The Bible is the mind of Christ (1Cor. 2:16). Understanding the truth of the Word of God and the mechanics of the Christian life is what gives us true freedom—even occasional freedom from the sin nature (when we are filled with the Spirit).

John 8:33 They answered Him, "We are offspring of **Abraham** and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

This statement ought to give you an idea as to the pride of these people. They were under Roman rule and they had been so for some time. They were not enslaved to the Romans, but Israel was not a free and independent state; and it had not been for over 400 years.

Furthermore, they did not understand the true nature of the bondage that they were under. Jesus is speaking of a spiritual bondage, both to the sin nature and to the thinking of Satan (the thinking of Satan is *evil*). He is not talking about freedom in the political sense.

His audience somehow connects their freedom to Abraham, but they do not know exactly how that comes about. Therefore, Jesus will explain what spiritual slavery is.

Abraham's name will occur 11 times in this passage.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

Jesus gives them the most elementary lesson on slavery. If you commit sin, you are a slave to sin. Obviously, we have all committed sins. When you have committed a sin, then you are out of fellowship. That makes you a slave to your sin nature (which is often the meaning of the word *sin* in the singular). Until you name your sin to God (1John 1:9), you will remain out of fellowship.

John 8:35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the Son remains forever.

Legitimate servitude has an endpoint; unless the slave agrees to be a permanent slave. We are slaves to the sin nature; but we will either be freed of this positionally through faith in Christ, or we will leave this life, dying in our sins. In either case, the Son remains forever. Remember the Greek word ménô (μένω) [pronounced *MEH-noh*] from above? That is the Greek word behind *remains*. The Son is our escape; it is through Him we are freed from sin, but positionally and potentially for periods of time in time (while we are in fellowship).

Who are the slaves about whom Jesus is speaking? The people to whom He is speaking. They are slaves to their sin natures.

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

The freedom that Jesus offers is freedom from sin—and after salvation, this occurs intermittently (as we are filled with the Spirit); and in eternity, we live in a state of non-sin without the sin nature.

If you have ever tried to imagine that, what it might be like to live without a sin nature; you may be concerned that you will sin. There is an analogous situation which we can relate to—there are sins which do not tempt us. You may not be tempted to do drugs, to get drunk, to chase women, to gossip, to be jealous of others—there are a set of sins of some sort which do not really tempt you. That is what life will be like without a sin nature. We will retain our free will; but we will no longer be tempted by any sin. The sin which besets us the most today will be just like the sin which tempts us not at all today.

John 8:37 I know that you are offspring of **Abraham**; yet you seek to kill Me because My Word finds no place in you.

There are two groups of people listening to Jesus. There are those who have believed in Him; and there are the skeptics. These two groups were often present whenever He spoke (there are exceptions to this in the Bible, however).

The people questioning Jesus want to see Him killed, even though they are genetically descended from Abraham. The problem is, Jesus teaches truth, and they have rejected truth; consequently, they have rejected Him. Being genetically related to Abraham is not good enough. They must exercise faith in Abraham's God, Who is Jesus. He is the key to their true freedom.

I have seen this sort of anger in a religious context and in a political context. If a person proselytizes for Jesus Christ in a Muslim country, they may find themselves subject to imprisonment or death or persecution, by the state and by individuals.

In a political context, I have seen people—usually liberals (but not always)—when faced with a different point of view (particularly a point of view which they cannot answer), they can become quite angry and abusive. I have seen political discussions on line, when one person wishes harm or death upon another, simply because they disagree about a politician, a point of view or a program. At the very least, I have seen a silencing of the opposition viewpoint as a desired outcome.

For Jesus, it could not be more of a contrast. The religious hierarchy taught a religion of merit, and Jesus taught a relationship based upon grace and upon Him. If this seems farfetched to you, imagine a person carrying a sign, “I believe in Jesus” (written in Farsi) in Iran. Such a person would not last an hour on a busy street there. He would be imprisoned, censored, or possibly killed on the spot.

John 8:38 I speak of what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

These people operated on the value system which they chose; but that value system has come from Satan. They operated from the thinking of Satan, their father. The thinking of Satan is evil.

With regards to the concept of evil, I have not covered this concept specifically yet in this study of Genesis, but I will. The short version is, *evil* is the policy, plan and thinking of Satan. Evil can contain within it human good. Human good is that which is produced by the flesh; and many times, human good is evil. Giving money to some organizations can be extremely evil; giving money to some political candidates can be evil.

John 8:39a They answered Him, "**Abraham** is our father."

The Jews base their relationship to God on their being descended from Abraham; they do not want to have a relationship with the true God.

You have seen the word *repent* over and over in the gospels; and in some of the epistles. This word means to change their mind. The Jews think that they have a relationship to God through Abraham. They don’t. Abraham is a type; and Jesus is the antitype. Jews have a relationship to God through Jesus Christ. This is what they need to change their minds about. Being born a Jew does not give them an automatic in with God. It gives them a model or a type; but they have to follow through with faith in Jesus.

John 8:39b–41a 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 your father did."

Jesus is telling them that they are of their father, the devil. Satan's objective is to kill Jesus, and this is what they want to do (I do not believe that the genius Satan understood that the cross would be the event which breaks his back).

Abraham desired fellowship with the Revealed God, Who is the Preincarnate Christ. That is not what some of the people in this crowd want.

John 8:41b They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father--even God."

Once again, they do not understand what Jesus is saying, which has been true throughout this discourse. Jesus questions who their true father is; and they are reaffirming their relationship to Abraham (they are not bastards; they are not half-breeds; they are not born of incest); and their true Father is God. Jesus is not telling them that they are bastards or half-breeds or born out of incest. That is not His point at all.

John 8:42–43 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.

Jesus says they reveal their nature, because they reject Him and they reject His Word. If they were of God, then they would believe Him because He teaches what He knows from God.

John 8:44–45 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.

Jesus lays it on pretty heavy at this point; He says that these religious types are of their father the devil. He specifically states this, which He had not stated so clearly before.

John 8:46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?

Truth is Bible doctrine. And these men, who have watched Jesus intently, know that He has not sinned. They have been trying to catch Him committing any sin, that they might have an excuse to bring Him to the Romans for execution. They are looking for a misstep or a misstatement; anything that they can use against Him.

John 8:47 Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

Jesus tells them that their problem is, they reject Him because they reject the True God. They do not understand the Word of God because they have rejected God's Son.

This is so common today. People may not reject Jesus outright; but they make Jesus in their own image. They proclaim that he is pro-gay rights, or that He came to make sure that we are all tolerant (regarding anyone except Christians, of course); or that He taught that the rich are bad people and that the government should take more of their money. They reject Jesus for Who He really is; and then make up something about Him and proclaim that as His true message. In other words, they make God into their own image.

John 8:48 The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

It is not clear whether this was the latest rumor or whether these men thought of this right on the spot. However, they have to explain why Jesus is Who He is. How can He perform miracles; how can He sound so wise? In the thinking of these Jews, Jesus cannot be a fellow Jew (Samaritan's are half-Jewish); and He must have a demon guiding Him. This is their thinking, despite knowing that Jesus has not committed any sins; He has explained the Law better than any pharisee, and He has performed miracles.

John 8:49–50 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. Yet I do not seek My Own glory; there is One who seeks it, and He is the judge.

Jesus does not seek to glorify Himself, but to glorify God the Father, Who is judge over all.

John 8:51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death."

Keeping Jesus' word means to first believe in Him.

John 8:52–53 The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! **Abraham** died, as did the prophets, yet You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death.' Are You greater than our father **Abraham**, who died? And the prophets died! Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

The Jews believe that they have Jesus. They know that all of the prophets have died; they know that Abraham has died. How can Jesus claim that keeping His Word means that such a one will never taste death (Jesus is referring to eternal death; eternal separation from God).

John 8:54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father Who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'

Jesus glorifies God the Father; God the Father glorifies Him. The Jews before Jesus claim that this is their God. His Father is the One these Jews claim that they worship.

John 8:55 But you have not known Him. I know Him. If I were to say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know Him and I keep His word.

Jesus tells these religious types that they do not know God. Jesus, however, does.

Keeping the word of His Father was to remain within the plan of God throughout His life, which included the cross. He had to claim an intimate relationship with God, because saying anything else would be false.

John 8:56 Your father **Abraham** rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad."

You will recall the promises which God made to Abraham. Some were immediate, to having a son; but there was also going to be a son of Abraham Who would fulfill all of God's promises to Abraham. That is Jesus. Therefore, Abraham would rejoice to see this day. Abraham saw this prophetically (although it is debatable just how much he understood of his Son Who would inherit all); and, apparently, Abraham is able to see, to some degree, what is going on now. What Abraham sees makes him glad.

As an aside, it is questionable just how much the patriarchs and the prophets understood of the promises made to them and the prophecies that they themselves spoke. Whereas, today, you can go on the internet and find hundreds of interpretations of the end times, with a great deal of specificity, we do not find that with the ancient traditions of the Jews. In fact, Jesus, as Messiah, confused them. They did not believe in Him; and therefore, they could not make a clear association between the Messianic prophecies and Jesus.

John 8:57 So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen **Abraham**?"

The Jews listening to Jesus do not quite get it. Obviously, Jesus has never spoken to Abraham, because He is not even 50 years old. How can He know what Abraham thinks? Asking Jesus if He has seen Abraham is intended to be understood as an insult.

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before **Abraham** was, I am."

Or, to put this in language that we might understand: "Before Abraham, came into existence, I existed eternally."

We first have the adverb prin (πρίν) [pronounced *prihn*], which means, *before, formerly*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #4250. The verb attached to Abraham is the aorist middle infinitive of gínomai (γίνομαι) [pronounced *GIN-oh-my*], which means *to become, to come into existence, to come to pass, to be*. Strong's #1096. The aorist tense is a point of time, generally in the past. This is a deponent verb, so context and not form determines whether the meaning is active, passive or middle;

The verb Jesus associates with Himself is the present indicative of eimi (εἰμί) [pronounced *eye-ME*], which means *to be, is, was, will be; am; to exist; to stay; to take place, to occur; to be present [available]*. Strong's #1510. So, Abraham comes into existence at a specific point in time (aorist tense), but before that, Jesus is continually in existence (present tense,

which is generally continuous or durative action in the present; but the beginning adverb starts this action before Abraham). The word *eternally* is not found, but since the present tense indicates continuous action, which suggests eternal existence—an existence which predates Abraham. So Jesus, the man standing before this hostile crowd, tells them that he existed before Abraham.

Because Jesus spoke Greek and the Jews listening to Him spoke Greek, they understood what He was saying. People today—particularly those who know nothing about the Greek—may argue about what Jesus is saying; but these Jews fully understand what He means. Here, He is saying that He existed before Abraham; making Him God.

John 8:59 So they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out.

Although many people act as though Jesus never proclaimed Himself to be God, here He did and the people listening to Him understood it and took up stones to kill Him for blasphemy (it would be blasphemy if He was lying). Jesus claimed to exist before Abraham. He is saying that He is God.

Lessons 272–273: Genesis 25 via Acts 3 Abraham in the Book of Acts Part I

We are continuing with a New Testament perspective of Abraham, whose name occurs about 75 times in the New Testament. Most of the mentions are incidental, but our knowledge of Abraham helps to increase our understanding of these passages.

Abraham in the book of Acts:

Abraham's name is invoked throughout the Bible. He will be mentioned in 3 sermons given in the book of Acts. At this point, you ought to have a much better idea of what is meant when his name comes up.

Bear in mind that the message that Jesus has risen from the dead, and that He is God Who walked among us as the Promised Messiah—this message went out to the Jewish population first. When Abraham's name was mentioned, nearly all of the audience would have a frame of reference.

This first sermon is given by Peter after he makes whole a lame man—a man who had been lame since birth, and was known to everyone there, as he laid daily at a gate to the Temple, asking for a personal offering.

Acts 3:12 And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? (ESV)

Peter is speaking to a crowd and he has just performed a miracle. Curing this lame beggar caused quite a stir, which is the *it* that Peter sees. Peter had just called for this man to walk. When someone is lame for any period of time, their leg muscles atrophy. There is no reason for the muscles of their legs to work. Even if such a person has restored feeling in his legs, he is still looking at months, if not years, of physical therapy, to be able to walk again. However, when this lame man was cured, he sprung to his feet and started walking all over. So this cure was completely and totally miraculous. The muscles in his legs were immediately restored. He does not go in for physical therapy to make up for a lifetime of never using his legs.

People are amazed to see this, and they run to see Peter and John in Solomon's Temple. So Peter asks them, "Do you think we cured this man from our own power or because we are really, really religious?" The answer to both of those questions is, *no*.

The Healing of the Lame Man (a graphic) by Raphael 1483 - 1520 (bodycolour on paper on canvas c. 1516). From ArtBible.info. Accessed December 30, 2013.

Acts 3:13 The God of **Abraham**, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His servant Jesus, Whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. (ESV, capitalized)

God glorified Jesus. Notice how Peter immediately diverts their attention away from the miracle and toward Jesus. The ability to perform miracles was the credit card of the Apostles, until they had established their identities and their authority as speaking from God. The purpose of these miracles was to gain a hearing. It is not the miracles which are important, but the message of the Apostles which follows the miracle. But the miracle indicates where God's power is.

Understand that there was no reason for anyone to listen to the message of the Apostles. Insofar as many were concerned, their Leader was dead, executed by the Romans as demanded by the Jews. Therefore, whatever this movement was that Jesus began—it should be dead. Yet, these Apostles are speaking boldly of the Risen Lord. Although many had seen the risen Lord (500+ people), that is not enough to convince the millions of people who did not. So the Apostles perform amazing miracles, and afterwards, speak of Jesus. It is the miracles which draws the people to them.

This particular miracle was quite amazing, because everyone in this area knew this lame beggar. Men carried this beggar to his station by one of the gates to the Temple, so

everyone walked by him for years and years. They all knew his face, they all knew his condition, they have probably seen his weak, muscle-less legs (that would have brought him more donations than having them covered up). And in one instant, he has full and complete use of his legs, as if there had never been anything wrong with them. He stands up and walks around, which is impossible.

Miracles like this were not done to alleviate suffering. They were illustrative—the man was weak and helpless, unable to cure himself—and he is here healed by God. This illustrates the salvation of the soul. Secondly, miracles were done to show that God had given power and authority to these Apostles. Who do you give a hearing to? The so-called theological scholars who have been distorting the Old Testament Scriptures for years, or these Apostles who could undeniably cure people for whom there was no cure.

As soon as the authority of the Apostles was clearly established (which took decades), then these miraculous abilities faded away. Paul, for instance, did not call for a healer to come in and to heal Timothy's upset stomach, but recommended taking a little wine for his stomach's sake (1Tim. 5:23). Later, Paul had to leave behind another disciple because he was too sick to travel (2Tim. 4:20). These epistles were written near the end of Paul's earthly ministry and suggest that he did not have the gift of healing near the end of his ministry. By that time, his authority was well-established and accepted by the early church. He no longer had to heal someone in order to get a hearing. When he sent an epistle to the church at Corinth, where he rips half the congregation apart for their behavior and actions outside the Spirit, the Corinthians accepted and listened to the correction which he sent, and they took action to cure the problems Paul spoke of. Paul's authority with them had been established. Paul did not need to go to Corinth and perform a miracle in order to get them to listen to him.

This passage in Acts is at the very beginning of the ministry of the Apostles. They are just beginning to establish their authority; and therefore, they are in full possession of all the sign gifts. What these gifts do is give them a hearing; these gifts give them credibility as coming from God.

What happened here was none of this is hokey like you see in little holy roller churches today. None of this is like the false charismatic churches that we find today, where the onus for healing is placed upon the person being healed ("Do you *really* have faith; because if you don't, God won't heal you"). The healings done by the Apostles could not be denied; they were every bit as amazing as the healings done by Jesus. And none of their healings failed because the recipient did not have enough faith.

If no one is performing great miracles anymore, then what is there to draw people? What is the basis for their power and authority? The book of Hebrews tells us: the Word of God is alive and powerful. Billy Graham in his crusades in the 1950's and 1960's drew tens of thousands of people to each event, and millions witnessed these events on television. He did not heal anyone. He did not speak in tongues. He did not perform any miracles. He simply spoke the Word of God in the power of the Spirit. I have seen an evangelist speak to about 1200 hungry Freshmen kids, and that lunch bell rang, and he said, "Just give me

5 more minutes, will you?" And there was not a peep out of any of those kids. Now, that was a damn miracle which I saw with my own eyes. They were transfixed and listening carefully to what he said, because he spoke the truth, and they knew what he said was important to their own lives. It was the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peter has the attention of the crowd. They knew that no one could have cured this man unless the power of God is with him. But Peter focuses their attention not on the miracle, but on Jesus Christ. The miracle is not important; Jesus is important.

Acts 3:14–15 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, Whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. (ESV, capitalized)

Peter is speaking to the Jews about Jesus being given a potential pardon by Pilate, but the Jews demanded that a murderer instead be released. Pilate, trying to figure out how to get out of the spot he was in, said, that he would free either Jesus or this gangster thug, Barabbas. Pilate figured that this would be easy. Offer the people of Israel a pardon for a gangster versus a pardon for an innocent man—Pilate was certain the crowd would pick Jesus to be pardoned, because He had done nothing wrong. However, on the contrary, the people called for the release of Barabbas. Killing Jesus was an act of volition which the people fully participated in. They called for His death.

The crucifixion itself fulfilled Ex. 12:6b, which reads, literally: And all the assembly of the congregation of Israel will kill [plural verb] him [masculine singular suffix] between the evenings. Your Bible may not be translated at all like this, but this is all about the first Passover. For all intents and purpose, the plural verb has a singular subject (*Israel*); whereas, what is killed, a number of male lambs, one for each household, is designated by a masculine singular suffix.

Peter continues with his sermon:

Acts 3:16 And His name--by faith in His name--has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all. (ESV, capitalized)

Peter again reminds his audience of what they have just seen. He is not bragging here; he is pointing out something which they have never seen before (unless they witnessed some healings of Jesus). Peter is teaching his audience some doctrine; and he can tell that some of them are becoming angry, so he brings them back to the miracle that they just witnessed, a miracle which they cannot deny. This shows that Peter has become an excellent public speaker, as he is able to look at his audience, figure out what they are thinking, and then he gets them to refocus.

It is Jesus who restored health to the man that Peter healed. Peter properly gives the credit for this healing to Jesus, and reminds the people that they know this man and they can see with their own eyes that he has been miraculously restored to health.

Furthermore, this healing is illustrative, just as the healings of Jesus were illustrative. The person healed came to the Apostles with faith and this faith was parlayed into being healed. We all have and exercise faith daily. But the key is the direction of that faith; and the faith of that lame man is in the Name of Jesus Christ; his faith is not directed toward Peter. So this healing illustrated to everyone, *believe in Jesus' name and you will be healed*. That was the salvation message. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

Acts 3:17 "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. (ESV)

Peter allows that they acted in ignorance. He allows that there might even be people standing before him that day who called for the killing of Jesus. *Their rulers* is a reference to the Romans who controlled Judæa.

Despite their sin in calling for the death of Jesus, God, in His mercy, will allow them the chance to believe in Jesus. Jesus has historically died for their sins and God has raised Him from the dead. Many of the Jews thought that Christ was dead; dispensed with; and yet, now before them is this *little-Christ* who also can perform miracles and who powerfully speaks the Word of God to them.

Peter continues:

Acts 3:18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ [= *Messiah*] would suffer, He thus fulfilled. (ESV, capitalized with insertion)

Christ means *Messiah*. It was foretold that Jesus would suffer as Messiah. This was revealed most graphically in Isa. 53, but Psalm 22 also presents a parallel picture of Jesus on the cross. We have already studied in Gen. 22 Abraham offering up his son Isaac, and how this represented Jesus dying for our sins. What Abraham did is called a *type;* and when Jesus offered up Himself for our sins, that is known as an *antitype*.

The fact of the suffering of the Messiah is found in the Old Testament; but it was not being taught, nor did the religious types of Jesus' day take it into consideration.

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out,... (ESV)

Repent means *change your minds;* and they are supposed to change their minds about Jesus. People today are also called upon to change their minds. The unbeliever has all kinds of ideas about Jesus—just Who He is. Some think He is a good man saying a lot of really nice things. Some think that He is a sandal-wearing, long-haired hippie pacifist dispensing free healthcare. Some think that He never existed; that somehow, a few people just decided to just make up His existence, and even people of His era were fooled into believing that He existed. In that crowd, there were people who believed Jesus to be a heretic; and many there believed that His era was over with. Peter calls upon people who believe these incorrect things about Jesus to change their minds about Him.

The word translated *to turn again* is epistrephô (ἐπιστρέφω) [pronounced *ep-ee-STREF-o*], which means, *1) transitively; 1a) to turn to; 1a1) to the worship of the true God; 1b) to cause to return, to bring back; 1b1) to the love and obedience of God; 1b2) to the love for the children; 1b3) to love wisdom and righteousness; 2) intransitively; 2a) to turn to one's self; 2b) to turn one's self about, turn back; 2c) to return, turn back, come back*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #1994.

Repentance and turning again are essentially the same thing as believing in Jesus Christ. They are the other side of the same coin. One side of the coin says, "Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved." The obverse reads, "Change your mind about Jesus." When they change their minds about Jesus and believe in Him, the end result is, their sins are blotted out.

Acts 3:20 ...that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ [Messiah] appointed for you, Jesus,... (ESV, capitalized)

The times of refreshing refers to when Jesus had walked the earth. And personally, the times of refreshing is a person being reborn.

Acts 3:21 ...Whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago. (ESV)

This would be the 2nd advent of Jesus Christ, which is when He will return as a conquering Hero. This return is known as the *time for restoring*.

Jesus must be received in the heavens. The restoration of all things would be the removal of sin from the world, as predicted by the prophets. This would return the earth to a perfect environment.

Now let's put these verses together, with the slight change of taking the portion which is parenthetical and putting that into parentheses:

Acts 3:17–21 "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ [= *Messiah*] would suffer, He thus fulfilled (Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out); that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ [Messiah] appointed for you, Jesus, Whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago.

Now let's remove the parenthetical portion:

Acts 3:17–18, 20–21 "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ [= *Messiah*] would suffer, He thus fulfilled; that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ [Messiah] appointed for you, Jesus,

Whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago.

So, what Peter has done is something which is found many times in the Old Testament; he takes the 1st and 2nd advents of our Lord and throws them together as if one event. For Peter, at that point in time, the 1st advent was past and the 2nd advent was future; but he presents them together. The Old Testament Bible taught two advents, but they were not always separated in Scripture. So we have instance after instance of the 1st and 2nd advents of Jesus presented as one event, but intercalated between these events is the Church Age. See the **Doctrine of Intercalation** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). (This is an amazing doctrine, if you are unaware of it). Peter presents the gospel of Jesus Christ in the same framework here, and in the middle of these advents calls for his listeners to Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.

Acts 3:22–23 Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to Him in whatever He tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that Prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' (ESV, capitalized; Deut. 18:15–16, 19)

The Prophet that Moses spoke of was Jesus being brought before the people.

It would come to pass that those who did not listen to the prophet; who did not hear Jesus; they would be destroyed. This prophecy has a duel fulfillment: the Jews in the time of Christ who rejected Him would be destroyed, along with the city of Jerusalem; and not listening to that Prophet indicates negative volition, which results in eternal separation from God.

Some people choose eternal separation from God. They spend every waking moment on this earth pushing away the God Who saved them; Who sent His Son; Who requires perfect righteousness. We live in a world where it is easy to have some understanding of love and hate, righteousness and unrighteousness, and justice and injustice, even perfection and imperfection. These concepts are fundamental to life and we can all relate to them. In fact, there are studies of infants unable to walk who appear to have an innate understanding of these concepts. I have been to many web pages by atheists, and they all have some understanding of these concepts. Those who reject Jesus (and they must reject Jesus for every waking moment of their lives) logically reject a God of love, righteousness, justice and perfection. Such a person often worships the creation over the Creator (that is, they become overly concerned about global warming, about man-made justice, even animals).

Salvation means that, you have spent at least a few seconds of your life believing in Jesus Christ. In order for you to be damned, your rejection of God must continue throughout every moment of your entire life; and it is logical that if you reject God for every second of your 60 or 70 years; that you will not suddenly, at death, decide, “Oh yes, I really want to spent the rest of eternity with God.” It is not just a matter of, *you had your chance and you threw it away;* it is a matter of your volition and the application of your volition with regards

to God and His Son, Jesus. Your rejection of the Person of Jesus Christ, whether you are religious or a heathen, carries over from life into eternity. Rejecting Jesus for every moment of your life, means that you have rejected His love, righteousness, justice and perfection.

Furthermore, every atheist and every person who has rejected Jesus understands these concepts and often brings these things to the forefront in their attacks of Jesus or of Christianity or of Christians. How many times have you heard, "Would a God of love allow this to happen?" And then have a graphic of something which is truly sad—victims of war, of vicious attacks, of malnutrition—completely ignoring man's volition in these matters. And many times, these same people refuse to admit to a single fault, or recognize their need. But Jesus is the very embodiment of God's love and righteousness and justice and perfection.

This same Jesus who is testified to throughout the Old Testament.

Acts 3:24 And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days.

Samuel also proclaimed the Messiah and the days of restoration, as did all the other prophets. The restoration of this earth can be found in the writings of many of the prophets.

Acts 3:25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to **Abraham**, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' (ESV; Gen. 22:18)

Abraham's *Offspring* is Jesus. This is where his line would lead to. It is through Jesus that all people would be blessed. This is one of the many amazing things about the Old Testament. Many people understood that the blessing of the world would come by the descendants from Abraham; and, in a sense, that is true. But, as this relates to the Messiah, the way that Peter is teaching this same passage, the *Offspring* (*Seed, Descendant*) refers to Jesus. Paul teaches the same thing. That which would bless the world is Abraham's Seed, Who is Jesus.

There are many things understood in the Old Testament in a particular way, that find a new understanding in the New Testament. The way these things were understood in the Old Testament is not rejected or abandoned, but are given a new dimension of truth.

There are people and events in the Old Testament who were always understood in a particular way. However, once we come to the New Testament, the understanding of these people and events is altered and shaped by the New Testament. Nothing in the Old Testament is false or historically inaccurate or incorrectly interpreted by Old Testament standards; it is just that the New Testament adds a new dimension to old truths.

Reinterpreting Old Testament Truths

Old Testament	New Testament
Abraham offering up his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God is seen in the Old Testament as the proof of Abraham's obedience to God.	After the cross, it is clear that this act of obedience looks forward to the offering by God the Father of His Son Jesus on the cross.
The Passover was presented as a ritual, that, because the people of Israel were obedient to this ritual, God did not kill their firstborn. In fact, if anyone, even Egyptian families, followed this ritual, their own firstborn would not die.	The Passover—and the first Passover in particular—is representative of the offering of Jesus. God sees the slaughtered lamb—that we place ourselves under the slaughtered lamb—and He passes over us, and does not impute to us the judgment we so deserve.
Moses is refused entry into the Land of Promise because of one act of disobedience to God. It is as if all that he did in obedience to God, for 40 years, are set aside because of one sin.	The key is, Moses, who is closely associated with the Law, cannot bring his people into the Land of Promise. The Law cannot save (Gal. 3:24). The one who brings them into the Land of Promise is Joshua, whose name means *savior,* and which is translated into the Greek as *Jesus*.
Although David has the idea to build a permanent residence for God (the Temple), God tells him that he would not build this Temple because of all the blood on his hands. However, his son Solomon would build the Temple.	David is associated with Jesus in His 1st and 2nd advents, where Jesus will return and kill millions of people. But Solomon is associated with Jesus when He rules over New Israel from Mount Zion, in a time of great peace and prosperity (the Millennium). Therefore, Solomon is associated with the Temple of God.

These are 4 examples. There are many more. The way in which Moses disobeyed God in the Old Testament comes off as a simple act of disobedience. However, when it is related to the illustration of salvation by the cross; so it becomes obvious why Moses' act of disobedience was so wrong.

The way that Isaac is born is another example. It is presented in the Old Testament as being the result of a life of faith, and God finally rewards Abraham for his great faith. But, in the New Testament, suddenly we see all of these parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jesus. Isaac's birth, in retrospect, takes on a whole new dimension.

The point is, there are many things in the Old Testament which are understood in a particular way. However, once we get to the New Testament and particularly to the cross of Christ, these Old Testament people and events can be seen in a completely new light. This does not negate the way these events were previously understood; but it adds a new dimension of understanding to them.

Let me give you an example from your life. When you first heard about the healings that Jesus did, you were probably an unbeliever and understood that He healed these people out of compassion because they were suffering (assuming that you thought these miracles to be true). However, at some point after becoming a believer in Jesus Christ, you have begun to understand that this miracles are representative—they illustrate God's ultimate healing which is offered to every single one of us, which healing is attained by faith in Christ. You understood the miracles of Jesus in one way; and then later, when you learned some Bible doctrine, you saw them in a different light. The way that you understood miracles before was not wrong, but you did not have the full story. You got that through the teaching of the Word of God.

Back to Peter's sermon:

Acts 3:25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to **Abraham**, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' (ESV; Gen. 22:18)

Peter, for the second time, quotes the Old Testament. The Old Testament was his Bible.

Those who were listening to Peter speak, they are called *sons of the prophets,* not because they were literally descended from the prophets, but they understood the divine nature of the writings of the prophets—this was essential to their culture as Jews. They knew that their prophets spoke the truth.

Acts 3:26 God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness." (ESV, capitalized)

Jesus was sent to the Jews first; and then to all the world. The wickedness of the Jews was nothing like the sins that we observe in the United States today. For the most part, the Jews were very moral and upright. They did sin, of course, and they were rebellious and hard-headed, but, for the most part, they were moral and honest. Their wickedness included sin, but it included their self-righteousness as well. Their wickedness was summed up in their religion of merit.

You all know people who think that they deserve what they have, when they really don't. Perhaps they are born rich and they feel as if it is theirs and they deserve it; or a woman is born extremely beautiful, and she believes that she deserves the best because of her physical beauty; or a welfare recipient believes that they deserve the handout that they get and should not have to work for it. For most of you, you understand at least one of those illustrations, and you think to yourself, when you meet such a person, "You don't deserve

that. You haven't done anything worthwhile to deserve what you have." This is the wickedness of the Jews. They believed that they deserved a relationship with God because they are descendants of Abraham and Peter is telling them to turn away from that wickedness.

God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to you [Jews] first. The Jews, as a whole, rejected Jesus. As a result, He turned to the gentiles. His Apostles would do the same. Paul, who said he would give his own life for his people the Jews, if they would only believe (Rom. 9:3–4), became known as the Apostle to the gentiles (Rom. 11:13).

As a result of the overall national rejection of Jesus Christ, the Jewish nation of Judæa would then face the 5th Stage of National Discipline (this is where a greater power—Rome, in this case—would dispossess them of their land). These various stages of national discipline were taught to the Jews back in Lev. 26, before they even had entered the Land of Promise.

Lessons 274–275: Genesis 25 via Acts 3 Abraham in the Book of Acts Part II

We are continuing to look at all of the references made to Abraham in the New Testament; and specifically in the book of Acts.

Saint Stephen was doing signs and wonders among the people, and then, once he had an audience, he would proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this, he was hauled before the council and people lied about what he had said, claiming that he had said that Jesus would return and destroy that place and deliver them from the traditions of Moses. Acts 6:8–15.

Therefore, the high priest asks this question.

Acts 7:1 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" (ESV)

Stephen had been brought before the high priest, accused of speaking blasphemous words, and the high priest asks him directly if this is true. "Have you really said these things that you are accused of saying?" the priest asks. This questioning takes place in a very public forum.

Quite obviously, the narrative of the end of Acts 6 is really a part of Acts 7. The chapter divisions and verse divisions were added to the inspired text long after the inspired text had been written. Therefore, there is nothing inspired about the chapter and verse divisions in the Bible (the Greek and Hebrew was written without punctuation, capitalization, and spaces between words, even).

Acts 7:2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father **Abraham** when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,... (ESV)

Stephen begins to make a public proclamation before all the people. He is going to take the history of the Jewish people and show how this is related to Jesus of Nazareth. However, he does not tell his audience that. He does begin giving them the big picture; he begins with a history that they cannot argue with.

Stephen provides a timeline which is not completely clear to us in the book of Genesis. God appears to Abraham when he was living in Mesopotamia with all of his family.

You may not recall, but there was some question as to when God appeared to Abraham. Here, Stephen says that God first appeared to Abraham when he was living in Mesopotamia, which was down where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers meet, not too far from Babylon.

Acts 7:3 ...and [God] said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' (ESV; Gen. 12:1)

We have already studied this in great detail. God came to Abraham and told him to leave his land and his family and go to a land that He would show to him.

So Abraham left Mesopotamia and moved to Charan (Haran); which is about halfway to where God wanted him to go. Furthermore, Abraham did not separate from his father, and it appears as if other members of his family went with him as well, even though God told him to separate from them. Abraham had not gone to the land of Canaan; he got halfway there and stopped—probably influenced by his family who are with him (which is why Abraham was supposed to separate from them in the first place).

Acts 7:4 Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. (ESV)

As long as Abraham's father was alive, Abraham seemed to be unable to leave Charan (Haran). Once his father died, then Abraham went to the land that God had originally directed him to. You will recall that we have studied this.

Abraham's Journey from Ur to Haran (a graphic) is from Bible-history.com; accessed December 30, 2013.

From Charan, one could either go north, up along the Euphrates River and away from the land of promise; or go west (actually, southwest), leaving the Euphrates River, traveling toward the land of promise. You may not realize it, but leaving the Euphrates River is a great act of faith. Abraham, Sarah and Lot went west.

Acts 7:5 Yet God did not give Abraham an inheritance in the land, not even a foot's length, but He had promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child.

God never gave Abraham any portion of the Land of Promise. He lived in many places throughout the land, and often under the auspices or sponsorship of someone else; but the only land he purchased was a plot of ground for his wife's burial (Abraham would be buried there as well).

Why didn't God give this land to Abraham right then and there? There is the human reason and the divine reason. The human reason is, although Abraham eventually built up a powerful group of servants, God knew that He was going to take Abraham's descendants out of Canaan and move them temporarily to Egypt. So, owning any significant plot of land in Canaan would be meaningless, if the Jews would be outside of the land for 400 years. God would bring back the descendants of Abraham, 2 million strong, to take the land of Canaan. Had Abraham lived in the land of Canaan, and then all of his descendants after him, there would have been the potential for centuries of war, as Abraham's descendants slowly acquired more and more land as the people of the land became more and more degenerate. So, it makes more sense for the descendants of Abraham to come and take the land all at once.

Then there is the spiritual view. We are not given all that God has put aside for us the moment that we believe in Jesus Christ. At that moment, we are all potential, but nothing else. God blesses us in our Christian life as we grow (assuming that we grow at all spiritually); and then in eternity, God gives us blessings beyond what we could ever think or imagine. We studied these blessings, which are both temporal and eternal, previously when we studied Eph. 1, which R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls *escrow blessings*. Just as we are all potential at the moment of salvation, so are our blessings. They are in the hands of the chief executive escrow officer (Jesus Christ), Who will dispense them at the proper time.

The same is true of Abraham and his seed. There will be a proper time for his *seed* to receive all of the blessings which God has designed for them. So, God giving the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed parallels the life of the believer.

The Seed of Abraham and the Life of the Believer	
Abraham and his Descendants	**The Life of the Believer**
First, Abraham believes in the Revealed God. This sets up the potential for blessing. Gen. 12:1–3 15:4–6	We first believe in the Revealed God, Jesus Christ. This sets up the potential for blessing. Psalm 2:12 84:12
Abraham is exposed to the blessings which would come from God. Gen. 12:1–3	We are exposed through Bible teaching the potential blessings which would come from God. John 13:17
Abraham begins to enjoy temporal blessings. Gen. 13:2	As we grow spiritually, we begin to enjoy temporal blessings. Luke 11:28
When the time is proper, God delivers great blessings over to the descendants of Abraham. They are given the Land of Promise. Gen. 15:4–5, 7–8	When the time is proper, God begins to pour blessings into the life of the believer. Psalm 1:1
The nation which they came out of (Egypt) would be judged by God. Acts 7:7	The place we come out of (the earth) will also be judged by God. Psalm 98:9 Acts 17:31
However, these blessings are nothing compared to the Land of Promise in the Millennium. 2Sam. 7:29	The blessings which we receive in time are nothing compared to the blessings which we will receive in eternity. Eph. 3:20–21 Rev. 22:14
First a person believes in the Revealed God; then he is exposed to the great potential of the life of the believer; and then, when he reaches maturity, he is able to take that which God has given him. Furthermore, in eternity, there are even greater blessings which await us.	

Stephen continues speaking:

Acts 7:6 And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring [lit., *seed*] would be [temporary] sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. (ESV)

Abraham's great grandson, Joseph, became prime minister of Egypt; and, because of a drought (possibly caused by global warming), the family of Jacob (Abraham's grandson) had to go to Egypt in order to get food. When the sons of Jacob first came to Egypt, they did not know that this prime minister of Egypt was Joseph their brother, whom they had sold into slavery. They meet the prime minister decades later. Joseph knows who they are; they do not know who Joseph is. When it was revealed who Joseph was, they all moved to Egypt.

A later dynasty in Egypt, after Joseph died, enslaved the Jews. For that reason, God would judge them.

God, in Gen. 15:3, told Abraham that this would happen. And Y^{e}howah said to Abram, "Knowing you must know that your seed shall be an alien in a land not theirs; and they shall serve them. And they shall afflict them four hundred years; and I also will judge that nation whom they shall serve; and afterward they shall come out with great substance. And in the fourth generation they shall come here again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." (Gen. 15:13–14, 16).

The term *Amorite* is often used as representative of all those who lived in the land of promise. Their degeneracy had not yet reached a point where God would be willing to wipe them out. Throughout the life of Abraham in the land, his dealings with others in the land was generally quite congenial.

Acts 7:7 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship Me in this place.' (ESV; Gen. 15:14; Ex. 3:12)

The Jews would serve Egypt as slaves, but God would judge Egypt. After these series of judgments (described in the book of Exodus), the Jews would come out of Egypt and worship God in the Land of Promise.

Then Stephen suddenly backtracks and speaks of circumcision. He realizes that he jumped too far ahead in this story, so he backs up a few generations.

Acts 7:8 And He [God] gave him [Abraham] the covenant of circumcision. And so **Abraham** became the father of Isaac, and he circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob [became the father] of the twelve patriarchs. (ESV)

Recall the circumcision represents salvation; it represents regeneration. It represents life where previously there was no life. Circumcision represents a restoration of life. See the **Doctrine of Circumcision** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Circumcision—what it represents—is the key to their relationship with God and our relationship with God. We have a relationship with God because we are circumcised of heart (Deut. 10:16 30:6 Rom. 2:28–29).

Acts 7:9 "And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him... (ESV)

The patriarchs are the other 11 sons of Jacob. They are jealous of Joseph and the fact that his father favors him, so they sell him into slavery, and he ends up in Egypt. However, all of this was a part of God's overarching plan. This is the plan where God works all things for good to those who love Him. Although that is a verse in Romans, this is true of all dispensations. Joseph explained this very principle to his brothers: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be

kept alive, as they are today." (Gen. 50:20; ESV) Despite the evil plans of his brothers, God took these evil plans and turned them into good, as He works together all things for good (Rom. 8:28).

Acts 7:10 ...and [God] rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him grace and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. (ESV)

What happened to Joseph was actually more complex than this, but this is the general idea. This is something that we will study in the future in Genesis.

Acts 7:11 Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. (ESV)

A famine in the ancient world is very much the same as a depression in today's world. The *fathers* here refer to Jacob and his 11 remaining sons. So Jacob and his sons found themselves in the midst of an economic depression, and there was nowhere to turn but to Egypt, where they had prepared for such an event.

Obviously, Stephen is giving a history/theology lesson to those who are supposed to know these things. So far, those with any background are nodding their heads up and down, agreeing with Stephen—waiting to hear something with which they disagree.

Acts 7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers [some of Jacob's remaining 11 sons] on their first visit. (ESV; insert added)

Jacob is the son of Isaac, the grandson of Abraham. This is the Jewish line. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Jacob's 12 sons are the patriarchs (*fathers*) of Israel.

When Jacob's family began to run low on grain, Jacob sent some of his sons to Egypt. Egypt, because of Joseph, who had anticipated this drought based on a revelation from God, and he saw to it that grain was set aside for the 7 years of drought.

The state government in Texas and other states imperfectly follow this plan, and set aside a rainy day fund—a state bank account set aside for emergencies, unforseen events, or unanticipated expenses.

Acts 7:13 And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. (ESV)

When the sons of Jacob returned to Egypt, Joseph let his brothers know who he was. Joseph's actual position is a little tricky. R. B. Thieme, Jr. simply refers to him as the prime minister of Egypt. He is not referred to as Pharaoh, so he was not the highest position in the land.

Acts 7:14 And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. (ESV)

Joseph asked for his father and all of his brothers to be brought to Egypt to him. As a result of what Joseph did for Egypt in anticipation of this drought, he was able to keep his family and millions of others alive.

Acts 7:15–16 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that **Abraham** had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. (ESV)

Joseph and all his brothers and his father all died when living in Egypt. God chose for this to happen, and God allowed the slavery which took place afterwards.

Remember the famous cave that Abraham bought to bury his wife in? This would serve as a burial place for Joseph who only wanted his bones to be buried in the land of Canaan, the land which God gave to the sons of Israel. He understood that this land would be given to his people as a gift from God forever, and he wanted to be buried there.

Acts 7:17 "But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to **Abraham**, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt... (ESV)

The descendants of Abraham, around 75 people, grew to 2 million over a period of 400 years. This is actually very possible; but it would be unusual under the conditions of slavery. It suggests very strong, and healthy family lives, despite the great oppression.

Acts 7:18 ...until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. (ESV)

After a few short years, someone arose to power who did not know Joseph or anything about Joseph, or his family. His family were the Jews who were growing and multiplying in the land of Egypt over all these years. It was clear that these were a different people. Egyptians are descended from Ham; and Israelites are descended from Shem. This suggests that there were clear, recognizable racial differences between these groups of people.

Acts 7:19 He dealt fraudulently with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive.

The first verb is the aorist middle participle of Verb katasophizomai (κατασοφίζομαι) [pronounced *kaht-as-of-IHD-zom-ahee*], which means, *to circumvent by artifice or fraud, conquer by subtle devices; to outwit; overreach; to deal craftily with*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2686. This word only occurs here, which explains why there are so many different translations for it.

This particular ruler to whom Stephen refers is not the ruler who put the Jews into slavery. He is several generations removed from that. He grew up in a time where Jews were slaves to the Egyptians, and had been slaves for some time.

It was likely that few Egyptian knew the history of Joseph and what he had done for Egypt. In fact, we have seen this occur throughout history, where a true account of events is changed, obscured or somehow removed from public knowledge, with the result that a culture is acting upon a false history. We have seen this in our public schools today, where history has been teaching that our founding fathers were mostly deists (they were not; they were mostly born again believers); and that FDR saved us from the Great Depression (also not true; the United States was the only major country at that time to suffer a *great* depression).

Many future historians will recount President George W. Bush as being a profligate spender of public money and present President Barack Obama as fiscally responsible, who dramatically reduced the deficit. The groundwork for this has been laid already. So these statements can be made, a reference to a mixed-up economist who blames the first year of Obama's spending on George Bush (ignoring the fact that President Obama pushed for and passed a nearly trillion dollar Stimulus package, and that there was a great deal of Obama-specific spending in Obama's first year in office). Both presidents spent too much money, and both were far too involved in social programs; and President Obama spent in 4 years what Bush spent in 8. But, I can guarantee you that, wherever there is enough space to delve into the two presidencies, in many cases, this is the way that they will be misrepresented.

Many historians have a point of view. If the facts of history are at odds with their point of view, then they massage the facts of history. No child today would graduate high school or college as a socialist if they were taught accurate history about socialism and where it has been tried and what the actual results were.

Real history properly interpreted is important to every generation. Moses, before sending the children of Abraham over into the Land of Promise, spends about an hour teaching them about their own recent history (Deut. 1–4). He teaches them history which most of them had just experienced. Accurate and objective history helps a society develop a cohesive and sensible dynamic. Inaccurate and subjective history causes a society to throw off good traditional norms and standards and to pursue silly utopian ideals which have never worked and never will work.

Here, the fairly recent history of the Jews coming to Egypt was changed so that the Jews could be made into slaves. Did some people actually know the truth about their background? I suspect that some of them did. I have known people who know various truths about their own history, and that they themselves slant these facts or change them entirely to be in accordance with their political philosophy. I know people who will argue

that President Obama is fiscally conservative[106]; and that President Reagan ruined our country with overtaxing.[107]

So that there is no misunderstanding, I am not trying to sway anyone's politics; I am just taking what we study in the Bible and give it a modern application. The Egyptians enslaved the Jews because the history of their relationship was distorted.

Therefore, if the good that Joseph did for Egypt was removed from Egyptian history, then it is much easier to enslave the Jews. The people cannot be taught that having a Jew in high places in Egypt was good for Egypt. If they know that, then it is much more difficult for them to hate the Jews. We will study Joseph in Egypt near the end of the book of Genesis.

Acts 7:20 At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house,... (ESV)

God knows the end from the beginning, and He knew what to expect with Moses. Moses was beautiful because of what he would do in the plan of God.

Acts 7:21 ...and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. (ESV)

For any of us who have a daughter, this should be something that we can understand. Even if the pharaoh has sent out an order to kill all of the babies of the Jews (because they were multiplying too fast), when his own daughter finds a Jewish baby and loves him, a father cannot just ignore this and kill the child. That a daughter can have quite an impact and influence on her father is well-known to any father and daughter. So, what this young woman required, with respect to this one child, was granted by her father. And so Moses was saved.

Acts 7:22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds. (ESV)

Moses was brought up to be the next pharaoh. He would have been instructed in law, in geography, in history, in politics and in warfare. He would have been knowledgeable and skillful. We do not know the deeds which he engaged in, when a young man; but we can rest assured that he had the best education and training that any person of that era could have had.

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[106] And in case you do not understand how this story has been falsified, it is based upon *annual **growth** in real per capita spending*. In other words, President Bush spent too much money (particularly in his last two years), and President Obama spent more, but we simply look at the *growth* from Bush to Obama. So, to the unlearned, it appears that Obama spent less than Bush, but that is not true and that is not what the graph shows.

[107] As an aside, here is the real story. Furthermore, such an over-simplification ignores that Reagan primarily worked with a Democratic Congress (he did, however, have a Republican majority in the Senate for 6 years).

There was a recent television series on the Bible, and it portrayed Moses as a nutjob. Moses was pretty much exactly the opposite of how he was portrayed. He was regal, brilliant, strong, learned and a leader of men.

If you think that Moses was lost in the desert and that he could not lead his people out of it, that is simply wrong. Moses knew exactly where he was at all times in the desert, and there are many passages in the books of Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy which bear this out. He knew the geography of the land and he knew who lived where, and he knew what their history was. Over and over again, it is clear that Moses acts based upon a knowledge of the people of the land. Moses' training as a young man is key to his leadership role in Israel.

Part of the reason that Moses was able to lead the people of Israel was, he was brought up to be a leader. This was ingrained in him from his youth up. Notice that he was *mighty in words*. Moses could address a group of people as a leader and motivate them. This is a skill that very few people have. This was a necessary skill, because the people of Israel tended to drag their feet a lot when being led by Moses.

Acts 7:23 "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. (ESV)

For this, and a few other reasons, I believe that Moses had access to the book of Genesis and that he knew that he was a Jew. My guess is, Moses had access to the greatest library of the ancient world, the Library of the Egyptian Pharaohs; and that he spent a great deal of time in that library furthering his education. This would have been part of his education, alluded to here. Why would the book of Genesis be there? Because Jews populated Egypt. Therefore, it is only logical that, at some point in time, their literature (Genesis and Job) found their way into the royal library.

The Jewish people in slavery had to have a working knowledge of Genesis as well. Otherwise, just Who exactly did they call upon to take them out of bondage?

As an aside, you should be able to recognize at this point the parallels suggested by the Jews being enslaved in Egypt, looking to God to save them, and then being delivered out of bondage into freedom by Moses. Eventually, their *savior* (Joshua—his name means *savior*) would lead them into the Land of Promise.

There would have been a physical difference between Moses and other Egyptians; and there is every indication that he had been circumcised (whereas the men of Israel before taking the Land of Promise were circumcised, Moses is never spoken of as needing to be circumcised). His adopted mother, the daughter of the pharaoh, who loved him, would have seen this immediately. She knew that she would be raising a son of the Jews. However, seeing this baby tugged at her heart.

Moses' nanny was his actual mother, a Jewess. His natural mother would have steered him toward that sort of reading; or she would have read to him as a child from the

Scriptures. My guess has been that Genesis was passed down verbally and memorized. For this reason, I would assume that Moses understood what was going on—that he was by birth a Jew. His adopted mother named him a name which specifically spoke of her taking him out of the water. At some point in his life, Moses would have been made aware of this and what it meant for him to be a Jew. So, one day, Moses decided to visit the Jewish slaves—his brothers—because he knew he was a Jew.

Acts 7:23–24 "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. (ESV)

When Moses was about 40, we went out to see his people, who were slaves, and what was going on with them. It says that *it came into his heart to visit his brothers;* so he knew that he was a Jew long before this. When he decided to see his people, observed an Egyptian striking a Jewish slave, so Moses killed the Egyptian and buried him.

Acts 7:25 He assumed that his brothers [that is, Jewish slaves] would understand that God was giving them salvation [or, *deliverance*] by his hand, but they did not understand. (ESV; insert added)

Do you see the parallel? Moses first goes to the people, and he is one of them; but they do not recognize that he is the salvation for which they have been praying. At first, they reject him. They do not realize that this is how God would deliver them. Of Jesus, the Apostle John writes: The real light, which shines on everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into existence through him. Yet, the world didn't recognize Him. He went to His Own people, and His Own people didn't accept Him. (John 1:9–11; God's Word™; capitalized).

Their lack of understanding is quite fascinating, because when I became a believer in Jesus Christ, and then discovered Bible doctrine, I assumed this is what all other believers would be interested in (the study of God's Word). It was the next logical step. Believe in Jesus Christ; and then find out what it was that you did. Find out what you just got yourself into. However, much to my surprise as a young Christian, not many people were really interested in verse-by-verse and even word-by-word studies of the Bible.

Moses assumed that, he presents himself before the Jews as their leader-savior, and they will follow him. It did not work out that way.

Acts 7:26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' (ESV)

The next day, Moses goes out again among his people; the slaves of Egypt. When he sees two brothers arguing, he tries to settle matters. Little does Moses know that is going to be his vocation for about 40 years—mostly settling disputes between people.

Acts 7:27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? (ESV)

Essentially, the strongest man looked at Moses and said, “And just who the hell do you think you are?”

Acts 7:28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' (ESV)

Then it became clear that, not only was Moses known, but what he had done the day before was also known throughout the camp of Israelites. This worried Moses greatly.

Acts 7:29 At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. (ESV)

At this, Moses left Egypt, a fugitive. He would remain gone from Egypt for about 40 years. He would marry, have two sons, and, interestingly enough, have a better relationship with his father-in-law than with his wife.

Acts 7:30 "Now when forty years had passed, an Angel [= *messenger*] appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. (ESV; capitalized)

Then Jesus Christ came to Moses. Jesus is the Revealed Member of the Trinity. We know Him as Jesus; but He revealed Himself in many ways to many people prior to His incarnation as the God-man.

Acts 7:31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord:.. (ESV)

This was quite an amazing thing for Moses to see. This clearly tells us that God is speaking to Moses from the burning bush.

Acts 7:32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of **Abraham** and of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. (Ex. 3:5) (ESV)

God Identifies himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this would certainly suggest that Moses understood that statement. That fact again suggests that Moses knows the book of Genesis. Moses does not stop God and say, “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Who are those guys?” Moses cannot know who these men are without having some knowledge of the book of Genesis.

Since he understood that the Jews were his people, my guess is, he was exposed both to his own personal history and to the book of Genesis before he became a fugitive from Egypt. His interaction with the two fighting Jews suggests that he knew more than just his own personal history.

After Moses leaves Egypt, he will have a wonderful relationship with his father-in-law; and it appears in the book of Exodus that this is based in part on their worship of the same God. I would suggest that during this time, Moses also had access to the books of Genesis and Job—possibly through his father-in-law. There is no reason to think that these books could only be accessed from one or two sources.

On the other hand, we do not find a surfeit of quotations from Genesis in Moses' writings. This could be simply because most of what he writes comes directly from the mouth of God; and it could be that what he was writing, unlike the gospels, for instance, did not require justification. However, what we do find in a number of instances is awareness of the book of Genesis—Moses seemed to be fully aware of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for instance. Abraham's name, for instance, occurs 18 times in the 4 books of Moses—principally in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The latter book is Moses' own words (much of Exodus and Leviticus are quotations from God). And in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses speaks of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as if his people know who their ancestors are (Deut. 1:8 6:10 9:5). Therefore, the people of Israel understood their background; they knew Who their God was, and they even called out to their God in the book of Exodus while in slavery to the Egyptians (Ex. 2:23). My point is, they had a fundamental understanding of their own history; and it is reasonable to assume that this comes from the book of Genesis (I am one of the few people who does not believe in the Mosaic authorship of Genesis; at most, he acted as an editor for that book).

How is it that they understand this history, but the Egyptians do not? We have this sort of thing occurring right now, today, in the United States. There are many people who have taken a renewed interest in the founders of this country and their philosophies and their words, as well as their faiths. Such people, often associated with the TEA party movement in the United States, have learned a great deal of true history about our founders, whereas, much of what is being taught in our school system today about our founders is false (or simply left out of the history books altogether). So it is quite possible to have two sets of people living in the same land, who have completely different understandings of our nation as founded.

The remainder of Acts 7 goes into the history of Moses, which is outside the scope of this study. I am most concerned with tying what we have learned to mentions of Abraham in the book of Acts.

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Lesson 276: Genesis 25 via Acts 13 — Abraham in the Book of Acts Part III

What we have been doing for a number of lessons is looking at every instance of Abraham's name being used in the New Testament. Now that we have a full and complete understanding of who he is, many of these verses become easier to comprehend. This gives us some context for these passages.

The Apostle Paul spoke to a difficult mostly Jewish crowd in Acts 13. We pick up his speech in the middle:

Act 13:23 Of this man's offspring [contextually, this would be King David's offspring] God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, [just] as He [God] promised. (ESV; capitalized with added insertions)

King David is descended from Abraham and he is a *type* of Christ (as were Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Samuel, and many others).

As the books of Matthew and Luke attest to, Jesus is linked to King David on the side of His legal father and on the side of His natural mother. David is about midway through the line of Jesus from Abraham. We studied those genealogies a few lessons ago.

Acts 13:24 Before His coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. (ESV)

This is before the coming of Jesus. *Repentance* refers to a change of mind; not to some emotional swing. The pharisees taught a religion of merit; and John told them that they needed to change their mind about this. They would also need to change their minds about Who the Messiah is.

Although the word *repent* is found two dozen times in the New Testament, the phrase *repent of your sins* as related to salvation (or anything like it) is *not* found anywhere in the New Testament. A person is not saved by regretting his sins or even by changing one's mind about one's sins.

One of the problems today is, we are slowly transitioning away from the King James Bible, where there are a great many archaic words like *repentance,* which most people either do not know or do not have a correct understanding of. Many people believe that regretting your sins and promising God you will never commit those sins again is a part of your salvation. It is not. Those are good intentions, and when exercised as an unbeliever, they are energy of the flesh.

Repentance of Sins in the Bible

1. As an aside, this particular topic certainly bears some discussion. The closest that we have to the phrase *repent of your sins* is the phrase, "For I did not come to call righteous ones, but sinners to repentance," which Jesus said in Matt. 9:13b. All men are sinners; and those who recognize their state of sin, Jesus calls upon them to change their minds about a religion of merit. However, they are not to change their mind about being sinners (or even about sin); they are to change their minds about Jesus Christ. They are to change their minds about approaching God from the standpoint of a religion of merit. How do you merit something from God being a sinner? That is the idea behind what Jesus is saying.
2. On the other hand, we do have the example of Judas *regretting* his sin; and that

did not get him any closer to salvation or even to fellowship if he was saved (Pastor Bobby Thieme thinks Judas is saved; I lean toward him not be saved—but it is certainly a debatable topic). In the case of Judas—his regret is not based upon the Greek word for *repent* but upon a different Greek word, sometimes translated *repent,* but more accurately translated *regret*. Judas' response to his own sin was emotional. *Repent* means *to change your mind;* and *regret* means to feel bad about something and to perhaps wish that you had not done that thing. In the Greek, these are similar, but different words. The word which is applied to Judas and his emotional response to his own sin is what most Christians think *repent* means.

3. The pharisees taught a religion of merit during the time of Jesus. They saw themselves as being righteous and they taught others to be righteous as well; and this righteousness was attained by adhering to hundreds and thousands of regulations, which had the intent of putting man more in line with God's proclamations in the Bible. Over the centuries, the religious class in Israel *fine-tuned* the Mosaic Law. So, rather than leave the commandment Remember the Sabbath and treat it as being set apart from the other days, up to the hoi polloi to understand, they devised perhaps 600 or so regulations to define exactly how a person was to observe the Sabbath. The Law of Moses condemns all mankind; and the pharisees added on top of the Law a thick layer of regulations so that men thought that keeping these regulations made them righteous. That is what they needed to change their minds about. Changing one's mind about the regulations of man and a religion of merit was not necessarily an emotional experience of any kind (just as salvation is not necessarily an emotional experience).
4. The words *repentance* and *remission* (*forgiveness*) [of sins] are found together in several passages (Mark 1:4 Luke 3:3 24:47 Acts 2:38 5:31; for instance, Mark 1:4 reads: John came baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for remission of sins.)
   1) *Remission* is the Greek word áphesis (ἄπεσις) [pronounced *AWF-ess-iss*], which means *forgiveness, remission, freedom*. Thayer gives these definitions for this feminine noun: *1) release from bondage or imprisonment; 2) forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty*. Strong's #859.
   2) You may or may not regret your sins; but John proclaimed that changing one's mind about a religion of merit would led to a *forgiveness* of sins.
5. This is quite different than saying that men need to *repent of their sins,* which to many people, means to *regret committing those sins and having a desire to not commit them again*. If this is the standard for salvation, then *no one* is saved.
   1) There is a theological problem with this approach as well. It is asking someone, in the power of the flesh, before they are saved, to take a stand against their own sins, and to make promises to God, by the energy of the flesh, not to commit those sins again.
   2) This would make salvation from God a system of works based upon the

strength of the flesh. Emotional intent while unsaved would therefore become a part of the salvation requirements, and that is energy of the flesh.

3) People are saved by having faith in Jesus Christ, despite the many sins they have committed and despite how they feel about those sins. Salvation is free and is given totally apart from the energy of the flesh. Personal effort of any sort is not a part of salvation. And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. (Rom. 11:6; NIV)

4) Now, some may reduce the number of sins that they commit after they believe in Jesus Christ; but that does not make them any more saved than someone who believes in Jesus, but returns to committing his favorite sins.

6. There is one place in Scripture where men are called upon to *repent* of some specific sins, and this is addressed to *believers* in 2Cor. 12:21. The point being, that we do not repent of our sins as a necessary condition for salvation. You may need to change your mind about your sins *after* you are saved. We have an excellent example of this today: some homosexuals believe in Jesus, and they are saved. However, their Christian life can go nowhere, if they continue to think that committing homosexual acts is okay; it is just how God made them. In a situation like this, they would need to repent (change their mind) about their sins. Again, they do not need to regret their sins; they do not need to work up some great emotional thing about desiring those of the same gender; they simply have to recognize such acts are sins and sins of any kind slow a person down in their advance in the Christian life.

7. The repentance from fornication in Rev. 2:21 is directed toward a church that has been embracing a variety of false doctrines. They were embracing that which is false. Jesus told them to change their minds about *that*.

8. We also find the phrases *repentance toward God, repentance from [dead] works* and *repentance of deeds* in Scripture. These passages refer to change one's mind about something (what they do or what they think or what they teach); and none of this is related to salvation. For the most part, it is changing one's mind about the energy of the flesh production.

9. One of the few unequivocal statements of a repentance of sins is in Rev. 9:21, which is at a time when mankind had become incredibly degenerate. Rev. 9:20–21 The rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands to stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which are not able to see, hear, or walk. And they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts. God, through judgments of the earth, had destroyed many people, but this did not dissuade others from committing the sins that they committed.

1) The things which these people did violated the laws of divine establishment.

2) The things which these people did revealed their negative volition towards God.

3) People saw the destruction of other people all around them, but it never occurs to them that this is related to their behavior. They never change their minds about their actions.
4) If this was about salvation, God would be calling upon them to believe in Jesus Christ.
5) However, the context of this passage is judgment, not salvation. That is, there does come a time when salvation is no longer available. Today, that is when the unbeliever dies; in the Tribulation, that occurs when Jesus returns and gathers all of the people for judgment.

10. Our salvation is all about faith in Christ; it is not about our attitude towards our sins at salvation or after salvation. We may come to God ashamed of our sins, or upset with ourselves over our sins, or perhaps we just recognize that we have made a mess of our lives—but we are *saved* by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. Working up some kind of emotion or feeling about our sins prior to salvation is not a part of the salvation process, despite what many evangelists have said.
11. Repentance as related to salvation is the other side of the coin of faith in Christ: we change our minds about deserving God's favor; we change our minds about the religion that we had been following; we change our minds about Jesus Christ, Who we did not really understand before. When we change our minds, we simultaneously believe in Him, and that is what secures our salvation for us.

Whereas, it is quite difficult to find any Scripture which ties salvation to the repentance of one's sins, I can point to dozens of Scripture where salvation is clearly based upon exercising faith alone in Christ alone; there is nothing in the Bible which connects the repentance of sins to salvation. See **Salvation** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

By the way, if there are things throughout this study which have offended you or that you doubted or that made you leery; you first start with salvation and work from there. You look at the fundamentals of salvation—what it takes to be saved, why God allows us to be saved in this way; how this relates to God's love, justice and righteousness (in theology, this is known or soteriology)—and then you build up theologically from there, using that as your foundation. This is why a lesson on salvation can be quite important, even to a person who has been saved for decades. If you are confused about your own salvation, then you will build a faulty structure of doctrine based upon not understands how and why you are saved.

And so that there is no misunderstanding, this doctrine is not about excusing or promoting sin; it is about understanding how repentance is related to salvation and how it is not.

Back to Paul's speech:

Acts 13:25 Then as John [the baptizer] was completing his life work, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the One. But look! Someone is coming after me, and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on His feet.' (HCSB; insertion added)

John is a witness that Jesus is not merely a good teacher or just a good man. John's life work was to herald the King; to tell about Jesus to come. Before Jesus is in the public eye, John the Baptizer indicates that Jesus is righteous beyond any other man. Jesus was absolutely righteous, whereas men can have, at best, relative righteousness. That is, I can look down my nose at the kinds of sins you commit and say, "I am better than you, Charley Brown! The sins which you commit are repugnant to me and I would never commit those kinds of sins!" That is relative righteousness (and, in that example, self-righteousness), which is completely unrelated to God's righteousness.

John the Baptizer, before Jesus, lacked righteousness and standing.

Acts 13:26 "Brothers, sons of the family of **Abraham**, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. (ESV)

Paul is speaking to an audience of mostly Jews—mostly Jews who are antagonistic towards him. He is telling those in his audience—those who are the family of Abraham (that is, Jews)—that this is the message of salvation, or deliverance. So Paul goes back to John the Baptizer to indicate that this was the *beginning* of the salvation message.

Paul calls them *brothers;* because they are his brothers according to the flesh—they are sons of Abraham.

Acts 13:27 For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize Him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning Him. (ESV; capitalized)

When Jesus had His public ministry, many people saw Him and listened to Him, but did not realize Who it is. They did not understand what the prophets said about Him. They heard these prophecies related to the suffering of our Lord, but never made the connection. Another way of saying this is, *they did not understand Bible doctrine*. These antagonistic to Him fulfilled the prophecies of the prophets by their condemnation of Him (like Psalm 22 and Isa. 53). Those negative toward Jesus were the very ones who persecuted Him, nailing Him to the cross[108] (the Romans actually nailed Jesus to the cross, but the religious Jews demanded that He be executed).

As an aside, we just studied Moses. He came to his people, but his people did not recognize him as their (human) savior; they did not realize that he was the human deliverer that they had been praying for. When Jesus arrived on the scene, He was not recognized by most of the people or by most of the religious leaders. They did not recognize that He was their Savior. This was despite the fact that they read the prophecies of the prophets every Saturday in their synagogues. Many of these prophecies were about Jesus in His 1st advent. Such as Zech. 12:10 Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at Me whom they pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for Him

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[108] As an aside, the cross probably looked more like a *T*.

as one weeps for a firstborn. (HCSB; spoken and written 500 years before Jesus). Psalm 22:16–19 For dogs [those who have rejected the faith] have surrounded Me; a gang of evildoers has closed in on Me; they pierced My hands and My feet. I can count all My bones; people look and stare at Me. They divided My garments among themselves, and they cast lots for My clothing. But You, LORD, don't be far away. My strength, come quickly to help Me. (HCSB; circa 1000 B.C.). Isa. 61:1–2a The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's grace. (Written circa 700 B.C.) There are dozens of Old Testament Scriptures which speak of Jesus and these Scriptures were read in the synagogues of the Jews. See **Messianic Prophecies** (HTML) (PDF). Paul is saying, *you hear these things read every Saturday in the synagogue, and yet you refuse to make the connection between these words and the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Acts 13:28 And though they found in Him no guilt worthy of death, they [the religious Jews] asked Pilate to have Him executed. (ESV; capitalized)

Pilate testified, as the ultimate judge, that no wrongdoing was found in our Lord. The Jews who accused Him had to lie about what Jesus had said or they distorted what He had said, in order to try to convict Him; and even in this, they could not find agreement among one another. They could not find two people who would agree upon the same distorted story. They agreed that they wanted Him crucified, but on nothing else.

Acts 13:29 And when they had carried out all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. (ESV; capitalized)

Paul, speaking to a crowd of antagonistic Jews, sons of Abraham, tells them that Jesus in the crucifixion was fulfilling the Scriptures. The clearest description of the crucifixion was written 700 years before the crucifixion actually took place, in Isa. 53.

Acts 13:30 But God raised him from the dead,... (ESV)

Jesus, however, was raised from the dead, to show that God approved of His work on the cross; to tell us that we are saved because our Lord's sacrifice on the cross was efficacious for our sins.

Paul, in this speech, continued on for another 17 verses, which are outside our scope of study. However, Paul did turn these people around. Many of them believed in Jesus by the time he was done.

Abraham in the Pauline Epistles:

As before, we will go through a number of passages in the epistles where Abraham is mentioned. Most of the time, he is not central to the issue being discussed, but knowing who he is helps us to have a fuller understanding of the passage.

We have already covered Rom. 4 back in lessons #149, #178–179.

Rom. 9:1–2 I am speaking the truth in Christ--I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. (ESV)

Paul is writing to the Roman church. There are Jews at this church and, because it is clear that these epistles were copied and circulated, that many Jews would read these words of Paul.

The general topic is, what about this new age and what about God's relationship with the Jews from the Old Testament?

Rom. 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. (ESV)

Paul is greatly concerned for his own brothers, which would be those who are Jews. A person is a racial Jew because they come from the stock of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Also, many converted to Judaism and moved to Judah. Paul would offer up himself as accursed, if only his brothers would believe in Jesus.

Rom. 9:4–5 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. (ESV)

Note that there are specific things which belong to the Israelites. This means that these things are not given to the gentiles or to the church.

The Things which Belong to Israel

The Adoption: The adoption means that God adopted the Jews as a people. In other places, the analogy used was, He took in the people as a wife (this was illustrated by Hosea and his whore wife, Gomer). After adopting the Jews as His people, God worked through the Jews as a race and as a nation to reveal Himself to the world.

The Glory: The word usually translated *glory* is doxa (δόξα) [pronounced *dohks-ah*], which means *1) opinion, judgment, view; 2) opinion, estimate, whether good or bad concerning someone; 2a)* in the NT always *a good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honour, and glory; 3) splendour, brightness; 3a) of the moon, sun, stars; 3b) magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace; 3c) majesty; 3c1) a thing belonging to God; 3c1) the kingly majesty which belongs to him as supreme ruler,*

The Things which Belong to Israel

majesty in the sense of the absolute perfection of the deity; 3c2) a thing belonging to Christ; 3c2a) the kingly majesty of the Messiah; 3c2b) the absolutely perfect inward or personal excellency of Christ; the majesty; 3c3) of the angels; 3c3a) as apparent in their exterior brightness; 4) a most glorious condition, most exalted state; 4a) of that condition with God the Father in heaven to which Christ was raised after he had achieved his work on earth; 4b) the glorious condition of blessedness into which is appointed and promised that true Christians shall enter after their Saviour's return from heaven. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #1391. There is a future for Israel in the Millennium, where Jesus reigns over the earth from Israel. The church does not belong to any particular nation; churches are found in almost every country and nation. But Israel, as a nation, will be associated with the glory and excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Millennium. In the Age of Israel, Israel was associated with the glory of God, at several points in time. The leading of Israel in the desert—the cloud by day; the fire by night—that is God's glory. The Shekinah Glory in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple—that is God's glory. These manifestations are associated directly with Israel.

The covenants: God made a number of covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; with the people of Israel; and with King David. These covenants are specific to Israel and not to the church. These covenants have not been *spiritualized* and then transferred over to the church. This passage in Romans tells us that they belong to the Jews.

The giving of the law: The Law of Moses was given from God to the people of God, the Jews. Israel was a theocracy, and God made the rules for that nation. These laws belonged to a particular nation during a particular period of time. We do not live under the Law of Moses today, even though many principles from that Law are found in most societies (the Ten Commandments, for instance).

The worship: God also defined for them a specific worship system, which revealed Jesus over a thousand years before the Incarnation. The animal sacrifices, the feasts, the Day of Atonement, the worship of the Jews, the Tabernacle[109] and the Temple all spoke of Jesus Christ; as did even the furniture[110] in the Tabernacle and Temple (particularly the Ark of the Covenant). These were not things which the Jews had to follow and get exactly right in order to be saved; these were things which evangelized the Jews and revealed Jesus Christ to the world.

The promises: The promises that God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; as well as to others, remain with the nation Israel. They were never transferred over to the church. The idea that God's specific promises made to Abraham and his progeny have been transferred over to some other group of people is a false notion. Right here, Paul writes that these promises belong to God's people, the Jews. The implication is, these were for the Jews specifically; they were not for the church.

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[109] Wenstrom also covers this topic in detail.

[110] See also Realtime.net on this doctrine.

The Things which Belong to Israel

The patriarchs: This is the very specific line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and then the 12 sons of Jacob. In order to be a racial Jew, you must be descended from these men. However, this relationship is *according to the flesh;* that is, there is no spiritual value in being born a Jew if you are negative toward the Revealed God.

None of the things above were transferred over to the church. For instance, at no time in the New Testament is the Mosaic Law said to have belonged to the Jews, but now God gives it to the church (although, 9 of the 10 commandments are restated in the New Testament).

Rom. 9:5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. (ESV)

This particular line, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is all a part of the Jewish inheritance. All of the Jews have been descended from the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (unless, of course, they converted over during Israel's history).

Rom. 9:6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,... (ESV)

The Word of God has not failed. It is the volition of the Jews in general which failed. Some who have the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob rejected Jesus. *Not all Israel is Israel*. What this means is, not every person who is descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will believe in the Messiah of Israel. Being descended from these men does not insure salvation. Remember when we studied the gospels, so many Jews believed that, simply because of their status as Jews, that they were related to God; or that they had an "in" with God. Jews who believed that, but did not believe in Jesus are now in eternal torments.

Quite obviously, in this time that Paul is writing, there are problems in Israel. After Paul dies, Jerusalem will be destroyed, along with the Temple, beginning the 5th stage of national discipline for the Jews in Judæa (the 5th stage of national discipline is the removal of a people from their homeland; we see this happening in Syria today[111]). In some cases, one nation removes a people from their homeland; in recent history, the population of Syria has removed itself from its homeland—as many people have done during times of great political upheaval.

Because of 5th stage of national discipline during the time of Paul, Jews would be scattered throughout the world. The Romans understood that the Jews could not be allowed to congregate into one large area, because that made them ungovernable. I refer here primarily to fallen Jews—those who rejected Jesus Christ.

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[111] There are at least 2.5 million refugees who have left Syria.

Paul will teach those in Rome *not* to be ungovernable in Rom. 13. No one should be able to accuse groups of Christians as being impossible to govern, as was believed about the Jews during this time period.

Rom. 9:7 ...and not all are children of **Abraham** because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." (ESV; Gen. 21:12)

Paul uses Abraham as an example. Not all of his children would be considered Jews and inheritors of God's promises. You will recall that Abraham had children by Hagar and then later by Keturah. It was not that his children were unbelievers; they were not Jews, and therefore God's promises would not be given to them. This did not disqualify them from eternal life through faith in the Revealed God.

So, in the way that Abraham's children are not all Jews, so all those descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not all *true Jews*. That is, they are not related to God through Jesus Christ, their true Messiah. Paul is taking an argument based upon genetics, but then actually applying this argument to those who have not apprehended Jesus as their Savior. He is taking a fact of genealogy, but applying it by analogy.

The Jewish faith was a Messianic religion. Nearly all of the Jews knew about the Messiah and hoped that Messiah would come in their generation. You may or may not be aware, but the Jews have had dozens of men (possibly hundreds) who presented themselves as the Messiah of Israel. However, unless you know Jewish history, you only know the name of one of those men.

Rom. 9:8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (ESV)

A child of the flesh is someone who simply has the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such a one does not have an automatic relationship with God. The key is, the circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16 30:6 Jer. 4:4 Rom. 2:29 Col. 2:11), which we might understand as the rebirth of the heart, or being born again. Circumcision of the heart is where life comes out of death. Only the children of promise are those who are the true descendants of Abraham. This means that they have trusted in the God of Abraham; not the god of the pharisees. Does this help you to understand why Jesus and His disciples called for others to *repent?* They needed to change their minds about all of the religion of merit that they had been brought up with.

Rom. 9:9 For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." (ESV; Gen. 18:10)

For Abraham, the key was Isaac. All of the promises would be fulfilled through Isaac; not through Ishmael. His son Isaac was a Jew; his other son Ishmael was a gentile. As we have already studied, Abraham had a passel of children by Keturah. His son Ishmael became the father of many children. But none of these men were heirs to the promise,

and therefore, Abraham sent them away from the Land of Promise with some cash in their pockets (Gen. 25:6). The line of promise went through Isaac.

We have studied the many genealogies in Genesis, and you will recall there is the straight-line genealogy, which often covers many generations, which is always the genealogy of the Child of Promise. There are also cluster genealogies, which may cover 2 or 3 generations and they are never picked up and continued again. There is only one genealogy which is followed throughout the Old Testament (and in Matthew and Luke in the New), and that is the genealogy of the Messiah, which went from Adam to Noah to Abraham to David and then to either Joseph or to Mary. Why do we have cluster genealogies? In my opinion, these are those who have believed in the God of Abraham; the Revealed God of their era. Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, were not unbelievers, and therefore cast out of Abraham's household. Hagar spoke to God; God saved Hagar and Ishmael from death in the desert. Therefore, it is logical that not only did they believe in the God revealed to them, but so did some of the children of Ishmael. It would be reasonable on the human level to record the sons of your half brother, as Isaac does; and it would be reasonable on the divine level to record the names of believers in the line of Ishmael. The actual difference is, many generations from Abraham and Isaac, their descendants still believed in their God; but many generations after Ishmael, the same was not true. Truth was passed down through many generations of Israelites; truth was not passed down through many generations of Ishmaelites.

Rom. 9:10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,... (ESV)

Although we have not studied this yet in Genesis, Isaac would marry Rebekah and she would bear him twins. One of those twins, Jacob, would be a Jew; and the other twin, Esau, would be a gentile. One would be a child of promise and the other would not be. As with Ishmael, this does not mean that Esau was an unbeliever. It means that Esau was not in the line of promise. Messiah would not come from his genes. He would teach his children about the Revealed God, and some of them would believe; but the faith of the Revealed God would be continued in the line of Jacob.

Rom. 9:11–12 ...though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad--in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." (ESV; Gen. 25:23)

One of the twins would be a Jew and the other would be a gentile. One of them would continue the line of Abraham and the other would not. Esau was born first; and Jacob was born next. They might have been born 20 minutes apart, as Jacob's hand was grasping Esau's foot as he was delivered. But, this makes Esau the older of the twins.

Rom. 9:13 As it stands written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (Mal. 1:2–3)

Jacob, despite his many faults, valued the inheritance that God promised his grandfather Abraham. God loved Jacob, not because of anything intrinsic in his character (his name

means *chiseler, supplanter*), but because God's promises would be passed along through him to his children and to his children's children. Esau, whom we will come to know as being a nicer person than Jacob, will not be the son of promise. The Messiah will not be in his line. The truth of the Revealed God will not become a tradition in the line of Esau.

Rom. 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! (ESV)

Does this make God wrong? Is God wrong to say that He loved Jacob and that He hated Esau? God said this, knowing full well the choices that these men would make, and by knowing where their lines would lead. If we were picking the nicest person of these twins, Esau would have been chosen every time. God is not unjust because the line of the Messiah goes through Jacob. That is just human history and human volition. God knew this from eternity past; and can therefore make such pronouncements.

Rom. 9:15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." (ESV; Ex. 33:19)

This is where the sovereignty and foreknowledge of God and the free will of man all meet. God knows us from the beginning, how we think, what we will believe and what we will choose.

Rom. 9:16 So then, it is not by the desire or by the attempt [lit., *running*] of man, but by the mercy of God. This is from the Bible in Basic English.

The first verb is the present active participle of thélô (θέλω) [pronounced *THEH-loh*], which means *to will, to have in mind, to wish, to desire, to purpose, to intend, to please; to take delight [pleasure] in*. One's active volition and purpose are implied. Strong's #2309. This means that we are not dealing with the desires, wishes or purposes of man.

The second verb is the present active participle of the verb trechô (τρέχω) [pronounced *TREHK-oh*], which means, *1) to run; 1a) of persons in haste; 1b) of those who run in a race course; 2) metaphorically; 2a) of doctrine rapidly propagated; 2b) by a metaphor taken from runners in a race, to exert one's self, strive hard; 2c) to spend one's strength in performing or attaining something; 2d) word occurs in Greek writings denoting to incur extreme peril, which it requires the exertion of all one's effort to overcome*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #5143. This indicates the effort of man or the works of man.

The final verb is the present active participle of eleeô (ἐλεέω) [pronounced *ehl-eh-EH-oh*], which means, *1) to have mercy on; 2) to help one afflicted or seeking aid; 3) to help the afflicted, to bring help to the wretched; 4) to experience mercy*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #1653. Before God, we are wretched and deserving of nothing. We are afflicted and we need aid. God through His grace—through Jesus Christ—provides this to us. That is the key to God's plan.

God's plan is not the result of the wishes, desires or purposes of man; nor is it the result of the effort or works of man, it is the result of the mercy of God.

Rom. 9:16 So then, it is not by man's desire [purpose or intention] nor is it by man's striving; but salvation is based upon the mercy of God.

Lesson 278: Genesis 25 via Rom. 11/2Cor. 11 Abraham: An Epistle Study II

In Rom. 11, Paul talks about the present-day relationship between God and His people, the Jews. Paul is writing in the Church Age. The Age of the Hypostatic Union has come to a conclusion; the Age of Israel has come to a halt (although 7 years yet remain on the clock for this era). So, there are clearly racial Jews all over the place. What is God's plan for these racial Jews? Are they now simply rejected in this new dispensation?

Rom. 11:1 I ask, then, has God rejected His people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of **Abraham**, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. (ESV; capitalized)

Paul later asks, *has God rejected His Own people?* He answers that this is not the way to understand God's plan in the Church Age. After all, Paul himself is a Jew, descended from Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God has accepted Paul and God uses Paul, the chief of sinners (1Tim. 1:15). Therefore, God has not rejected His Own people. What is going on is a change of dispensation—a change of how God manages His household on earth—but this change is not a rejection of the Jewish race. God will no longer work through the nation Israel, but God has not rejected His people.

Rom. 11:2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? (ESV; capitalized)

Paul first used the example of himself, in v. 1; and then he goes back to the Old Testament and uses the example of Elijah. Elijah thinks that he is the last man standing; the last man to believe in the Revealed God.

Rom. 11:3 "Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have demolished Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." (ESV; capialized;1Kings 19:10)

These are the words which Elijah speaks to God. He gives up to God the best "Oh, woe is me" prayer that he can muster. He believed that he was the only remaining believer in all Israel, but this is not true.

I love how Paul continues to use the Old Testament. The Old Testament does not belong to the Jews alone. It is the Word of God. Therefore, even when writing to a mostly gentile church, Paul uses the Old Testament upon which to base his arguments. Paul uses the Old Testament because the Word of God is the Word of God.

As an aside, why did God have several different programs throughout the ages? Let me suggest several answers, any one of which could lead to a lengthy theological discussion.

There are a myriad of objections which Satan has made to the plan of God since the beginning of time. One of his objections would no doubt deal with the concept of perfect standards; another would involve a perfect environment. So, there was an era during which God provided perfect standards for that era (those standards being known to us today as the Mosaic Law). In the Millennium, there will be a time of perfect environment. There are many people today who have faith in various schemes to achieve the perfect environment. Some of these schemes may be environmental; some may be political; some may be economic. But, in the Millennium, there will be perfect environment; and some men will still sin and some men will still disobey God and some men will still reject faith in Jesus Christ, even though He will be on the throne in Jerusalem. All of this falls under the general heading, *the plan of God;* so this is why we study the Old Testament as well as the New.

This is another reason as well—the Bible was preserved by many divers and sometimes opposing groups. There is the false notion out there that the Catholic church, at the end of the 4th century, decided what the Bible was and what the Bible was not. That idea is poppycock, and reveals a complete lack of knowledge of the history of the canon of Scripture! First of all, the Old Testament had already been fixed in its canonicity and several groups were in charge of preserving the OT text. Jews preserved it in the Hebrew in several cities; Aramæans preserved it in Syriac; the Catholic church preserved it in the Latin (which was the common language of their day and geographical period); and earlier Christians preserved the OT in the Greek. These are very diverse groups of people, and they did not get together and say, "I really like Psalm 23, but don't think that Psalm 24 belongs in Scripture, so let's get rid of that." Or, "I really like this set of verses, but this portion of this same chapter needs to be edited out." Or, "What do you think about adding this book that I just found?" You cannot do that when there are thousands upon thousands of copies of the Old Testament scattered throughout the world, being preserved by a variety of groups and nationalities, not all of whom really got along too well; and most of whom do not necessarily even have a common language with which to communicate to one another. So, the idea that the early Catholic Church came along and waved some magic wand and changed all of the Scriptures to fit their point of view is silly and historically preposterous (even though many people believe this).

Some people are under the mistaken notion that the Catholic church somehow, around A.D. 400, chose the New Testament canon of Scripture. Also preposterous. They did gather and decide upon the New Testament canon, but they were not the only ones. There were 4 separate councils that we are aware of which *recognized* the canon: Nicea (325–400), Hippo (393); Carthage (397); Carthage (419).

There are all kinds of writings in the first 4 centuries where the New Testament is referenced. Pseudo Barnabas (circa 70–130); Clement of Rome (c. 95–97); Ignatius (c. 110); Polycarpa (c. 110–150); etc. There are nearly 2 dozen writers of theology in the first few centuries which referenced the New Testament books—some quoting passages, some indicating authority for certain books.

Then we have what would naturally occur—men would realize that amongst all of the writings available to them, there must be a core canon of Scripture. So, we are aware of at least 5 lists of books by respected men who tried determine which books were authoritative.

Not all of these agreed. Taking all of these various sources, books were then classified: there was the Homologoumena, the books accepted by all. About 20 of the 27 books of the New Testament fall into this category. Then there were the disputed books, called the Antilegomena, which were the remaining 7 books of the New Testament: Hebrews (who is the author?); James; 2Peter (unusual writing style compared to 1Peter); 2 and 3John (short, personal letters); and Revelation (weird). By about A.D. 300, all of the books from this list began to be accepted as a part of the canon.

Then there was the Pseudopigrapha, or the books rejected by all. There are 21 gospels, only one of which came out of the 1st century (and that is suspect); there are the various *Acts* of various Apostles (there are at least 8 of these, probably none from the 1st century); there are 9 epistles (again, not from the 1st century); and 4 Apocalypses. There is no indication that any of these books were considered as serious contenders for the canon by anyone or any group.

My point is, there are only 7 books which were seriously questioned, and those are in your Bible. You can read and study them at your own leisure and draw your own conclusions about them.

Finally, there were also translations which were made. The New Testament was written in the Koine Greek, but this was not the language used in Rome 400 years later; and when the message of Jesus was taken to other lands, it was spread in the language of that people. So we have the Old Latin translation from around A.D. 200; the Old Syriac translation from around 400.

So, when I study an Old Testament passage, I can easily find the Hebrew, Latin, Greek and Syriac versions of that passage, all preserved in the original languages, all translated into English, and come to a fairly clear understanding as to what the original text was and what it means. I have all of this information right on my computer; and I can find this information as well on the internet. The differences between the Hebrew text of the OT and the Latin text of the OT is minor; and many times, it is based upon, you would say one thing in Hebrew one way, but you would never express it in that way in the Latin. For instance, we use the singular noun *face* to refer to the front of a person's head. In the Hebrew, they never used that as a singular noun; it was always a plural noun. These are the kinds of differences, for the most part, which are found in these various manuscripts.

Back to Elijah:

Rom. 11:3 "Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have demolished Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." (ESV; capialized;1Kings 19:10)

Elijah portrays himself as the only faithful man remaining. “God, I am it. I am the only one in Israel who still believes in You. No one else has trusted You. It is only me.”

Rom. 11:4 But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." (ESV; 1Kings 19:18)

God has set aside another 7000 men who had not bowed before Baal. These are believers as well; these are men who have a place in God’s plan as well.

Rom. 11:5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. (ESV)

These 7000 men that God speaks of—these are the remnant. These are the ones of Israel who have believed in the Revealed God. Being a part of the remnant—being a part of those who believe in the Revealed God—is a matter of grace. Paul argues that there is still a remnant in Israel; there remain believers in Israel. This means that God has not abandoned the Jews; this means that God has not rejected the Jews. There is still a remnant.

Paul acknowledges that, there is not this small handful of Jews who really believe in Jesus Christ; but that there is remains a large population of believing Jews, just as there were in the time of Elijah.

However, this remnant must be based upon grace, not upon works; and not upon the law.

Rom. 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. (ESV)

The Jewish religion was a religion of merit; a religion of works (as is every religion). Being the chosen of God is completely of grace. We do nothing more than believe in His Son; there are no works required from us in order to be saved. If we depend upon works, then that is the opposite of grace, and we are only saved by grace (Eph. 2:8–9). Paul is making certain that his readers understand that they are saved only by grace, and not by adhering to some system of works.

Paul continues to reason through the remainder of Rom. 11, but no longer speaks of Abraham specifically.

There are two ways that people try to meet God—through faith in Him and through merit. The religion of merit was taught by Judaism and by every other major religion and cult. However, no one is actually saved apart from faith alone in Christ alone. Jesus is the narrow gate through Whom we must pass. No one possesses enough merit to impress God. No one is good enough.

2Cor. 11:18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. (ESV)

This is another letter written to the Corinthians (there appear to have been several); and some of the people in that church were boasting about their own credentials when opposing Paul. Because the legalists are boasting of their own background, accomplishments and works, Paul himself will also boast of his own credentials.

2Cor. 11:19 For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! (ESV)

Here, he uses a bit of sarcasm. He says that these people believe themselves to be wise, and they think that they are being tolerant of confused people (fools) like Paul.

Also, the people of Corinth indulged these people who boasted that they were as qualified as Paul to make pronouncements. "You are wise enough to put up with these men who boast."

2Cor. 11:20 For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. (ESV)

Paul asks them—what if someone treats them in this way? What if someone makes them into a slave (in this context, a slave to some legalistic system)? What if someone cheats them in a business deal? What if someone steps up and pops them in the face? Are you still going to be tolerant of them? Are you still going to listen to their point of view?

2Cor. 11:21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of--I am speaking as a fool--I also dare to boast of that. (ESV)

Paul says that he boasts of these things as well. Paul calls himself a fool, because he is going to get into a boasting contest with those in Corinth who boast of their own background and works.

2Cor. 11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of **Abraham**? So am I. (ESV)

These Judaizers brag that they are genetically related to Abraham. Paul says, "I am too." Do Paul's arguments suddenly hold more weight, since he is a racial Jew? Of course not! It is not a genetic relationship to Abraham that is key. In the same way, the arguments of the Judaizers are not strengthened because they are descendants of Abraham.

2Cor. 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one--I am talking like a madman--with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. (ESV)

These purveyors of false doctrine were coming to Corinth, and they would say, "You should listen to us because we are clearly in the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and we can boast about our background and accomplishments." Paul suggests that he has far more

to boast about, which boastings include beatings and imprisonments and being brought near to death. From here, Paul then describes the pressures that he has been under, which includes being beaten on many occasions; and being shipwrecked. The overall idea is, whatever those of his opposition boast of, he can either meet their boast or exceed it. "If you are going to listen to such people and give heed to them because of the things which they boast, well then, let me boast a bit as well. If authority is based upon who has the most to boast about; then listen to what I can claim."

Lessons 279–280: Genesis 25 via Gal. 3 **Abraham: An Epistle Study III**

We continue to explore all of the New Testament references to Abraham.

Galatians is a letter all about grace versus Law. Galatians is exactly the right epistle for Paul to speak of Abraham. Abraham is mentioned at least 7 times in Gal. 3.

Gal. 3:5–6 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as **Abraham** "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? (ESV; Gen. 15:6)

Paul has been before the Galatians and he has given the Holy Spirit to them and he has performed miracles before them. Was this done by the Law or by grace, he asks.

Paul speaks of Abraham, and asks what did he do? He believed God and this faith was counted to him as righteousness. His righteousness is based entirely upon faith. So, just as Abraham's righteousness is based upon faith, the giving of the Holy Spirit and the miracles worked among those in Galatia all came to them on the basis of faith.

As an aside, the letter to the Galatians is one of the earliest of the New Testament writings, if not the earliest, written A.D. 49 or 55.[112] In the early part of the Church Age—specifically in the early part of the 1st century—the Apostles got a hearing by the use of sign gifts. They could speak in languages which they themselves did not know; they could heal; and they could perform miracles. This gained them a hearing. But, once their authority had been established, these sign gifts faded into obscurity.

Gal. 3:7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of **Abraham**. (ESV)

Therefore, a true son of Abraham is a son by means of faith; not by a son by means of works. Again, even when writing to gentiles, Paul argues from the Old Testament. The Bible is for all mankind, even though the Old Testament was written by Jews; was preserved, for the most part, by Jews; and specifically dealt with God's relationship to

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[112] From https://bible.org/seriespage/pauline-epistles accessed March 3, 2014.

Israel. It is still God's Word. In fact, Paul uses the Old Testament again and again in this passage.

Gal. 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to **Abraham**, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." (ESV; Gen. 12:23)

Abraham was justified by faith; and God promises him that all the nations would be blessed in him. The promises made to Abraham, and passed down to Abraham, are promises for him and his descendants. Still, through him and through his Son, all the nations would be blessed.

Gal. 3:9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with **Abraham**, the man of faith. (ESV)

God did not choose a man of works to bless, but a man of faith. Abraham is our guide or our model in this regard.

Gal. 3:10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." (ESV; Deut. 27:26)

If we depend upon the Law, then we are under a curse. The Law of Moses does not justify us; it curses us. It reveals to us where we come up short. This is because in order to fulfill the Law, we must obey everything in the Law. If we don't, then we are cursed.

Gal. 3:11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." (ESV; Habak. 2:4)

Therefore, no one can be justified by the Law, because no one can keep all of the Law. Those who are righteous live by faith, not by works. And Paul quotes Old Testament passages to back him up.

Gal. 3:12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." (ESV; Lev. 18:5)

The Law of Moses is not based upon faith; it defined the righteousness of God for that era. The spiritual life in the Old Testament and in the era of Paul has always been based upon faith; it was *never* defined by keeping the Law.

Gal. 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"-- (ESV; Deut. 21:23)

Jesus became the cursing of the Law for us. Jesus fulfilled all of the requirements of the Law, and then He was crucified. Because He was crucified, Jesus was cursed, as Deut. 21:23 tells us.

Gal. 3:14 ...so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of **Abraham** might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (ESV)

Jesus was cursed on the cross so that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to the Gentiles as well. All could receive the Spirit through faith.

By the way, this is not some holy roller passage where you get in a group of holy rollers and you lay your head back and you start making noises in your throat and mouth, hoping that something else will take you over, and you will call that the Spirit. Everyone receives the Spirit by faith in Christ.

When you are in some Christian cult, and they are trying to get you to speak in tongues, and they point out, tongues are here, and here and here in the Bible. But after that, they will do all kinds of non-Biblical things to *help* you "get the ghost." If you have to try a variety of non-Biblical methods to "get the ghost," then you are not really getting the Holy Spirit, no matter how you feel.

Gal. 3:15 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. (ESV)

Paul illustrates God's covenant by using the example of a contract between men. Once a contract has been agreed to, one of the parties cannot come back later and change the terms of the contract unilaterally. He cannot add terms to it, remove clauses, and completely nullify this contract.

Gal. 3:16 Now the promises were made to **Abraham** and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to seeds," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your seed," who is Christ. (ESV; Gen. 3:15; 21:12; 22:18)

This is a fascinating take. When speaking of a *descendant* or *descendants,* the singular noun is used in the Hebrew. We do not find the plural of *seed* used for *descendants*. However, Paul uses this to confirm that this promise refers to Jesus Christ.

There are two things at work here: first, many prophecies are both near and far prophecies. That is, the prophecy can refer to something which will take place in the next decade or even the next century. That is a near prophecy. That Abraham would have children to whom the promises would be made came true. Abraham had a son Isaac and Isaac had a son Jacob. It is to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and to Jacob's 12 sons—to whom these promises are made.

However, the true Son of Promise is Jesus Christ. He is the far-fulfillment of this prophecy. As we studied, Isaac was a *type* of Christ, illustrating Jesus in his birth. **The Parallels between the Birth of Isaac and the Birth of Jesus** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Gal. 3:17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. (ESV)

Now Paul backs up and closes the logic on this. The Law of Moses came 430 years later after He *ratified* this covenant originally made with Abraham. God cannot annul His covenant with Abraham 430 years later. God cannot say to Abraham, "You know what, all that stuff about the promises that I made to you about the land and your sons and all of that—well, I have changed My thinking on that. From hereon in, these promises are only available to those who keep the Law." We cannot do this in contacts between men; so God cannot make a contract with Abraham, and then, hundreds of years later, make a new contract that annuls His first contract or dramatically revises his original contract.

Abraham is saved by faith. He is made righteous by faith. Abraham is given these promises by faith. His faith cannot be annulled by a Law or set of laws given 430 years later. If man cannot do something like this, then surely God cannot either.

There is a time problem here. God made His original promises to Abraham around the year 2000 B.C., and the Mosaic Law was given around 1450 B.C. That would suggest that Paul's estimate here is off by 120 years.

The common explanation has Israel under the thumb of the Egyptians for 215 years, which is the number found in the Septuagint in Ex. 12:40. However, the Bible clearly states that Israel was under subjugation to Egypt for 400 years (Gen. 15:13).

The book *When Critics Ask,* seems to have the best explanation.

When Critics Ask, on the Time Problem

GALATIANS 3:17 —Does Paul err in the amount of time between Abraham and the time the Law was given?

PROBLEM: In Galatians 3:17 , the apostle states that a period of 430 years elapsed between the time of God's promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3), which was about 2000 B.C., and the giving of the law to Moses, which was around 1450 B.C. This would be a mistake of over 100 years.

SOLUTION: The time that Paul refers to is not the initial giving of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12–15), but the later confirmation of the covenant to Jacob (Gen. 46), which was about 1877 B.C. Since the Exodus occurred around 1447 B.C. (cf. 1Kings 6:1), this would be exactly 430. There is good indication that Paul is referring to the confirmation to Jacob, not to the initiation of the covenant to Abraham. The text clearly dates the 430 years from "the covenant that was confirmed" (Gal. 3:17). Thus, the time period is the final reaffirmation of the Abrahamic promises to the descendants (seed) of Abraham which takes place in Genesis 46:2–4 to Jacob, a descendent of Abraham, which was 430 years before the children of Israel came out of Egypt.

The confirmation of the covenant in Gen. 46:2–4 occurs immediately before Jacob goes down to Egypt, as ordered by God. The verb is prokuroô (προδυρόω) [pronounced *prohk-oo-ROH-oh*], which means, *to validate [establish] beforehand, to confirm legally; to sanction, ratify*. Strong's #4300.

Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask;* Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Gal. 3:17.

Gal. 3:18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to **Abraham** by a promise. (ESV)

If the inheritance of Abraham comes through the Law, then it is not based upon God's promises, given when Abraham was alive and later in a grave when these promises were confirmed to Jacob. God gave Abraham a promise; God did not give Abraham a great set of laws to follow.

Gal. 3:19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the Seed should come to Whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. (ESV)

Why was the Law given in the first place? This was because of the constant transgressions made by the people of God against God. The Law carefully defined sin; it was not a means of justification or righteousness.

The Seed to come is Jesus Christ. All of the promises to Abraham were ultimately about Jesus and to Him as well.

That angels were involved in the giving of the Law is confirmed in Psalm 68:17 Acts 7:53 Heb. 2:2.

Gal. 3:20 Now an intermediary [= *mediator, arbitrator*] implies more than one, but God is one. (ESV)

In order to have an intermediary, there must be people on both sides of the intermediary. There is no need for an intermediary unless there are two sides. Man is on one side, God is on the other. There needs to be a mediator between them.

The Greek word for mediator is mesítês (μεσίτης) [pronounced *meh-SEE-tays*], which means *mediator; one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant; a medium of communication, arbitrator; a guarantor; a pledge*. Thayer, Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider. Strong's #3316.

The Law, as a mediator, is problematic. The Law is perfect and good, like God; but man continually violates the Law. So, with God on one side and man on the other, but the Law between them—man is able to do nothing but violate God's perfect Law. The Law is not a pathway from man to God; it is a barrier between man and God. The Law tells us, "This is *why* you cannot come to God."

So we have the problem that the Law is an imperfect mediator because man is unable to keep the Law.

Gal. 3:21 Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. (ESV)

The Law of Moses was not given to give life or to establish righteousness. All law can do is establish our sinfulness.

There were certainly other purposes for the Law of Moses beyond condemning us. However, Paul concentrates on that aspect of the Law, because the Judaizers were teaching the congregation at Galatia that keeping the law was necessary to give them righteousness.

Gal. 3:22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (ESV)

All mankind is under sin. We are all imprisoned by sin. We are all in the slave market of sin. Despite having given man the Law, the Scripture also concludes that all of sinned and fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23 1Kings 8:46 Eccles. 7:20). Our only escape from this prison of sin is by means of Jesus Christ.

Gal. 3:23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. (ESV)

The word *faith* is the feminine singular noun pistis (πίστις) [pronounced *PIHS-tihs*], which means, *1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it; 1a) relating to God; 1a1) the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ; 1b) relating to Christ; 1b1) a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God; 1c) the religious beliefs of Christians; 1d) belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same; 2) fidelity, faithfulness; 2a) the character of one who can be relied on*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #4102. So it is not just the act of believing, but it is also that which is believed in. Salvation has always been through faith in the Revealed God. However, we did not understand exactly how and why this was true until the salvation of Jesus Christ was revealed. That *understanding* is a fundamental of our faith.

Imprisoned by law simply means that the Law of Moses condemns us before God.

Gal. 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. (ESV)

The word *guardian* is the masculine noun paidagôgos (παιδαγωγός) [pronounced *pahee-dag-o-GOSS*], which means, *a tutor,* i.e. a *guardian and guide of boys*. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood. Thayer definition only. Strong's #3807.

We must be careful to understand what is being taught. Salvation has always been through faith in the Revealed God; so the Law of Moses did not take the place as the object of faith or means of salvation. This Law, in many ways, preserved the Jews as a people, and it also showed them how deficient they were when it comes to keeping the Law. There were different components to the Mosaic Law. Some portions of it were issues of morality; some revealed Jesus Christ; some simply preserved the people of Israel. There are even some laws in Deuteronomy which are not really laws, but Moses providing common sense guidance to a people who knew almost nothing about nothing.

The study of Deuteronomy is fascinating. Much of what is found here, in the realm of law, is like what is found elsewhere in the books of Moses. However, now and again, Moses will offer what is more of a helpful hint about how to do something (or, how *not* to do something, like not mixing divers threads when making clothing), and unbelievers will take these helpful hints, elevate them to the power of the Ten Commandments, and then say, "Are you wearing a polyester blend shirt? Then you are violating the Mosaic Law." The people in the desert who stood before Moses had never farmed, built houses, or made clothing before; and their parents were all dead by the sin unto death. So Moses taught them a few common sense things that they needed to know before going into the land. He told them a few common sense things becoming farmers, house builders and clothing manufacturers. There was no morality affixed to these *handy hints* (Moses did not warn people who mixed divers types of thread that they would receive lashings or be cut off from their people).

Here is the part that is fascinating—New Testament authors, like Paul, took those things which were given as helpful hints, and gives them a whole different spiritual application. In the New Testament, for instance, we are taught that certain things should not be intermixed—we don't put new wine into old wine containers. The principle which is actually being taught is, you do not mix Christianity in with legalism. You cannot mix a little faith in with a little law. Which point brings us right back to our topic.

Gal. 3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,... (ESV)

Faith again stands for what is believed; and we believe in Jesus, Who is both revealed and salvation is understood. Personally, I do not believe that Abraham or Moses or even Isaiah fully understood exactly Who Messiah would be. And most certainly, the citizens of Israel throughout the centuries did not fully understand Who their Messiah would be. They trusted and believed in their Messiah; they trusted and believed in the Revealed God—and this saved them—but a full understanding of Jesus and what He did took time and revelation.

As discussed back in Gen. 22, Abraham understood his offering of Isaac to be done as an act of obedience. He did not know that this was a type, looking forward to the antitype of God the Father offering up God the Son. Much (maybe all?) of typology is not known until the antitype is revealed. Then we can place the type next to the antitype and be amazed as to how closely they match up. This is one way that a type is different from a prophecy. When the Messiah was prophesied, many of the Jews understood that was a prophecy

about Messiah. They may or may not have been able to correctly understand the prophecy completely, but they understood that the prophecy was about their Messiah. Nearly all Jews understood the general concept of the Messiah and that God had promised them a Messiah (whether they believed this or not is another thing; whether they could recognize the Messiah when He came, is another thing). But there was no connection made during the Age of Israel of the *types* to the Messiah. No one ever taught in the Temple or the Tabernacle that Abraham offering up his son to God was all about the Messiah. They understood it only in terms of obedience. God told Abraham to offer up his son of the covenant to God, and so he did. **The Offering of Isaac** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Back to the topic at hand:

Once Jesus has come, we are no longer under the Law of Moses. There are two basic reasons for this: (1) Jesus fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, which is something that we could not do; and (2) all of those things which looked forward to Jesus (the animal sacrifices, the feast days, etc.) were fulfilled in Jesus. They no longer need to look forward because Jesus, to Whom they looked forward, had come (this is what much of the book of Hebrews is all about).

Your kid has a birthday coming. On the refrigerator door, you tape a sign "7 days til Charley's birthday." The next day, "6 days til Charley's birthday." After his birthday has come, you don't keep hanging up signs that his birthday is coming. Nor do you hang up signs, "Your birthday was 3 days ago." So, once Jesus has come and has died for our sins, there are no more animal sacrifices. The things which pointed toward His coming—the types and the prophecies—are no longer presented anew. They are no longer needed.

Gal. 3:26 ...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (ESV)

Here is something that was not fully understood in the Old Testament—when we believe in Jesus, we are made sons of God. We are in Christ, so that when God looks at us, He sees His Son; and His righteousness and His Sonship are all applied to us, because we are in Him. We are put into Christ by faith.

Gal. 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (ESV)

This simply means that we are identified with Christ and we are *in Christ*. Being baptized into Christ means that we are closely identified with Christ; so, in this way, we have put on Christ.

Gal. 3:28 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. (ESV)

There are no superficial distinctions among Christians. If I am a Gentile, free and male, this does not make me any better or give me a higher ranking in Christ than a Jewish female slave. In Christ, we are one. This does not mean we are the same person; it

means that we are in the plan of God, and we have the same general purpose, to fulfill the plan of God for our lives. Furthermore, when God looks at us, we are both clothed in Christ, making us equal in that regard. God does not love one of us more than the other. What we do have is equal opportunity and equal privilege in God's plan, despite the great human differences which may exist between us.

Gal. 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are **Abraham's** offspring, heirs according to promise. (ESV)

If we have believed in Jesus Christ, then we are Abraham's true sons; his true seed. We are heirs to the kingdom. This does not mean that we have assumed all of the things found in the Law for the Jews; nor does this mean that we now replace the Jews. We are sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ, just as Abraham was made righteous through his faith in Y^{e}howah Elohim.

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Gal. 4 covered back with Isaac and Ishmael. in lessons #237–238.

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Lesson 281: Genesis 25 via Hebrews Abraham in Hebrews; An Epistle Study IV

I realize that this has seemed like a long excursion outside of the book of Genesis. However, Abraham's name occurs in the New Testament 71 times; David's occurs 54 times and Moses' occurs 79 times. He is one of the greatest men of the Old Testament for many reasons; therefore, it behooves us to understand who Abraham is and how and why he is referenced so many times in the Christian era. He is just as much your father as he is the father of the Jewish race.

Abraham in Hebrews:

The book of Hebrews is quite the amazing book. This goes back and forth between the Old Testament and how so many things were fulfilled in Jesus Christ—prophecies and types.

Heb. 2:9 But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Angels begin with much greater abilities than we have. They can apparently go from being here on earth to being in heaven in the Divine Courtroom in little or no time at all (compare Gen. 19 to Job 1–2). We do not have the ability to go back and forth like that.

Angels apparently can make themselves visible; they can make themselves material; they can inhabit both men and animals; and they can probably do a number of things not spoken of in Scripture. They are smarter than we are and stronger and more agile; and

their bodies do not appear to wear out. God does put restrictions upon angels and the only angels we know who inhabit men or animals are fallen angels (also called demons).

So Jesus took on the nature of man—in fact, He was fully man, except without the sin nature. This was the purpose of the virgin birth—the sin nature is passed down by the man. Both the mother and father are carriers of the sin nature, but only the father passes it along to his children. Jesus, being born of a virgin, did not inherit the sin nature from a human father.

Jesus took upon death for all men; he was willing to endure death for all men, so that we might live forever.

Heb. 2:10 For it was fitting that He, for Whom and by Whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Jesus brought all things into existence, and His suffering on the cross—paying for our sins—perfected our salvation and thereby, brings many sons to glory (Jesus brings many people to salvation which results in the glorification of Himself).

Heb. 2:11 For He Who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers,...

We are all sanctified by Jesus Christ. Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers, not because we are such wonderful people, but because we possess His righteousness by faith in Him. We have imputed righteousness.

The *one source* is God, of course. Although Jesus is a Member of the Godhead, His humanity is real, and that was ultimately created according to the plan of God the Father.

Heb. 2:12 ...saying, "I will tell of Your Name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise." Psalm 22:22

The books which spend a great deal of time in the Old Testament include Matthew, Romans and Hebrews. In Psalm 22, the psalmist is a witness to the revealed Lord. Psalm 22 has several passages which speak of the cross quite graphically (although that was not the human author's original intent of this passage).

Heb. 2:13 And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given Me." Isa. 8:17–18

Salvation is through trust in Jesus Christ. The children that God has given Him are believers. The writer of Hebrew is substantiating that faith in Christ results in eternal salvation; and he goes back to the Old Testament to show how.

Heb. 2:14–15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the

power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Jesus Christ was completely human, as are we all. He had to be human in order to die for our sins.

As men, we are subject to death and a lifelong slavery to the sin nature; and slave market of sin from which we cannot purchase ourselves or anyone else. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is the coin of the realm which purchases us from the slave market of sin. See Gen. 14:19 for a thorough discussion of the slave market of sin. **Genesis 14** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Heb. 2:16 For surely it is not angels that He helps, but He helps the offspring of **Abraham**.

Although there are some theologians who suggest that there was a salvation issue presented to angels, I do not believe that to be the case. There is a great difference between angels and man. We are all related to one another as men. We all are carriers of the sin nature because we are born from Adam; we all stand condemned by God for our own sins and because Adam's original sin is imputed to us—in part, because Adam is our father.

Angels, on the other hand, appear to be discrete creations (billions may have been created all at once; but each angel is independently created). Because of this difference, Adam's sin affects all mankind; Satan's sin tempted other angels, but did not bring down all angelic creation. Only those who chose to follow him fell. This gives us two very separate groups of angels—those who disobeyed God and those who have never disobeyed God.

Here, Scripture tells us that it is not angels that Jesus helps. It is likely that the fallen angels simply chose against God. They each individually chose to disobey Him, and that damns them forever.

The offspring or the seed of Abraham are those who have believed in the Revealed God, Who is Christ Jesus in our dispensation. We are the ones that Jesus helps. We are the offspring of Abraham through faith in Abraham's God.

In the context of Heb. 2, Jesus originally comes as a help to the physical offspring of Abraham; that is, the Jews.

Heb. 2:17 Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Jesus had to be human in order to die for our sins. He had to be subject to all of the same weaknesses to which we are subject. He therefore needed to be a descendant of Adam, but without having the sin nature.

The High Priest was a human office, held by various Levites from Aaron's line; and the High Priest represents man before God. In fact, once a year, the High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies (whether in the Tabernacle or in the Temple) and he would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (one of the articles of furniture in the Tabernacle which very few Jews had ever seen themselves). Both the Ark and the office of High Priest were representations of Jesus; they were *types;* Jesus was the *antitype*.

Types, by the way, are quite different from prophecies, even though there is obviously a prophetical nature in the concept of typology. Generally speaking, a *type* is not revealed, at his or its inception, as a type or as being prophetical. When the Ark of the Covenant was built, for instance; or when David brought the Ark into Jerusalem; at no time did anyone say, "And this Ark represents Messiah-to-come." However, after the fact—after the antitype is clearly understood—then we can look back and see how it is the image of the type.

The High Priest was a type of Jesus Christ; but, at no time, was that stated in the Old Testament. But here we are told that Jesus became a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God. And what was His purpose as our High Priest? To make propitiation for the sins of the people.

To be the Mediator between God and man, Jesus had to be equal to both man and God. This allows Him to go into the Holy of Holies (that is, into the Throne Room [Presence] of God).[113] As God, Jesus can appear before God the Father; and, as man, Jesus is able to represent us to God. No one else is qualified to represent us before God: not Abraham, not Moses, not Mohammed, not Confuscius, and not Buddha (the last 3 of whom are probably in hell).

Heb. 2:18 For because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

Heb. 6 and 7 are covered in Lesson #136. This is also contained in **Genesis 14** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Then comes from the chapter on faith, which features both Abraham and Sarah.

Heb. 11:8 By faith **Abraham** obeyed when he was called to go out to a place where he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Abraham was promised an inheritance, but God sent him out in such a way that Abraham did not know exactly where he was going. God directed him.

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[113] The Holy of Holies is different from the Throne Room of God; but it is representative of the Throne Room of God, inasmuch as it takes the High Priest to the Presence of God.

Heb. 11:9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

Abraham had faith in God, and for this reason, lived in this Land of Promise even though he owned none of it (except for the cave where he and Sarah would be buried).

Isaac and Jacob were heirs to this same promise. This is what separated the Jewish line of Abraham from the non-Jewish line—heirship. Those heir to God's promises (that is, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), were the true Jews. Others, like Esau, like Ishmael, both of whom are from the loins of Abraham, both of whom were believers, did not receive the promise, which they could then pass down to their own children. They were not heirs to the promise.

Heb. 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Ultimately, this city would be the New Jerusalem. In the time of Abraham, there was not even a Jerusalem (although that occupied area was called Salem).

Heb. 11:11 By faith **Sarah** herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful Who had promised.

Even Sarah, at some point, believed God, and that He was faithful in His promises. And God had promised her specifically that the son of promise would be born through her.

If you will recall, when Sarah heard that God promised Abraham a son through her specifically, she laughed within herself. Despite her laughter, she did consider God faithful, and that she could depend upon any promise which He made to Abraham and to her.

Heb. 11:12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

The man who is as good as dead is Abraham. This does not mean that he was on his deathbed for 75 years. It means that he was sexually dead for several years (fewer than 13 years).

I have always liked this comparison between the stars of heaven and the grains of sand by the seashore and the descendants of Abraham. This does not mean that there would be a one-to-one correspondence, but that Abraham would have billions of those who would follow him in faith. God, Who made these promises, knew that the number of stars in the heavens was comparable to the grains of sand by the sea—and God did not require a telescope to know this, as He made all of the stars. The writer of that portion of Genesis knew this by revelation; not by science.

Heb. 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Both Sarah and Abraham died. They are laid to rest in that cave. They remained foreigners in the land given them by God. The same is true of their children and their children's children.

They began as strangers and exiles in the land of promise; and believers in Jesus Christ experience the same thing—that we are of an earth not yet visible to us—except through God's promises.

Heb. 11:14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

They were seeking a homeland, but they never owned any part of the land given them by God, except their gravesite. This homeland had been what God promised to them.

Heb. 11:15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

They could have returned at any time to the land of their fathers. But that was not the land given them by God.

Heb. 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.

God was providing them an eternal home.

There is another layer of meaning here, that we ought to be aware of. The earth on which we live, this is not our permanent home; therefore, we ought not to be caught up in the things of the earth (the philosophies, the propaganda and the blindness of human viewpoint thinking).

Heb. 11:17 By faith **Abraham**, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son,...

This is Gen. 22, where the death of Jesus Christ is seen through the parallel of Abraham offering up his uniquely-born son, Isaac. Isaac was the fulfillment of many promises that God had made to Abraham; and yet Abraham was willing to offer up this uniquely-born son to God.

Isaac in his birth was a type of Christ (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); Isaac, when offered up by Abraham, was a type of Christ (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Heb. 11:18 ...of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."

Isaac was offered up, even though God promised that the fulfillment of all the heavenly promises would come through Isaac. So Abraham had to keep in his head two principles which appeared to be in opposition to one another: (1) God's promises to him would be fulfilled in Isaac; and (2) God required that he offer up Isaac as a human sacrifice. These two seemingly contradictory things are also true of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 11:19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Abraham assumed that, if he offered up his son, then God would have to raise him up from the dead. In any case, Abraham did not lose his son.

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Lesson 282: Genesis 25 Abraham in the General Epistles; An Epistle Study V

This is the final installment of searching out where Abraham is mentioned in the New Testament.

Abraham in the General Epistles:

James, the half-brother of the Lord, wrote the epistle of James, and it appears to be a very practical epistle, often misunderstood.

James 2:15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,...

James is quite obviously a Jew, and usually, when speaking of a brother or a sister, this was a fellow Jew or a fellow believer. Even though there is a distinction, that is not really the point of what James is saying. At the beginning of this book, it is clear that James is addressing fellow Jewish believers.

James 2:16 ...and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

There are times when we, as believers, are put in a situation where there is someone before us who is in need. James is saying that we might want to do more for this person than pray for them.

I am not saying that you feed every homeless person that you see. In some cities, that would be on every street corner, but there are times to act and those times will sometimes cause you spend money—money which you may have earmarked for a different purpose.

In other cases, you might have a particular mission outreach which you support financially. It would appear that giving is a part of every believer's ministry, however, giving needs to be done not under pressure or because you have been moved emotionally, but as part of

the Christian life. Obviously, it needs to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit, or you are wasting your time (this means, there is no unconfessed sin in your life).

As an aside, and generally speaking, you should not be supporting ministries which spend a significant amount of time asking for money. When I was a new believer, I recall listening to one radio show where, for nearly the full 30 min., the pastor (or whatever) spent the time asking for money, in a variety of ways, presumably so that he could come back tomorrow and do that same thing all over again. I was young in the faith at that time, but even I recognized that there was something wrong with this approach.

James 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Dead here is the adjective nekros (νεκρός) [pronounced *nehk-ROSS*], which means, when used metaphorically, *spiritually dead; destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God, because given up to trespasses and sins; inactive as respects doing right; destitute of force or power, inactive, inoperative*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #3498. Here, the idea is *non-operational*.

One has to be careful here. This is not a call for new believers to start running around and doing things. However, a mature believer will have works, because a growing believer is beginning to understand his function as a believer. No believer who grows spiritually is going to be without works.

A new believer who runs around and does things is often going to do things which work at cross-purposes with the plan of God; or have no effect whatsoever on the plan of God.

James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

The word *faith* can refer to believing; but it can also refer to *what* a person believers. In other words, this can be used as a synonym for *Bible doctrine*. It is the feminine noun pistis (πίστις) [pronounced *PIHS-tihs*]. From Zodhiates:[114] Metaphorically, it means *the object of Christian faith, meaning the doctrines received and believed; Christian doctrine; the gospel, all that Christianity stands for*. Strong's #4102.

The word translated *by* is actually ek (ἐκ) [pronounced *ehk*], which means *out of, out from, from, of*. Strong's #1537. His faith is made obvious *out from* his works.

James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith [that which you have believed] and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my doctrine out from my works.

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[114] Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament;* AMG International INC.; ©1992; p. 1164.

Again, this is not applied to a believer who is a few months old in the faith. Your pastor needs to distinguish from time to time between those who are new in the faith and those who have grown spiritually and know the Word of God.

It should be noted that, in that particular era, right after the cross, during the great persecutions, and before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, many believers grew up quickly. Teaching sometimes came in very extended periods of time, because they knew not when they would have good teaching again (for instance, when Paul or Timothy or Titus were available to teach). Having sermons which might continue for hours was not out of the ordinary (Acts 20:9). This was particularly true close to Judah and among the Jews, some of whom were persecuted by fellow Jews and by the Romans. The dramatic events of that day made for spiritual growth which occurred more quickly. Suffering often accelerates spiritual growth, but that is a whole other topic. However, as another aside, given the state of our own country, this may become a very important point of doctrine to those of us who live in the United States. We have lived great lives of ease over the entirety of my lifetime, which is very much out-of-step with most of the rest of the world.

Suffering alone does not bring with it spiritual growth; suffering and the teaching and application of Bible doctrine.

James 2:19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder!

It is accurate that God is one is essence. Jews new to the faith had a background to contend with. They had learned as Jews, the words of Moses: Hear, O Israel: Y^{e}howah is our God; Y^{e}howah is one; and you shall love Y^{e}howah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deut. 6:4–5). Every Jew knew these words, and James is not denigrating them or saying that this is false. “You know this, and it is accurate.” is more the idea of what he says. And he adds, “But demons believe this as well.”

I have never seen any evidence that demons are offered salvation as we are. Any person, no matter who he is or what evil he has done, can believe in Jesus Christ and be saved. However, there does not appear to be the same open invitation to demons (fallen angels). They clearly know the reality of God and they know the reality of their future—being placed under judgment—and it makes the shudder.

James 2:20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is non-operational?

There appears to have been a problem with some Jewish believers; that they quietly believed in Jesus, but they did not publically admit to this. For a new believer, it is often best that they keep this to themselves and grow spiritually. One of the greatest embarrassments to Christianity is finding some celebrity who has just been converted, and then hauling him all over to speak to use his celebrity status. Such a person barely knows

up from down. They might know how to speak before a group; and they might no how to tug on the heartstrings of some audience members, but they generally know little or nothing about the faith that they have professed, and provide zero spiritual impact when speaking to groups (unless they understand the gospel of Jesus Christ and are able to articulate it).

During a period of disaster, believers learning Bible doctrine often have their faith super-charged. They tend to learn more quickly, apply their faith more often, and therefore grow spiritually in a shorter period of time. In times of great stability, we are able to access and to enjoy the teaching of God's Word more easily, as well as enjoy a life of relative ease (which is true of most people who live in the free world). However, because of the ease and stability of life, it is often easy to take our faith and stable periods of time for granted as well.

In the time of James, the Jewish world was in an upheaval. Jesus' teachings were spreading throughout the Roman world; the Romans and the Jews were in difficult conflict, which would result in the destruction of Jerusalem and their Temple; and Christians were continually being persecuted, both by the Romans and by the Jews. This was the time during which James wrote this letter.

James 2:21 Was not **Abraham** our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

The verb *justified* is aorist passive indicative of dikaioô (δικαιόω) [pronounced *dik-ah-YOH-oh*], which means, *1) to render righteous or such he ought to be; 2) to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered; 3) to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #1344. In that point of time, Abraham showed himself to be righteous. He had been saved many years earlier (Gen. 15:6); but he showed himself to be righteous or gave evidence of his righteousness by offering his son on the altar, thus giving us a marvelous type which matches the antitype of God offering His Son on the cross.

Abraham did not go from faith in Y^{e}howah Elohim to offering Isaac on the altar in a few days or even a few weeks. Abraham clearly believed in the Revealed God before he left Ur of the Chaldeans. He therefore believed when he was less than 75 years old. However, he offered up Isaac to God somewhere between ages 107 and 112. Therefore, even the example that James uses does *not* indicate that Abraham was saved and then, a week or so later, he is doing great things for God. He had to grow spiritually in between.

The Jewish believers to whom James is writing (James 1:1) have to therefore grow spiritually and their works which come out from their faith will become manifest. It is a natural outgrowth of the believer entering into maturity.

This entire process is known as experiential sanctification. *Sanctification* means *to be set apart to be used by God*. Sanctification is a classification which involves position and relationship. There are 3 stages of sanctification. (1) salvation sanctification;

(2) experiential sanctification; and (3) ultimate sanctification. Ideally, the believer enjoys sanctification in time, which means he grows spiritually and then expresses his sanctification through his works (James just has given the example of Abraham). In ultimate sanctification, we die and shed the sin nature, and stand righteous before God (we stand before God on the basis of what Jesus Christ did for us).

As we have previously studied, **Abraham's offering of Isaac** was one of the greatest applications of faith, as this **foreshadows the cross of Christ**. (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

James 2:22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;...

The verb *was completed* is the aorist passive indicative of the verb teleioô (τελειόω) [pronounced *tehl-i-OH-oh*], which means, *1) to make perfect, complete; 1a) to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end; 2) to complete (perfect); 2a) add what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full; 2b) to be found perfect; 3) to bring to the end (goal) proposed; 4) to accomplish; 4a) bring to a close or fulfilment by event; 4a1) of the prophecies of the scriptures*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #5048. This describes experiential righteousness. The person expressed faith in Christ Jesus; grew spiritually; and then expressed his faith-doctrine by means of his works. A person with legitimate works had taken his faith to a point of fulfillment or completion.

James 2:23 ...and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "**Abraham** believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" —and he was called a friend of God. (Gen. 15:6 Isa. 41:8)

What has happened is faith-righteousness is parlayed into works-righteousness; or Abraham progressed from salvation sanctification to experiential sanctification. But notice that this progression, which James offers up as an example, took place over a period of at least 35 years. Therefore, what James is saying here is not directed toward the believer who is 3 weeks old in the faith.

James 2:24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

There is a place for works righteousness in the plan of God. That is experiential righteousness; when we reach a certain point in our spiritual growth. Works are a natural outgrowth of spiritual advance.

Peter will speak about the relationship between husbands and wives and he will use Abraham and Sarah to illustrate.

1Peter 3:1–2 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Some women will be married to men who are not believers, or who are believers in reversionism (they had turned away from the faith). Often, such a woman is saved while being married, and Peter is telling them that they are still under the authority of their own husbands, even if they are unbelievers.

The wives, by their respectful conduct, can win over the souls (thinking) of their husbands. At some point, the wayward husband will recognize what a wonderful wife it is that he has. *Conduct* is the feminine singular noun anastrophê (ἀναστροφή) [pronounced *an-as-trof-AY*], which means, *manner of life, conduct, behavior, deportment*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #391.

The word *pure* is the adjective agnos (ἁγνός) [pronounced *hag-NOSS*], which means, *exciting reverence, venerable, sacred; pure; pure from carnality, chaste, modest; pure from every fault, immaculate; clean*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #53.

Respect here is the masculine singular noun phobos (φόβος) [pronounced *FOHB-oss*], which means, *1) fear, dread, terror; 1a) that which strikes terror; 2) reverence for one's husband*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #5401.

Through the woman's lifestyle and her respect shown toward her husband, this will sometimes win over the heart of a man who is either an unbeliever or who is turned away from the faith. There are an abundance of lousy wives out there; so a husband with a good wife may potentially come to recognize that part of her motivation is her faith in God.

1Peter 3:3 Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear--...

This does not mean that a woman should not spend time doing her hair, picking out nice clothes or wearing jewelry. The passage deals with emphasis. The woman is not to emphasize the externals over the internals. Nothing in the Bible requires women to try to look ugly.

1Peter 3:4 ...but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

The woman is to put the emphasis upon adorning the "hidden person of the heart." That is, the woman is to concentrate on what is not seen, which would be the spiritual and soulish person. I have known some very beautiful women in my day. I can recall one woman who was, for most of her life, exceptionally attractive. However, her entire world revolved around her. Whatever she saw or heard, she related directly to herself. She did not appear to understand that people thought or made decisions independently of her.

When she expressed this verbally, she could be very poor company, despite her physical beauty.

Peter is saying that the emphasis of the woman should be upon her human spirit, which means she needs to take in the Word of God. She needs to grow by means of the Word of God. This is described as having the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

Here are some other translations:

AUV-NT	Do not let your [*adornment*] be [*the decorations*] of the physical body, such as elaborate hair-dos, the wearing of golden [*jewelry*] and the wearing of [*stunning*] outfits. But [*the kind of adornment you should display is*] that of the inner person, with its enduring qualities of a meek and calm spirit, which are extremely valuable in God's eyes.
ERV	It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. No, your beauty should come from inside you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. That beauty will never disappear. It is worth very much to God.
God's Word	Wives must not let their beauty be something external. Beauty doesn't come from hairstyles, gold jewelry, or clothes. Rather, beauty is something internal that can't be destroyed. Beauty expresses itself in a gentle and quiet attitude which God considers precious.
JMNT	...whose world must not consist of the external adornment -- of braiding of [the] hair and placing-around of gold ornaments, or of dressing up (putting on garments) --but to the contrary, [it should consist of] the hidden human (concealed man; cloaked personality) of the heart, within the incorruptible and imperishable quality of the gentle (tender; mild; kind; meek) and still (at rest; tranquil; quiet) spirit (or: attitude; disposition), which is (continually exists being) of great value (very costly) in God's sight.
Knox NT	Your beauty must lie, not in braided hair, not in gold trinkets, not in the dress you wear, but in the hidden features of your hearts, in a possession you can never lose, that of a calm and tranquil spirit; to God's eyes, beyond price.

1Peter 3:5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,...

And Peter also throws in those words which are anathema to many women today: ...by submitting to their own husbands... The woman's movement in the United States, since the 1970's in particular, rejects this axiom. As believers, we should expect this. In a society where most people are believers, Satan is going to be hard at work to turn others away from the faith in any way that he can. Therefore, I have seen several norms—submissive wives, obedient children, understanding that homosexual acts are wrong—be turned completely around in my lifetime. Along with this, we have seen the dissolution of marriage, the destruction of the public school system, and a bevy of homosexual lawsuits filling up our courts. This is what Satan does. He replaces truth with lies, which always

results in societal ills. When society does the opposite of what the Bible mandates, society goes downhill.

1Peter 3:6 ...as **Sarah** obeyed **Abraham**, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Peter gives the example of Sarah and Abraham. Sarah refers to Abraham as her *lord* in Gen. 18:12 (And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After my being old, shall there be pleasure to me; my lord also being old?"). She did not even need to state this out loud; she said this in her soul.

Even though I think it is a grand idea for women to periodically call their husbands *lord,* that certainly does allow for some measure of sarcasm, which we men might not fully appreciate. In any case, the key is the attitude of the woman's soul. The key is how the woman thinks about her man in her own soul.

We are children of Sarah and Abraham in the faith; and James warns here about living a life in fear. The believer, even when his nation is falling apart, ought not to be afraid.

1Peter 3:7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

This passage, like many others, tells us that domestic tranquility is related to God hearing the prayers of a married couple.

This concludes our digression into the New Testament where Abraham is spoken of.

Lesson 283: Genesis 25:11–16 — The Children of Ishmael

We are still in the 25th chapter of Genesis. So far, we have studied Abraham's children by Keturah and Abraham's death (vv. 1–10). After which, we took an extended look of Abraham and Sarah in the New Testament. Now we return to complete Gen. 25 in a few lessons.

Genesis 25:11 And after the death of Abraham, it happened that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac lived by The Well of the Living One, My Beholder.

Isaac and Ishmael became reacquainted when Abraham died. As families do, Ishmael would have told Isaac about his children; and these are recorded here in Gen. 25.

This particular well had become quite closely associated with the extended family of Abraham. We first became acquainted with this well when Hagar ran away from the household of Abraham because Sarah was abusing her. She got this far away, and God spoke to her and sent her back to Abraham's compound (Gen. 16:6–14). When Isaac met

Rebekah for the first time, he was living by this well (Gen. 24:61–67). Isaac is still living by this well at this time.

Interestingly enough, even though it reads that *God blessed his son Isaac,* we will then study the children of Ishmael. I think that the technical term for this is *pulling the old switcheroo*. We have the list of Abraham's children by Keturah; the death of Abraham; the blessing of Isaac, which we would expect to be followed by a listing of all Isaac's children. But the author pulls the old switcheroo, and will then talk about all of Ishmael's children.

Why is there a genealogy for Ishmael?

Now, how exactly do we explain Genesis 25:12–18 and 1Chronicles 1:29–31 (which also features the genealogy of Ishmael)? Why are these passages in the Word of God? We might understand how Abraham or Isaac, from a human point of view, might want to include this sort of information. Have you ever kept in touch with a part of your family in another state, and you know 3 or 4 generations of them, but, at some point, it is clear that you and no one in your direct line will know any more than that of their family, despite being related? So, from a human perspective, it is easy to understand why either Abraham or Isaac wanted to include these names and these generations of Ishmael in their records. But what about God the Holy Spirit, the other Author of Scripture? There is always a human and a divine reason for this information being here.

Let me suggest a few things that might be different than you have read elsewhere, and then answer the question. We tend to shortcut our explanation of why Isaac is in the line of promise and Ishmael is not. One is the line of faith and the other is the line of unbelief. Yeah, well, sort of yes, but sort of no.

Let me suggest to you that both Isaac and Ishmael both believed in the Revealed God. Let me further suggest that all of the people named below in vv. 12–18 are believers. These are not just a list of nobodies that the Holy Spirit grudgingly recorded, because the human authors write these genealogical tables down; but these are men to be celebrated, men whom we will meet in person sometime in eternity. They are not just a batch of random names; they are believers who continued in the Ishmael line. Ishmael believed in the Revealed God and some of his sons also believed and some of their sons also believed.

God knew where both lines were going. For the most part, the line of Abraham and Isaac would be filled with believers. Furthermore, that line would lead to Moses, to David, to Solomon, to Isaiah, to Jeremiah and to Jesus, our Savior. Therefore, their line is the line of promise; their line is the line of the Hebrew people. Does this mean that every Arab is cursed? Does this mean that no Arab will believe in Jesus Christ? Of course not! Many do. Not necessarily an overwhelming number, but they do. This genealogy recognizes and blesses those early on who believed; and it also offers hope for the Arab today. And, in case you were unaware, the Arab are a semitic group just like the Jews, but they are cousins to the Jews—originally first cousins, then second cousins and now distant cousins.

All Arabs are ultimately descended from Abraham. Some are direct descendants from Abraham and Keturah; others are the descendants of Ishmael; and others are the seed of Esau.

What happens to the Arab who recognizes that the religion of his people is bankrupt? It is a medieval system of religion that does very little beyond inspiring wars and personal striving. There is a solution for their corrupt faith. That is the solution taken by Ishmael, Nebaioth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. For them, that solution was to believe in the Revealed God; and today, for any Arab reading this, the solution is to believe in Jesus Christ. Because, long, long before there was Mohammed, there was the Revealed God; Who eventually was revealed as Jesus Christ in the fullness of time. That is Ishmael and his twelve sons. The earliest and greatest tradition of the Arab peoples was to believe in the God revealed in the Scriptures, which God is Jesus.

Genesis 25:12a And these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son,...

Except for the change of focus, this list of the sons of Ishmael is a natural progression. Isaac and Ishmael are brought together after the death of their father, Abraham. Therefore, it would be expected that they would have discussed their families, and this is why Isaac would be aware of Ishmael's family and be able to record it here.

Let's put a timeline to this. Isaac was born when Abraham was 100, and Ishmael was 13 years older than him. Abraham slept with his fathers (died) at age 175, so Isaac is now 75 years old and Ishmael is 88 years old. What we would expect is for Ishmael to recount, at this point in time, 3–4 generations. Ishmael had to grow up fast. When he and his mother were dying of thirst, his mother saw the well (God pointed it out to her) and took care of her young son. However, soon thereafter, Ishmael learned to take care of his mother. My point in this is, Ishmael grew up quickly—he had to be a man at the age of 14 or 15; so he may have taken a wife early—say, age 17 or 18, or even in his 20's—as opposed to Isaac, who married when he was 40 years old. All of this would be in agreement with the text of Scripture.

Over this period of time, Ishmael will have had 12 sons; and their names will be recorded in this section. At this point in time, they would likely have all have been already born; and they are probably all young and middle age adults by this time.

Interestingly enough, even though some of their sons were probably already born to them, Isaac lists only Ishmael's sons (I am assuming that Isaac *wrote* this portion of Genesis). Actually, I don't believe that anyone actually *wrote* the book of Genesis until perhaps the time of Moses. I believe that man had a tremendous mental capacity at this time, and it would have been easy for a parent to teach his son or daughter world history by teaching them to memorize the book of Genesis, including the genealogies. As each new generation arose, new chapters would be added, continuing the history of man. The new chapters follow logically and reflect the sensibilities of the author who recorded it (i.e., the one who taught it to his son).

As you may recall, I postulated that Melchizedek *handed off* the first 10 or 11 chapters of Genesis to Abraham; and that Abraham continued the tradition of teaching these chapters and his particular genealogy to his son Isaac, who would do that same.

Isaac is a man of milestones. He will primarily talk about births, deaths and marriages. Sometimes he would talk about places he has lived. A list of sons of his half-brother is exactly the sort of thing that Isaac would find out about and record.

Now, you may ask, *what about Gen. 24, which was this very detailed and repetitive story of how Abraham's servant went to Abraham's relatives and brought Rebekah back to Isaac?* Exactly my point. Who were the main characters in this story? Abraham's servant and Rebekah. Who would have recalled all of the details? Abraham's servant and Rebekah. As mentioned before, it reads like a bedtime story, and is likely what Rebekah or her personal maidservant "read" this story (an actual historical event) to Jacob and Esau when they were infants (they have not yet been born in our narrative, but that will occur in this chapter).

Genesis 25:12 And these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bore to Abraham.

You will recall that Abraham and Sarah left the land of promise to go to Egypt during an economic depression, and probably returned from there with Hagar, who became Sarah's personal servant. At some point, when Sarah had not conceived, she suggested to Abraham that he sire a child through Hagar. This was Ishmael. This was a bad idea and put a strain on the relationship of Abraham and Sarah, and certainly upon the relationship between Sarah and her maid.

Genesis 25:13 And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations. The first-born of Ishmael was Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,...

It is reasonable to suppose that all of these sons believed in the Revealed Lord. It would make sense for them to be named in Scripture because they are believers. I am personally unaware of any other reason for listing them. I can understand Isaac listing them, as he concerns himself with births, deaths and marriages. However, I am unsure as to why God the Holy Spirit would include these men, apart from them being believers, and possibly the last generation of believers in Ishmael's line (with some individual exceptions).

You will recall the two types of genealogies: (1) the straight-line genealogy, which follows many generations and is *only* found in the line leading from Adam to Jesus; and (2) the cluster genealogy, where the sons and grandsons of a man might be named. However, unless this genealogy is in the line of promise, it is never taken any further. This portion of Genesis is a cluster genealogy.

Nebaioth is named in the genealogies (here and in 1Chron. 1:29), and he is found mentioned with Kedar by Isaiah: And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of **Kedar** shall be gathered to you; the rams of **Nebaioth** shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on My altar, and I will beautify My beautiful house (Isa. 60:3–7). Much of the end of Isaiah deals with the Millennium and this suggests that there are believers to come from these two lines who will come to Israel.

Nebaioth is also associated with the Nabataeans, however the Nabataeans are associated with Greek and Roman history, and these men would have been Semitic, having been descendants of Abraham (and, therefore, ultimately from Shem instead of Japheth). There may have been some intermarriage—we do not really know one way or the other.

Kedar, which means *dark–skinned,* is named in as #2 son of Ishmael in Gen. 25:13; 1Chron. 1:29. This is also the name of a great tribe of Arabs settled on the northwest of the peninsula and on the confines of Palestine[115] (and they are likely from this particular Kedar). The "glory of Kedar" is mentioned in Isa. 21:13–17 and the "princes of Kedar" are mentioned in Ezek. 27:21. In fact, *Kedar* is mentioned in at least 12 times in these Bible: Gen. 25:13 1Chron. 1:29 Song. 1:5 Isa. 21:16–17 42:11 60:7 Jer. 2:10 49:28 Ezek. 27:21. Therefore, this particular line continued for hundreds of years.

Adbeel, which means *offering of God,* is only found in the genealogy passages. ISBE tells us *[This] name appears in the Assyrian records as that of a north Arabian tribe residing somewhere Southwest of the Dead Sea*.[116] This is exactly where we would expect any of Ishmael's sons to be found.

Mibsam is found in the typical genealogies and there is another Mibsam spoken of in 1Chron. 4:25. His name means *perfume*.

Genesis 25:14 ...and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,...

Mishma is named in the two Ishmael genealogies. There is also a Mishma who shows up as a son of Mibsam in a different genealogy (1Chron. 4:25–26). We know that his name means *a hearing,* but nothing else about him. There is no reason to think that every son of Ishmael had an enduring legacy.

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[115] Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary;* 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Kedar.

[116] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Adbeel.

Dumah is named here and in 1Chron. 1:30. There was a city in Judah with this name (Joshua 15:52) an Isaiah speaks of an oracle concerning Dumah in Isa. 21:11.

> Concerning Dumah, ISBE writes: *According to the Arabic geographies this son of Ishmael rounded the town of Dûmat-el-Jandal, the stone-built Dûmah, so called to distinguish it from another Dumah near the Euphrates. The former now bears the name of the Jauf ("belly"), being a depression situated half-way between the head of the Persian Gulf and the head of the gulf of Akaba. Its people in the time of Mohammed were Christians of the tribe of Kelb. It contained a great well from which the palms and crops were irrigated. It has often been visited by European travelers in recent times*.[117]
>
> Although I thought there were a lot of references to Massa, there are only two in Ishmael's genealogies. Smith writes: *His descendants were not improbably the Masani, placed by Ptolemy in the east of Arabia, near the borders of Babylonia*.[118]

Genesis 25:15 ...Hadad [*Cheder?*], and Tema and Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

The first man in the list, *Hadad* or *Cheder,* has the problem of his name (the Hebrew letter equivalents of *d* and *r* are frequently confounded in proper names). There are also two similar letters in the Hebrew (h, ה = hêʾ; ch, ח = chêyth) which are properly transliterated with an *h* and a *ch;* however, it is quite common for the letter chêyth in the Hebrew to be represented with just an *h*. In fact, the Strong's #2316 (which is *Chădar*) is said by the e-sword version of the KJV concordance not to exist anywhere. Both Smith and ISBE reference *Hadad* instead. He is only named in the genealogies, although there are 4 *Hadad's* found in Scripture.

The name *Tema* is found in Gen. 25:15 1Chron. 1:30 Job. 6:19 Isa. 21:14 Jer. 25:23. The man Tema, the son of Ishmael, is in the genealogies of the first two passages. The tribe which was descended from him is found in Jer. 25:23. The place where they lived in named in the other two passages.

> ISBE has the following information: *the place where they dwelt (Job. 6:19 Isa. 21:14) [is]...a locality in Arabia which probably corresponding to the modern Teimā' (or Taymā' —see Doughty, Arabia Deserta, I, 285), an oasis which lies about 200 miles North of el–Medina, and some 40 miles South of Dūmat el–Jandal (Dumah), now known as el–Jauf. It is on the ancient caravan road connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Aḳaba; and doubtless the people took a share in the carrying trade (Job. 6:19). The wells of the oasis still attract the wanderers from the parched wastes (Isa. 21:14). Doughty (loc. cit.) describes the ruins of the old city wall, some*

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[117] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Dumah.

[118] Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary;* 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Massa.

> *3 miles in circuit. An Aramaic stele recently discovered, belonging to the 6th century B.C., shows the influence of Assyrian article The place is mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions (Schrader, KAT2, 149)*.[119]

With the name *Tema,* we face a chicken-and-egg situation with regards to Job 6:19. Did the family of Tema settle into an area which was then named Tema? Did the area Tema exist first, and Ishmael liked the name and gave it to one of his sons? Did a particular son of Ishmael become so closely associated with an area called *Tema,* that *Tema* became the family name (names of places were updated on many occasions in the Bible)? I ask these questions, simply because I believe the book of Job to predate Abraham. However, there is nothing in the book of Job which prevents it from occurring in the time of Jacob and Esau. The close association of a person with the place where he lives occurs today just as it did in the ancient world. I am a Texan, even though I was not born or raised here. So, it is possible the name *Tema* comes down to us today based upon where this son of Ishmael lived instead of this being his name at birth.

Jetur is found in two genealogies and named as a tribe in 1Chron. 5:19. ISBE tells us *they are the Itureans (Ituræans) of New Testament times*.[120]

Naphish (Nephish) is essentially mentioned in the same places as Jetur is, first as an individual and then as a tribe.

> ISBE tells us: *[The] Naphish, along with other Hagrite clans, was overwhelmingly defeated by the Israelite tribes on the East of the Jordan (1Chron. 5:19, the King James Version "Nephish"). Their descendants are mentioned among the Nethinim by the name "Nephisim"*.[121]

Finally, Kedemah is only mentioned by name in the two genealogy passages. The people who came from him *might be* the Kadmonites (found in Gen. 15:19, which is part of a list of the peoples who eventually lived in Canaan).

Therefore, it is possible that several of these peoples remained with Ishmael in the land of Canaan; and some apparently moved east.

Genesis 25:16 These were the sons of Ishmael, and these were their names, by their towns and by their settlements; twelve chiefs according to their nations.

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[119] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Tema.

[120] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Jetur.

[121] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Naphish. There are some alternate spellings for his descendants.

Notice how this is stated—these are their names, by their towns and by their settlements. People were closely associated with where they lived. Therefore, these men could have been given one name, but they became so closely associated with an area, they became known by that name. This would allow for *Tema* (for instance) to have been given a different name; but he became so closely associated with the area of Tema, that became the name he was known by. I am not saying that this is the case; but the way this is written allows for such an understanding for some of Ishmael's sons.

This further suggests that each one of Ishmael's children either began a city or a city-state. What happens is, each child may claim a piece of territory for himself. He will marry, have children, and have a farm or a ranch. As we have seen throughout Scripture, particularly in this time period, it was not unusual for a family to have 10 or 12 children. This would continue until the patriarch is 60–90 (or older), in most cases. By this time, his children will have become adults and they will have begun their own families. Before the patriarch has died, all of his 12 or so children will have married and would be producing children as well. Some of the oldest ones would have grandchildren or even great grandchildren before the patriarch has passed. So, over one lifetime, a small city could be established, all coming from one man. This patriarch may have 120–150 children and grandchildren. Before he dies, even some of his grandchildren will be grown and reproducing children as well.

Furthermore, it would be very likely that this spirit of young independence would have been engendered by Ishmael in his young sons. He was on his own at age 13 or 14; so he is not going to tolerate children as layabouts at the late age of 17 or 18. So it is likely that his sons started on their own at a young age, at the urging and training of Ishmael their father. So, at this time, when Ishmael is 88 years old, all 12 of his sons would be old enough to be establishing small villages on their own. Ishmael's upbringing would have likely resulted in his sons becoming tough and independent young men in their teens.

It appears as if Isaac and Ishmael kept some contact over the years, as the next verse records when Ishmael died (at age 137). Given his age and his early start, it would not be impossible for there to be 6 generations of Ishmaelites by the time of his death. Therefore, the information listed previously of his sons as heads of villages and encampments is even more likely. If such a thing is possible at age 88 for Ishmael; then it is certain even more likely by the time of his death. So, if Isaac knows about his death (I am assuming that Isaac is the author here), then Isaac clearly knows about Ishmael's sons and their villages and encampments. Remember that these two families—Isaac's and Ishmael's—do not live that far from one another. Isaac is living near the very well where Ishmael almost died of thirst when cast out at age 13.

There were obviously problems between their respective mothers. However, this does not mean that Isaac and Ishmael were equally estranged in their lifetimes. The fact that Isaac would include the names of all the sons of his half-brother Ishmael suggests that they both developed a much friendlier relationship as older men.

In the previous lesson, we studied the sons of Ishmael and the relationship between Isaac and Ishmael.

Genesis 25:17a And these were the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred thirty-seven years.

As discussed earlier, it was perfectly possible for Ishmael, at age 88, to have had sons already striking out on their own and establishing their own families and their own villages by the time that he reunites with Isaac at his father's funeral. Ishmael dies almost 50 years later, which is more than enough time for these small villages and encampments to be prospered with more and more children.

Ishmael should not be viewed as some kind of a villain in Scripture. He was simply not Abraham's true heir to the promises of God. However, he did come from Abraham, and God, for this reason, blessed Ishmael. God blessed and protected Ishmael and his mother.

We also know that his mother named the well which saved their lives *The Well of Him Who Sees Me,* a reference to the Living and Revealed God, Who saw her and Who looked out for her. 137 years is a long life; 12 sons, all of whom are tough and independent, is a great blessing. However, these sons are not to be the 12 tribes of Israel. Whereas Ishmael is a believer in the Revealed Lord, as is his mother, and as are probably his sons, the Word of God does not appear to be central to their lives or to the generations from that point on. However, there is no denying that God greatly blessed Ishmael. This blessing would have been a combination of an extension of blessing to Abraham as well as blessing given to Ishmael and his family directly, because they have believed in the Revealed God.

Furthermore, as we have already observed, some men from Ishmael's line continued to impact history for many generations after.

Genesis 25:17 And these were the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred thirty-seven years. And he expired and died, and he was gathered to his people.

We have two words here which appear to mean the same thing, as per BDB and Gesenius. However, there seems to be a connotation of breathing out one's last breath or giving up the spirit of life with the first verb. God breathes life into each person at birth, and when that person breathes his last, he gives up that life. That is essentially what is occurring here. Ishmael breathes his last breath and then he dies.

Throughout the Bible, there is the concept of the human soul—human life, if you will—which is the life that God breathes into each one of us at birth. For some reason, people make the soul into some weird, ethereal thing. It is not. It is simply our mentality, our volition, our norms and standards, our conscience, etc. The soul is very definable and very easy for even the unbeliever to understand. Apart from this soul, we are nothing.

Apart from the soul, we are a lifeless body. And when man acts only upon instinct and upon desires, he has abandoned the thinking of his own soul.

Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Human Soul**.

The short and simple differentiation between the human spirit and the human soul is, we relate to other people by means of our human soul (memory, thinking, emotions, norms and standards); and we relate to God by means of our human spirit (doctrinal content). We do not have a functioning human spirit until we are born again, at which point the human spirit is regenerated (made alive). We will talk about the human spirit next after the doctrine of the human soul.

Doctrine of the Human Soul

1. What the soul is not:
   1) The soul is not some mysterious, undefinable, ethereal essence.
   2) The soul is not simply the result of biological, chemical and electrical impulses firing off in our brains, which make us think that we are able to think.
   3) The soul did not develop by evolution. We were not some grunting heathen with a 10 word vocabulary which evolved into the men that we are today. Various segments of mankind de-evolve; but at almost any time in human history, the full scope of mankind from his best to his worst, from his most primitive to his most advanced exist simultaneously on this earth.
2. *Soul* is often used to translate the feminine noun psuchê (ψυχή) [pronounced *psoo-KHAY*], which means *1) breath; 1a) the breath of life; 1a1) the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing; 1a1a) of animals; 1a1b) of men; 1b) life; 1c) that in which there is life; 1c1) a living being, a living soul; 2) the soul; 2a) the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul etc.)*. Strong's #5590. When studying the Bible, we need to understand that, the language of the Greek could be nearly as flexible as the English language. That is, a word can have several different meanings often determined contextually. Sometimes psuchê is used very technically, as defined in this doctrine; and sometimes it is used in a much more general way.
3. God breathes life into each one of us, and that is the soul. Without this breath-life-soul, we are not alive. Human life is the result of soul life and biological life. After we are born, the electrical signals from the brain indicate a functioning soul. When these signals die, then we are physically dead. Gen. 2:7
4. The real person is the soul. Gen. 2:7 35:18 46:26–27 Psalm 104:29 Matt. 10:28
5. God has designed the human body and human soul to intersect in the brain. The electrical activity in the brain is the function of the human soul.
6. That electrical activity is both soul-life and exceptionally complex circuitry which controls the involuntary functions of the body. For instance, you do not think about maintain your body temperature to 98.5°—it just happens. But it is the circuit board in your brain which makes that happen.

Doctrine of the Human Soul

7. The Essence of the Soul (which is the shadow image of God—Gen. 1:26)
   1) Self-consciousness. Man is aware of his own existence and is able to relate to both animate life and inanimate objects on earth. Animals have consciousness, but not self-consciousness. 2Sam. 7:18 (And King David came in and sat before Jehovah, and said: Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that you have brought me to this point?) Psalm 8:4 (What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man, that You interact with him?)
   2) Mentality. Self-consciousness is no good without mentality (Prov 19:2). This is the thinking part of man and is composed of two parts.
      (1) The *mind* or left lobe of the soul.
      (2) The *heart* or right lobe of the soul contains the frame of reference, memory center, vocabulary and categorical storage, norms and standards, and launching pad for application of knowledge to life.
      (3) Knowledge enters into the left lobe (the mind); it is believed and then transferred over to the right lobe (the heart). Knowledge which is true and knowledge which is false can be believed; and that begins a layering in the heart. When this knowledge is true and about God, we experience spiritual growth. When this knowledge is false and a part of the cosmic system (= Satan's thinking), then we are building up scar tissue of the soul.
      (4) Emotion is also a part of the mind; and when it begins making decisions, that is when a person goes into emotional revolt of the soul.
      (5) Like much of the technical terminology in Scripture, *mind* and *heart* are not used in this technical sense each and every time these words are found. There are times when these words are virtually interchangeable.
   3) Volition. Man has the ability to be negative or positive to anything in life. Volition is given to man in order to resolve the angelic conflict. Joshua 24:15b ("This day choose whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.") God gives all men true volition.
   4) Emotion is the appreciator of the soul (Luke 12:19). Emotion responds or reacts to whatever thoughts are in the soul. Ideally speaking, the emotion should be dominated by the right lobe (thinking) of the soul. When emotion controls the soul, there are a variety of negative results: the rejection of the Word of God, the rejection of God, the embracing of liberalism, humanism, etc. In more severe cases, this can result in an emotional and/or mental breakdown. Emotional control of the soul is sometimes described as *emotional revolt of the soul*.
   5) Conscience. This is the evaluator of the soul. It contains the norms and standards. Acts 24:16

6) The old sin nature is genetically formed in every cell of the human body. It battles for control of the soul through sin, **human good** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) and evil. Because we have an old sin nature, we are said to be totally depraved. Without Bible doctrine in the soul, you tend to run loose with your old sin nature's area of strength and link this activity with pride. You set up your system of standards and compare yourself to others to further your pride.

8. The soul must be distinguished from the human spirit.
   1) Heb. 4:12a reads: The word of God [is] alive and powerful; sharper than any double-edged sword, and it penetrates deeply enough to effect the division of both the soul and spirit… Originally man was trichotomous, having a body, soul, and spirit. Y^{e}howah God formed the man out of the dust from the ground [= the body] and breathed the breath [= spirit] of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living soul. (Gen 2:7)
   2) After the fall, man is born dichotomous, having only a body and soul. The spirit of man is short-circuited by the sin nature. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God [= Bible doctrine; information about God], for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know these things, because they are spiritually discerned. (1Cor. 2:14). And the natural man simply lacks the human spirit in which to store this information and classify it. At the last time there will be scoffing skeptics following after their ungodly lusts. In this, they distinguish themselves, being like animals, not having a [human] spirit. (Jude 18b–19)
   3) The believer in Jesus Christ, however, is said to have a body, soul, and spirit (1Thess. 5:23). The human spirit is regenerated by God the Holy Spirit at salvation. It is the human spirit that is born again; it is the human spirit where we store Bible doctrine.
9. Only the soul, not the body, is saved at the point of regeneration. Psalm. 19:7 34:22 Mark 8:36-37 1Peter 1:9 Heb. 10:39
   1) Therefore, there is no "healing in the atonement." The body is not saved because the old sin nature resides there. In eternity the soul is given a perfect body minus an old sin nature and minus human good. The only reason that we can have eternal fellowship with God is because we will not have a sin nature and we will not retain or produce human good.
   2) Those in eternity who glorify God forever will be those who had maximum Bible doctrine in the soul during their time on earth.
10. Only the soul, not the body, was made in the image of God. Gen 1:26-27and Gen 2:7. God is not material but spiritual.
11. The soul is the source of all basic sin. It is the battleground between the old sin nature and the Holy Spirit. Matt. 10:28 Rom 1:20–22 Eph. 4:17–19 Psalm 143
12. The soul is the area of the worst sins which are mental attitude sins. Job 21:25 Zech 11:8.
   1) The content of the soul is seen when a person speaks. What you truly are is only revealed when you speak.

Doctrine of the Human Soul

2) Sins of the tongue reveal mental attitude sins. If you are guilty, arrogant, bitter, or full of revenge, you will talk a certain way—that reveals this content of your soul.

13. In physical death, the soul departs from the body. Job 27:8 Psalm 16:10 2Cor. 5:8
14. However, the soul does not die. Gen. 35:18 1Kings 17:21 1Sam. 28:14-19 2Cor. 5:8 Luke 16 Matt. 17:23 Rev. 6:9-11
15. The soul will be reunited with some kind of a body in the end times—for the believer, this will be a resurrection body (something which we will discuss at a later date).

Much of this doctrine was taken from http://dikaosune.com/documents/DoctrineoftheSoul.pdf and edited (accessed December 17, 2013).
Also used:
http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=549 accessed April 2, 2014.
Wenstrom's Doctrine of the Human Soul accessed April 2, 2014.

This doctrine is one reason why there is such a push to get you to believe in evolution. God saves the soul; so the idea of evolution is, we really do not have a soul; but we simply have all of these electrical impulses shooting off in our brain, awash with a variety of chemicals, which cause us to do the things which we do. The idea is, this separates us from the notion of a Creator-God and, at the same time, lessens our own personal responsibility for the things that we do (after all, if these are just chemical reactions and the function of various chemicals, then how much of a choice do we really have?).

Such beliefs lead to both moral relativism as well as belief in the cheapness of human life (survival of the fittest).

This naturally leads to the doctrine:

Like many words, *soul* and *spirit* have technical and nontechnical meanings. Either word may be used to refer to human life. These doctrines define their technical meanings. Their technical meanings do not apply to each and every passage of Scripture.

The human spirit is might be understood as a reflection of the human soul; but directed toward God rather than toward man. The human spirit relates God to ourselves; and the human soul relates other people to ourselves. Man is born with a human spirit that is not functioning or is dormant. When we are born again, that human spirit is regenerated.

Doctrine of the Human Spirit

I. The human spirit is distinguished in Scripture from the human soul.
   A. Hebrews 4:12 For the Word of God is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

B. 2Thess. 5:23b May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless...

II. In the original creation of man, the human spirit was made alive along with the soul.

A. Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **breath** of lives; and man became a living **soul**. Note the plural in *Breath of lives;* this refers to the soul and spirit. The bolded words are *spirit* and *soul*.

B. We find this soul and spirit spoken of together in Job 7:11 12:10.

III. The unbeliever is born without a human spirit. He cannot understand spiritual phenomena. He is dichotomous.

A. 1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

B. We are all born as *natural men;* with a fully-functioning sin nature but without a functioning human spirit.

C. Jude 19 These be they who separate themselves, **sensual**, having not the Spirit. The word translated *sensual* is psuchikos (ψυχικός) [pronounced *psoo-khee-KOSS*], which means, *soulish; natural; unregenerate; of or belonging to breath; having the nature and characteristics of the breath; the principal of animal life, which men have in common with the brutes; governed by breath; the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #5591. This is the adjective for the noun *soul*.

D. Unregenerate man does not have the apparatus for perception, and he is guided only by his own human IQ.

E. God the Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit in the presentation of the Gospel to the unbeliever so that he can be saved.

1. Genesis 6:3 And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

2. John 16:8-11 "And when He [God the Holy Spirit] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on Me; Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

3. 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 But the natural [= psuchikos] man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. R. B. Thieme, Jr., in the Doctrine of GAP, spent two hours explaining this short passage.

Doctrine of the Human Spirit

F. At the point of salvation, both the Holy Spirit and the human spirit are given to the believer. Being born again means that the human spirit is given life (or is regenerated). We now potentially have a place in our mentality with which to process and store information about God.

IV. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is trichotomous: body, soul and spirit.

A. 1Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The giving of the human spirit and the Holy Spirit makes human IQ no longer a handicap. Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

C. Spiritual perception functions under the principle of grace, Holy Spirit, human spirit, and the Word of God.

D. The Spiritual IQ of the believer is in the human spirit, and is determined by the amount of the word of God in the human spirit.

1. Job 32:8 "But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."
2. Ephesians 3:16-19 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **May be able to comprehend with all saints** what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passes all knowledge, that you [all] might be filled with all the fullness of God. The spiritual life occurs within a person's soul and spirit—in the *inner man*. R. B. Thieme, Jr. also spent two hours on this passage in the Doctrine of GAP.
3. You can be a brilliant person and know virtually nothing about God; you can be a barely functioning adult, and yet have great knowledge of God and the Word of God.

V. The human spirit is both the target and storage area for the Word of God under the concept of full knowledge.

A. The filling of the Holy Spirit is necessary to get the Word of God from the Bible to the mind to the human spirit.

1. John 14:26 "But the Comforter, Who is the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you." The Comforter is God the Holy Spirit.
2. 1Corinthians 2:9-16 But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows

no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (Isa. 64:4)

3. 1John 2:27 But the anointing which you [all] have received of Him abides in you, and you [all] need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you [all] will abide in Him.

B. Knowledge of the Word of God in the mind is called gnosis, which has not yet been believed in. It is something that we have been made aware of; and stands as academic knowledge.

C. The Word of God which is transferred by faith to the human spirit is called epignosis, *full knowledge* or *rooted doctrine*.

1. Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love.

2. Colossians 2:6–7, 3:9–10 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, being rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his practices... (VW) The new man is the soul and spirit of the growing believer; that is, the believer with Bible doctrine in his soul.

3. The difference between gnosis (= knowledge) and epignosis (= full or complete knowledge) is the expression, By means of faith; (pistis). Ephesians 3:17 (above)

D. The target therefore for the Word of God is inside the human spirit which becomes the basis of application or wisdom.

VI. The Word of God is usable only from the human spirit.

A. Intake of the Word of God into the mind as frame of reference and Divine viewpoint.

B. Exhale of the Word toward God and man. The human spirit stores knowledge of God and interacts with God. The human soul stores knowledge about people and interacts with other people. Many decades ago, R. B. Thieme, Jr. developed the Doctrine of the Edification Complex of the Soul. The weakness in this doctrine was, there was no differentiation made between our relationship with other people and with God. See the **God-ward and the man-ward sides of the Edification**

Doctrine of the Human Spirit

Complex (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). This doctrine will show the original edification complex structure and the revised version. The God-ward side is the human spirit and the man-ward side is the human soul.

C. Bible doctrine in the soul results in having eyes in your soul.

D. Bible doctrine in the soul results in maturity of the soul. Ephesians 4:12-16, 20-24 For the perfecting [or, *maturing*] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ [that is, *spiritual maturity*]; That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the Truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. But you [all] have not so learned Christ; If so be that you [all] have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the Truth is in Jesus; That you [all] put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you [all] put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. All of the body working together is the function of various believers who are spiritually mature, so that their gifts are all functioning without there being inordinate competition or people working in cross purposes with one another.

VII. Since the Word of God in the human spirit is the basis for spiritual IQ (Eph. 3:16-19), the human spirit is the area of refreshment.

A. 2Corinthians 7:13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort; yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy to Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

B. The Word of God stored in the human spirit constitutes the basis for grace orientation.

VIII. It is the human spirit that goes to God at death. Acts 7:59

From http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=181 accessed December 17, 2013; and is probably ultimately attributable to R. B. Thieme, Jr. Edited and appended.

See also:
Doctrine of Soul & Spirit (probably attributable to R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
Dano's Doctrine of the Human Spirit
Wenstrom's Doctrine of the Human Spirit.
Baytown's Grace Bible Church's Doctrine of the Human Spirit.

At the moment that a person breathes his last or the moment when the soul leaves the body, that is when the person has died. Both believers and unbelievers have souls; only the believer has a human spirit.

Back to the family of Ishmael:

Genesis 25:18a And they [Ishmael's family] lived from Havilah to Shur, which is before Egypt, as you go toward Assyria.

Translation: ...which [is] facing [or, *east of*] Egypt... The place where the sons of Ishmael lived was east of Egypt. Now, there are two different maps which place Havilah in a different area:

Map of the Location of the Tribes of Ishmael

You will notice Havilah in the deep southern portion of this map. Shur, not listed, is the other side of the water from Havilah.

From:
http://bigfaithministries.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/land-of-ham-and-shem-map1.jpg

Alternate Map of Ishmael's Sons

You will notice that this time, Havilah is located way over in what is now Iraq. That changes everything. This will be discussed below.

From:

http://www.bible.ca/archeology/maps-bible-archeology-exodus-ishmaelites-amalekites.jpg

Genesis 25:18a And they lived from Havilah to Shur, which is before Egypt, as you go toward Assyria.

This does not necessarily mean that the sons of Ishmael are stretched out all the way from Shur to Assyria. If that were the case, as the second map suggests, then they might as well be said to be living between Shur and Assyria. Or go from Shur as far as Havilah in Assyria (or, in the Chaldees).

I think the best sense of this is found in the Ancient Roots Translinear Bible translation: They dwelled in front of the trade-route coming from West-Arabia and Egypt to North-Iraq. He fell in front of all his brothers. The trade route eventually got as far as North-Iraq (Asshur). So, they spread out along the western section of this trade route, as that seemed to be beneficial to them.

Genesis 25:18b And he died in the presence of all his brothers.

This final phrase is quite interesting. *In the presence of* is actually a preposition and a plural noun, which together mean *upon the face of, facing, in front of, before (as in preference to), in addition to, overlooking*. This does not mean that all Ishmael's brothers were there when he died (as far as we know, there is only Isaac); it could simply indicate that Isaac and his family members lived fairly close to one another. All of the information found in this chapters about Ishmael and about his family indicates some interaction between Isaac and Ishmael after they became adults.

Who are Ishmael's brothers? There is Isaac, of course; but then there are the sons of Abraham by Ketura, who were sent towards the east. *Brothers* can also refer to a family of people, which may simply refer to Ishmael's descendants, who became a people.

The word translated *to die,* is the Qal perfect of nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*], which means *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert*. Strong's #5307 BDB #656. This sounds like more than just a simple death. He obviously lived a long life; but we have no idea what transpired at the end.

In any case, if Ishmael dies at age 137, then this would be nearly 50 years after his father Abraham dies (which is the subject of the next part of this chapter). This would suggest that Ishmael had a very full and excellent life.

Lesson 286: Genesis 25:19–23 — The Generations of Isaac

In Gen. 25, we have the death of Abraham and information about the next generation—those who are descended from Abraham. In this chapter, we have already studied Abraham's children by Keturah and we have looked at the sons of Ishmael (Ishmael is Abraham's son by Hagar). As noted before, the recording of this information

is very much in keeping with the personality of Isaac, who records the most monumental events to his family, such as births and deaths.

At this point, we will look at the line of promise. God made promises to Abraham, and those promises will be carried down along one specific line, which is contained in the straight-line genealogies which go from Adam to Jesus.

Genesis 25:19 And these were the generations [genealogies, families, history, origin] of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham fathered Isaac.

This general statement of the first half of this verse occurs many times in the book of Genesis, and it often signals a new section of Genesis, and possibly a new author (which is what I believe). It could simply mean that someone was adding onto the traditions from before—even the same author picking up at that place, 10–50 years later.

Genesis 25:20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

Let's set up a timetable here: Isaac's mother Sarah dies when she is 127 years old. This would make Abraham 137 years old and Isaac 37 years old (obviously, give or take a year depending upon what time of the year each one was born). Abraham sends his most trusted servant to fetch Isaac a wife. Although we are not given a timetable for this, this being perhaps a year for all of this to take place is about right. So, perhaps Abraham did this at age 139, Rebekah got fetched and brought to Isaac when Isaac is 40 years old. This indicates that Isaac, 3 years out from his mother's death, was still grieving for her (Gen. 24:66).

This entire sentence reads: Isaac was 40 years old [lit., *a son of 40 years*] when he took Rebekah for his wife [lit., *to him for a wife*]. However, time is taken to identify Rebekah more clearly. That is what the next 3 phrases will do. We already know this. We all read and studied **Gen. 24** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Did the writer of Gen. 24 forget? There are two possibilities: if it is the same author, these are chapters composed at different times for different reasons. This is more of a genealogical chapter, saying who was born, who had children (and what are their names) and who died. So, details are included here which may be repeated. However, the writing style is quite different here as compared to Gen. 24. This tends to support the idea that Rebekah or Abraham's servant *wrote* Gen. 24, and it was repeated many times to Jacob and Esau as a bedtime story. Gen. 25 is what Isaac wrote, a man who concerns himself with births, deaths and children.

It may have been that Isaac did not really intend to include the events of Gen. 24 in the Great Historical Narrative, so Rebekah would need to be more clearly identified. Jacob, who had heard Gen. 24 as a bedtime story, probably chose to enter it in to the Great Historical Narrative, which has come down to us as the book of Genesis.

Or, this could all be Jacob, writing at a later age, giving the background of his parents. In the narrative, Jacob has not yet been born. He will be the next generation in the line of

promise. Isaac may have recorded the names of his half-brother and the children of his half-brother Ishmael; but, at this point in the chapter, Jacob begins writing the narrative.

Quite obviously, we have the narrative itself and we also have the author and the time that it was written. This narrative appears to continue somewhat organically throughout human history. However, there are the writers of Genesis, who may write about these events many decades after they have actually occurred.

Now, it ought to be clear that, given Isaac's age, that Abraham is still alive when this marriage between Isaac and Rebekah takes place. Gen. 25:1–11 is about Abraham's death. Therefore, this section of Gen. 25 overlaps the first portion of this chapter in time.

When it comes to who wrote what, Rebekah or Abraham's servant probably wrote Gen. 24, but Jacob added it into the Great Historical Narrative (that is, *Genesis*). Then Gen. 25:1–18 was the sort of thing that Isaac was interested in: family records. Jacob may be writing this portion of Genesis, but 70 (or more) years later. Hence, the introduction:

Genesis 25:19 And these were the generations [genealogies, families, history, origin] of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham fathered Isaac.

Genesis 25:20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

Although we think chronologically and sequentially, not everything that we put to paper is going to be in a chronological order. Gen. 25:1–11 describes that last 35 years of Abraham's life (unless he took on a mistress while Sarah was still alive, which is a popular theory, but very doubtful in my opinion[122]). In that short time, Abraham fathered 6 children[123] (which could have happened in the first 10 years), and Abraham sent all of these children to the east with a generous gift. If Abraham sent them away at around the age of 16 or so, then they are all living in the east at the time of Abraham's death. This also makes psychological sense. Isaac and Ishmael are ages 75 and 88 respectively when Abraham passes, so they would be closely involved with the funeral proceedings. If Abraham has some 20-something sons living in the east, and they were specifically sent away, then it makes sense that they would not come for the funeral.

There may be some resentment involved here as well. These new sons, having little interest or respect for the promises of Abraham being laid upon Isaac (for these sons, that would be ancient history, as it occurs before they are born). So, at some point in their early lives, Abraham tells them, "Look, kid, you are not the child of God's promise, and you need to take this $10,000 (or, whatever) and go east and do not come back. Given that start in life, Abraham possibly died at an age where they were too young to appreciate who he was (again, his greatness was made clear before these children were even born; and that which

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[122] Recall that Sarah was none too happy about the arrangement with Hagar (which was her idea); so it seems like she would be less happy about Abraham keeping a mistress while she is alive.

[123] When God sexually regenerated Abraham, there is no reason to think that it was a one-shot deal.

happens before a person is born is ancient and often disregardable history—particularly to children in their 20's).

If we allow for a new author to step in at this point, there is no problem with the time frame being slightly messtup.

Genesis 25:20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

Bethuel is called an Aramæan (a Syrian); and often people are given names related to where they live, as opposed to who they have descended from. Bethuel is called specifically one from Padanaram, which would refer to the part of Aram where they lived. Laban, his son and Rebekah's brother, is also called an Aramæan for the same reason,

Calling Bethuel a Syrian—even though he is related to Abraham—suggests the spiritual distance between these two men. They are treated as if they are different races, even though Bethuel was Abraham's nephew.

> Padan–aram is the plain of Aram (or the plain of the highlands), mentioned many times in Genesis (Gen. 25:20 28:2, 5–7 31:18). According to Smith: *Padanaram....signifies the table–land of Aram, that is, Syriac...otherwise, called the Aram–naharaim, "Aram of the two of rivers", [which is] the Greek Mesopotamia (Gen. 24:10)...[this] term was, perhaps, more especially applied to that portion, which bordered on the Euphrates, to distinguish if from the mountainous districts, in the north and northeast of Mesopotamia*.[124]

Shem (son of Noah) had some very famous sons: Assur, Arphaxad and Aram, to name 3 (Gen. 10:22). Abraham and his family have all come down through Arphaxad (Gen. 11:10–26); but Aram appears to be the father of the Aramæans (although we do have another Aram in Gen. 22:21). Although it is

[124] Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary;* 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Padanaram.

possible that Bethuel, the son of Nahor (Abraham's brother) was somehow closely associated with the Aramæans; it is more likely that this designation is simply based upon where he lives. This topic is never discussed in any sort of detail, this suggests that Nahor and his family became fully immersed within the people of Aram. Or, simply that they lived in the same area as the Aramæans did.

Map of the Ancient World is from Bible-History.com, accessed February 26, 2014. You will see Padan Aram right above the word Mesopotamia, east of Syria. You may recall that, when God told Abraham to head out west, he got this far and then stopped. He went with his whole family, even though God told him to separate from his family. However, around age 75, Abraham almost completely separated from his family and moved to Canaan.

Laban is also called an Aramæan. Again, a reference to where he lives, not who is ancestors are. You may recall Laban from Gen. 24, whose eyes lit up when he saw the jewelry that Abraham's servant gave to his sister Rebekah.

We now jump 20 years ahead in the narrative:

Genesis 25:21 And Isaac prayed to Jehovah for his wife, because she was barren. And Jehovah heard him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

Ishmael, Isaac's older half-brother, has a whole lot of children. Isaac does not have any, even though he is the son of promise. He is the heir of Abraham, which heirship is based upon the line of promise—but, to this point, there was no line. But now, his wife is pregnant.

We do not find near as much interaction between God and Isaac as we found between God and Abraham. James calls Abraham the friend of God in James 2:23, which is hard to hear for some of us. Some of us know just how unlikeable we are, so we are taken aback when Abraham has such an exalted status.

More of us can relate to Isaac, who does not appear to have 7 or 8 face to face meetings with God as his father Abraham had.

In any case, Isaac clearly believed in the God of his father and prayed to Him. If he married Rebekah at age 40, but does not father a child until age 60, then there are 20 years during which it would have been normal to have a child. When he comes to realize how many children his half-brother Ishmael has sired, Isaac may feel a bit jealous. After all, he is the child of promise; Ishmael was not.

Like his father Abraham, having a child was not any easy thing for Isaac and Rebekah. However, apparently, God was waiting for Isaac to turn toward Him, which he did in this prayer. This may have been what God was waiting on Isaac to do.

Genesis 25:22 And the sons struggled together within her. And she said, “If it is so, why am I this way?” And she went to inquire of Jehovah.

God also answered her prayer. God is listening to Rebekah as well. Isaac prayed for a child, and God gave them twins. However, this was apparently a difficult pregnancy, and God will explain what is going on.

This struggling, which appeared to be taking place within Rebekah, is a foreshadowing of the relationship between Jews and Arabs for many centuries to come. Jacob would be in the line of the Jews and Esau would father many Arab groups.

The Bible is often accused of being a book which has something against females. We are in the first book of the Bible and Rebekah is going directly to God to sort this situation out. She speaks to God and God will speak to her. That is hardly misogynistic.

Also recall that the Angel of the Lord *first* appears to Hagar, the Egyptian girl carrying Abraham’s son—and He appears in this way to her *before* He appears as the Angel of the Lord to Abraham. Again—that is not misogynistic.

Genesis 25:23 And Jehovah said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two kinds of people will be separated from your bowels. And the one people will be stronger than the other people, the older will serve the younger.

Then God makes a statement which is quite unusual: “The elder son will serve the younger son.” These are twins. They have the same birthday (we can devise a situation where they do not, but we are dealing with principle here). One would be literally minutes younger than the other. God is telling Rebekah right now of the differences between her two sons that she is expecting.

Paul, in Romans, speaks about this: And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad--in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it stands written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! (Rom. 9:10–14; Gen. 25:23 Mal. 1:2–3; ESV). The context of this chapter is, Paul is desperately concerned about the Jews. Not only had they rejected Jesus in the flesh when He is here on earth, but after the resurrection, they continue to reject Him. However, despite the fact that the Jews are God’s people and they reject Him, this does not mean that God failed or that the Word of God failed. This is because, not all Israel is Israel. There are the children of the flesh and the children of the promise. Paul illustrates that with Isaac, who was a child of promise; and then with Jacob and Esau. These are twins—they come out of the same womb; yet God loves Jacob and hates Esau. This is not based upon works, but upon their being called—God, foreknowing their free will, called Jacob but not Esau. So Jacob is a Jew, but his twin brother, Esau is not a Jew but a gentile (specifically, an Arab). Is God unjust? He is not! Esau had free will; Jacob had free will. God knew their free will choices from

eternity past. God allowed them their free will choices. Furthermore, God knew the free will choices of their children and their children's children. God has a perfect plan for the human race, which He knows the end from the beginning; but within this plan are people with free will, whose free will is real and dynamic.

Surely you and your spouse have taken your children on vacation. You plan out where you are going to go, how you are going to get there, and sometimes, you know all of the different places that you will go to. Your children all of have volition, which can manifest in very unpleasant ways from time to time. This does not destroy your plan. The expression of their volition is an integral part of your vacation. You expect that their volition and your plans to coincide at various times, and, now and again, that requires a spanking (or however you discipline your children). Also, along this trip, you make prophetical utterances, such as, "If you kids are good, then we will..." Ideally speaking, you and your spouse are on the same page as to what this vacation is all about—and that would be analogous to the Unity of the Trinity (obviously, you are one person short, unless you want to round out this analogy and include the energy involved getting you from point A to point B as analogous to the Holy Spirit). If you can grasp the machinations of such a vacation—your overall plan, which, at times, must pay attention to the free will of your urchins—then you understand the basics of the plan of God. God has an overarching plan; and we have free will. Sometimes our free will is in synch with God's plan and sometimes it is not.

We will pick up with their birth next lesson.

Lesson 287: Genesis 25:19–27 — Jacob and Esau

So far, we have studied Gen. 25:19–23:

These [are] generations [genealogies, families, history, origin] of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac. Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah—the daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramæan—as his wife. Isaac entreated Y^{e}howah on behalf of his wife because she [is] barren. Therefore, Y^{e}howah was supplicated by him and Rebekah, Isaac's wife, conceived. The sons within her struggled together, so she said, "Behold, therefore, why [is] this [happening to] me?" Therefore, she went to see Y^{e}howah. Y^{e}howah said to her, "[There are] two nations in your womb and the two peoples inside of you will be divided. [One] people will be stronger than [the other] people; and the elder will serve the younger one."

The promise of Abraham went through Isaac, and for this promise to be fulfilled, Isaac would have to have a son. However, after 20 years of marriage, there was no son. Therefore, Isaac and Rebekah turned toward God and prayed for a son—and now Rebekah has twins.

We are not given any details on how she goes to see Y^{e}howah. Nor do we know how God spoke to her. The simplest explanation is, she went to God *in prayer* but that there was an audible answer from God. There may have been an intermediary process, like going through a priest (although the only priest spoken of from this era is Melchizedek). As is so often the case, there are details of interest which are left out of this narrative, when it comes to God.

Now as we have studied already in Rom. 9, the fact that Jacob is chosen does not mean that Jacob was some little goody-two-shoes and that Esau was anti-God. Compared to one another, Esau was probably a nicer guy. But Jacob recognized the importance of the promise of God—of the heritage promised first to Abraham—and Esau did not. Jacob wanted to carry on with the heritage of Abraham, and was willing to do anything in order to make that happen. His choices—which we will study (and many of them are wrong-headed)—were indicative of what was in his soul.

Genesis 25:24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, twins were in her womb!

There are both near and far prophecies throughout the Bible. Since God knows all things in advance, He can choose who and when to tell what the future is. As we have seen, there are a great many prophecies in the book of Genesis, and they continue throughout much of the Bible.

Knowing the end from the beginning is a witness to the omniscience of God, as His knowledge transcends time. God invented time, but He is not subject to time (in the same way that He created all the laws of the universe, none of which confine God Himself). Both angels and man are made aware of God's full knowledge of events. As has been discussed on previous occasions, there are a great many things about Jesus Christ which are revealed in the Old Testament. The entire Bible is about Jesus Christ, even though the Bible records about 4000 years of human history before Jesus is born. Because of God's omniscience, the cross is described more clearly in the Old Testament (Gen. 22 Psalm 22 Isa. 53) than it is in the New Testament.

Much of God's omniscience is revealed to angels just as it is revealed to us. Angels are watching human history play out with these promises and prophecies of God. Angels interact with God, but how do they actually recognize God? How do they know that He is Who He says He is? How do they know that God is of the essence which He claims to be? His purpose, His plan and His character all play out on the stage of human history. Elect angels see continued proof that God is Who He claims to be; and fallen angels view this as well.

Although we do not know the exact nature of Rebekah's interaction with God, it does appear to be a personal interaction without intermediaries (although that is not clear). On the other hand, it appears that in the Church Age, God does not have the same kind of interaction in our lives—we do not witness miracles, we do not see burning bushes, we do not hear voices out of heaven and this is because our lives do not require miracles or

prophecies. This is because we have the Holy Spirit and the entire Word of God. Virtually every believer in this dispensation has access to both the Holy Spirit and the complete Word of God (with the exception of some countries, which have been partially successful in outlawing the Bible). In this, we are blessed more than believers in any previous dispensation. Furthermore, we as individual believers potentially have a great spiritual impact, even if most people do not know who we are. In this dispensation, we all have our own spiritual gift or gifts, which function as we grow spiritually. This is the concept of the *invisible hero*.

In v. 25, we have the actual birth of the twins.

Genesis 25:25 And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment. And they called his name Esau.

Esau means *hairy* and possibly *red*. We would assume that this is the color of his skin, as opposed to being covered in blood when he comes out. Otherwise, we would expect Jacob to come out in the same manner. That he is hairy is probably in contrast to the way Jacob looks.

Genesis 25:26 And after that his brother came out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

Here is where we get to do a little arithmetic. Isaac was married at age 40 and now he is 60. So he and Rebekah had been married for 20 years, during which time Rebekah did not conceive. So, at some point during those 20 years, Isaac prayed for Rebekah to bear him a child, and God heard and gave them twins.

Arithmetic also tells us that Abraham is still alive. Abraham would have been 160 when these boys are born and he will not die for another 15 years.[125] So he will get to see these boys enter young adulthood. However, there is no historical recording of any interaction between Abraham and his grandsons.

Genesis 25:27 And the boys grew. And Esau was a man knowing hunting, and Jacob was a simple man, living in tents.

My father was a hunter and a fisherman; so naturally, he hauled me around with him, to see if I would pick up on it. Now, whereas I loved going out in the woods and hiking around, shooting animals did not appeal to me; nor did sitting for long periods of time being quiet and waiting for fish filled with bones to strike. We are going to see that Isaac favored Esau, and this would mean that Isaac would take this boy out hunting and fishing (at least hunting). Esau, through experience and through teaching, became skilled in this sport/avocation. Therefore, Esau felt at home in the open field; in the out-of-doors.

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[125] Despite the fact that we have studied his death already in this chapter.

There was probably a similar relationship between Abraham and Ishmael and between Abraham and Isaac. However, this is never discussed (but it is hinted at). Ishmael became renown for his hunting; and in this narrative, we will see the Isaac greatly enjoys the game that Esau kills.

Genesis 25:27 And the boys grew. And Esau was a man knowing hunting, and Jacob was a **simple** man, living in tents.

> On the other hand, Jacob appears to have been brought up by his mother. The NET Bible tells us: *The disjunctive clause juxtaposes Jacob with Esau and draws attention to the striking contrasts. In contrast to Esau, a man of the field, Jacob was civilized, as the phrase "living in tents" signifies. Whereas Esau was a skillful hunter, Jacob was calm and even-tempered (תָּם, tam), which normally has the idea of "blameless."* [126] This does not mean that these boys will be the exact opposites; it simply means that one was taken under the wing of the father and the other under the wing of the mother, which is not unusual for a family.

We have an interesting word in this verse which we have almost seen before. It is closely related to a word that means *perfect, complete, blameless*. The difference is the vowel and the vowel was added later (when this was read publically, everyone knew that these two words, that looked the same—the original Hebrew was written without any vowels—were different words, with a different pronunciation). The word found here is tâm (תָּם) [pronounced *tawm*], and it is translated by the words *quiet* (ESV, WEB, BBE, God's Word™, HCSB,), *simple* (Green's literal translation, MKJV), and *plain* (AKJV). However, it actually means one who has *personal integrity; perfected, completed, finished, innocent, blameless; having no intention to do evil*. A few translations try to translate this more accurately: *integrious* (ECB), *upright* (NSB), *complete* (Scriptures 1998) and *innocent* (JPCT). Strong's #8535 BDB #1070. This is an interesting description of Jacob, as much of his life, he will be anything but blameless.

This same word is used by God to describe Job in Job 1:1, 8 2:3. We may understand this word to mean spiritually mature, as no one, including Job, reaches some level of perfection.

Let me suggest that Jacob developed a serious interest in his spiritual heritage. Whether or not the Great Historical Narrative was available to him by scroll or through memorization, he apparently took an interest in it, whereas his brother Esau did not. They both knew about the God of Abraham and the spiritual inheritance which was promised to Abraham. However, this became important to Jacob; and not so much to Esau.

A boy with his father and a boy with his mother are going to be subjected to a different set of rules, no matter how well these parents try to coordinate their discipline. Isaac is going to encourage his child to be more daring, more active and more risk-taking. Rebekah will

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[126] From http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen25.htm accessed February 21, 2013.

raise a son who might be quieter, less-aggressive, less physically active. Esau was at home in the outdoors; Jacob was at home in a tent. The latter was more conducive to learning one's heritage (which, in this situation, meant learning the Revealed Word of God).

Now, hoping not to make this too personal, but I can relate to this as well. On camping trips, two of my brothers would be out with my father catching fish, and I would be back in the tent reading comic books. From a very early age, we all sort of gravitated to other things. In retrospect, I think I would have liked now to learn the things which they learned how to do, but I was quite the headstrong boy. Given our various interests, my guess would be, one of my brothers and I would have been a lot like Jacob, while the other two brothers would have been more like Esau.

As a child, I was more interested in my mother's cooking than I was hunting with my father. Perhaps Jacob was the same in this regard. It was the women who lived in the tents, much as the women of the 1950's ran the household; and it is not out of the question that Jacob was interested in many of the things which his mother did, which would have included cooking. Later in this passage, Jacob will make a lentil soup to die for—so, at some point in time, he did learn how to cook—and he was probably a very good cook.

Despite the fact that there is a clear contrast here between the two men, this does not mean that it is better to be a *quiet* man of the tent, and that it is not as good to be a hunter. This simply tells us what kind of young men these two grew up to be, and confirms their relationships with their parents, Isaac favoring Esau and Rebekah favoring Jacob. Apart from this, there is nothing innately superior about which parent raises which son or daughter; nor is there any sort of advantage that Jacob has over Esau. The only thing that stands out is the spiritual difference between the men, and that difference seems indiscernible in their early years. Rebekah sees the spiritual inheritance as being important, and passes this along to Jacob. Isaac, on the other hand, spends a lot of time hunting with his son Esau.

Being a person who loves the out of doors does not preclude spiritual growth. David, as a boy, spent a great deal of time outdoors with the sheep, and yet, by age 17, when he faced off with Goliath, he was clearly spiritually advanced. Therefore, he had to experience much of his spiritual growth while being in the great outdoors.

I want you to notice just how subtle the Bible is. Many times, we have the phrase *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;* and we know how the promises of God got through these 3 men. However, both Isaac and Rebekah pray to God about different things, and Rebekah appears to have an audible answer. Furthermore, Rebekah will spend a great deal more time with Jacob than Isaac does, and yet Jacob will develop the interest in his spiritual heritage. Furthermore, as we progress in their lives, Rebekah will even encourage Jacob to deceive his father, in order to have the great blessing of his heritage bestowed upon him. So Rebekah, despite her imperfect way of going about things, is apparently quite aware of and quite interested in this spiritual heritage which is the Abrahamic Covenant,

even though she became a part of the family decades after God made these promises to Abraham.

Think back to Gen. 24, when the servant of Abraham came to Laban and Bethuel and told them that his meeting with Rebekah at the well was of God. Despite their own personal flaws (and we will come to find that Laban has many), they had a lot of respect toward that claim. Rebekah was also very open to going out west and meeting this man—a distant relative of hers—and marrying him. This had to have some spiritual connotation to her. If you will recall all that the servant said to them before their meal—all of what he was proposing was related to the God of their fathers.

My point in all of this is, Rebekah is very much involved in this spiritual handoff, if you will, from generation to generation. She appears to be more involved, given the history which we read—than Isaac is. This may help you to understand why her prayer to God receives the answer that it does. She knew that there was trouble in her womb, she prayed, and God (in whatever way) explained to her that this foretold of what was to come between the lines of Jacob and Esau.

On the other hand, the means by which Jacob apprehends his spiritual destiny, reveals character flaws in him and in his mother—which we will study next time.

Lesson 288: Genesis 25:19–32 — Jacob wants Esau's Birthright

So far, we have studied Gen. 25:19–27:

These [are] generations [genealogies, families, history, origin] of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac. Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah—the daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramæan—as his wife. Isaac entreated Y^e^howah on behalf of his wife because she [is] barren. Therefore, Y^e^howah was supplicated by him and Rebekah, Isaac's wife, conceived. The sons within her struggled together, so she said, "Behold, therefore, why [is] this [happening to] me?" Therefore, she went to see Y^e^howah. Y^e^howah said to her, "[There are] two nations in your womb and the two peoples inside of you will be divided. [One] people will be stronger than [the other] people; and the elder will serve the younger one." And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, twins were in her womb! And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment. And they called his name Esau. And after that his brother came out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. And the boys grew. And Esau was a man knowing hunting, and Jacob was a simple man, living in tents.

Esau is the Hebrew word ʿÊsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced *ģay-SAWV*], and it means *handled, made, rough handling; hairy;* it is transliterated *Esau*. This is pronounced with a very small *g;* it is more of a guttural sound, made by running air across the top of your pallet in back. We do not have an equivalent letter in the English. Strong's #6215 BDB #796.

Jacob's name is actually Yaʿăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced *yah-ġuh-KOH^{B}V*], which means, *supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent* and is transliterated *Jacob*. Strong's #3290 BDB #784. Both are quite interesting names to give to one's children. But with Jacob, he is born holding onto the heel of Esau, suggesting that whatever Esau has (he is the firstborn, so the spiritual heritage goes to him), Jacob will take it from him. This is what happens in their lives.

Genesis 25:28 Now Isaac loved Esau, for game was in his mouth. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

Both parents made the mistake of having favorites and allowing their children to be aware of their favoritism. Isaac, as is said here, likes wild game. This and being in the great out of doors became a very important part of his relationship with Esau.

Rebekah, as the woman, would have spent more time in tents, cooking, or overseeing the cooking; and her awareness of the spiritual heritage of Abraham suggests that she either read or learned about what God promised to Abraham.

There is some interaction which occurs that is not recorded in the Bible. Abraham is actually still alive when Esau and Jacob are born. Abraham will live ot age 175; Isaac sires these twins at age 60, so Abraham will die about the time the twins are 15. We do not know how much interaction there is between Abraham and these boys or between Abraham and Rebekah. However, it will become quite clear that Rebekah knows all about the spiritual inheritance promised by God to Abraham through Isaac, and that this is important to her.

Genesis 25:29 And Jacob boiled soup. And Esau came from the field, and he was faint.

There are going to be two recorded incidents where Jacob will plot to take the inheritance of Esau, and this is one of them. What has happened is, Jacob is cooking, as he has learned from his mother; and Esau comes into their compound, and he is starved. Apparently, he had a lousy day going after game. In fact, it was probably a lousy couple of days, as Esau is so hungry as to be faint.

Genesis 25:30a And Esau said to Jacob, "I beg you, Let me eat of the red, this red, for I am faint."

Almost every English translation cleans this translation up, so that it makes good English sense, but it literally reads, "Please give me to eat from the red, the red, the that [or, *that red-red*]." Have you ever been so tired and worn out and hungry, that your mind did not work anymore? So Esau sees this bean soup, but he forgets the name of it—he forgets that this is *Cajun-style Red Beans and Rice*—and he is pointing at it, calling it *the red, the red;* because the 3rd or 4th word that Esau learned was probably *red (actually chestnut);* which is also the color of this bean soup. So he is pointing and calling it *the red, this red;* because his brain cannot at this time process a greater vocabulary than this, because he is so famished.

Not only does Esau call the bean soup *red-red;* but he also uses an unusual word for *eat* as well. It is a word often used of an animal devouring its food. This could be a word that Esau used a lot, as he hunted animals. Best way to hunt an animal is to lay a trap of food for them. So he may have used this word a great deal. However, his hunger at not getting any game has actually short-circuited his brain. So he uses a couple of words which are simply odd for him to use in this circumstance.

> The NET Bible makes this comment: *The rare term לַעַט (la'at), translated "feed," is used in later Hebrew for feeding animals. If this nuance was attached to the word in the biblical period, then it may depict Esau in a negative light, comparing him to a hungry animal. Famished Esau comes in from the hunt, only to enter the trap. He can only point at the red stew and ask Jacob to feed him*.[127]

This food appears to be a trap laid by Jacob for Esau. Jacob will use this food to get from Esau what he wants, which is the spiritual heritage of Abraham and Isaac. Esau is so hungry, he will enter the trap willingly.

Genesis 25:30 And Esau said to Jacob, "I beg you, Let me eat of the red, this red [soup], for I am faint." Therefore his name was called Edom.

Jacob got a kick out of this, his brother not being able to say the word *soup,* but repeating the word *red;* so Jacob nicknames his brother *red* (*Edom*), a name which has stuck with him to this day. This would not have really worked if *the red, the red* was just a common way of referring to this soup. If you came home and told your wife you a famished for a steak; "I really want a steak; a thick, juicy steak." She would not call you *steak-boy* after that, because you have spoken correctly. Esau did not. He sounded a little goofy—probably from being so hungry—and Jacob rubs it in.

When identifying the soup, Esau twice uses the word ʾâdôm (אָדֹם) [pronounced *aw-DOME*], which means *red, ruddy, reddish-brown (chestnut)*. Strong's #122 BDB #10. Therefore, Esau is called ʾĔdôm (אֱדֹם) [pronounced *eh-DOHM*], which means *reddish;* and is transliterated *Edom*. Strong's #123 BDB #10. In order for this name to stick, Isaac probably told this story to everyone, so that Esau became known to many as *Edom*. Therefore, his ancestors are called *Edomites,* rather than *sons of Esau*.

Throughout Scripture, we often find two names for the same person. Most Bible translations do not reveal this (unless there is a narrative like this to go along with it). So, you may not realize that there are two names for Joshua and two names for Jonathan and two names for quite a number of the Old Testament believers. There are at least 3 reasons for having two different names in the Old Testament: (1) In the case of Joshua and Jonathan, it appears that there is a formal version of their names (like *Robert*); as well as a less formal version (like *Bob* or *Bobby*). (2) In some situations, God renames a

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[127] From http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen25.htm (Footnote) The Net Bible®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); accessed February 22, 2013.

person—Abram is renamed *Abraham*. (3) Finally, in some cases, something a person does ends up giving him a second name—for whatever reason—as we have with Esau being called *Edom*. He simply becomes known by a different name at some point in his life—different from the name given to him by his parents. From time to time, you may know what the meaning of a person's name is in the Bible, and you think, "That seems just a little too accurate." It is not necessarily that the parents named the child and that name became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because of the sort of person that child became, he simply became known by a name which was more descriptive than his given name.

Jacob now springs the trap:

Genesis 25:31 And Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today."

The less exact translation might even better relay what is being said: Jacob said to Esau, "Sell me your birthright, right now." God has made promises to Abraham which would flow to Isaac and then to Esau, as Esau is the firstborn, if only by a few minutes. Now, you may recall that most of these promises which God made to Abraham were centered on his having a son, and these promises would be bestowed upon Abraham's descendants. God was not making these promises only to Abraham that He was going to give him a sports car and big mansion with a house filled with children. Most of what God promised Abraham (apart from the birth of Isaac) would be given to Abraham's children's children down the line. Jacob saw that being in this particular line was a good thing; Esau believed that too, but not as much in this extreme state of hunger.

Quite obviously, Jacob and Esau are both aware of this birthright, and that it naturally falls upon the firstborn. However, these are promises which would be fulfilled hundreds and thousands of years later. So Esau has to consider, "I am so hungry right now, I cannot even talk" as over against some promise, this pie-in-the-sky guarantee for centuries later.

It appears that the tradeoff here is the food for the birthright; there does not appear to be any other cost.

Application: This is a test that all believers face, and sometimes often. You have a want or a desire but then there are the Scriptures which tell you not to fulfill it—what do you do? This can be anything from cheating on your taxes, to cheating on your wife, to skipping doctrine for an evening. Often, it is simply a choice between doing the right thing and doing the expedient thing.

Esau wanted, more than anything else in this world, a bowl of Jacob's red-red. This promise of his birthright was really nothing to him, not compared to the here and now of his own needs. The birthright was some promise that extended out many years—many generations—into the future. Esau's hunger was right now. That whole spiritual thing which seemed to have more going on in the future than in the present—it did not compare to Esau's hunger.

We need to understand what is going on. Jacob recognizes the importance of the inheritance and Esau really doesn't. This does not mean that Jacob gaining this inheritance by evil means is okay. You cannot function in God's plan illegitimately. Wanting the birthright shows that Jacob recognizes God's promises as real and important. However, getting the promises transferred by illegitimate means is wrong. In the spiritual life, divine good is a result of doing a right thing in a right way. There is no spiritual benefit in doing a right thing in a wrong way (giving money to your church when out of fellowship); doing a wrong thing in a right way (giving money to some liberal cause while in fellowship); or doing a wrong thing in a wrong way (committing a sin). The narrative here simply describes what happened. In no way does the Bible endorse the behavior of either Isaac or Esau.

Genesis 25:32 And Esau said, "Behold, I am at the point of dying, and what profit will this birthright be to me?"

So Esau thinks out loud, "What use is this birthright to me? I am about to die anyway." From the standpoint of human viewpoint, Esau knows that if he dies without children, the birthright transfers to Jacob anyway. So, does he trust God to fulfill His promises or does he go with human viewpoint and trade whatever he has to stay alive? If God is to fulfill His promises to Abraham, then He cannot just let Esau die as the one who holds the birthright to the promises of God. How much Esau reasoned through this, we do not know. My guess is, he did not think his way through this very far. He was too hungry to. What he chose spoke more to his values and the amount of trust that he had on what God had promised.

Application: Although it is highly unlikely that any one of us will face this circumstance, death versus a myriad of promises from God; we may face the trade-off of, what are we willing to do to stay alive. What values are we willing to compromise in order to keep breathing?

Esau does not fully understand or appreciate this birthright. His birthright would be the promises of God to Abraham, and then to Isaac. Abraham appreciated these promises, and for at least 25 years of his life, he depended upon these promises from God, even though there was absolutely no manifestation of them in any way—apart from his speaking to God and the temporal blessings which he received.

How do we relate to this? God has made promises to us concerning our birthright, which will be heaven and eternity with God. We have some general promises about there being no more sorrow, no more tears, the old things have passed away; and we know that in this place, there are many dwelling places. Furthermore, given what we know about Adam on earth, in the garden, it is likely that we will have work to do as well. The quality of our lives in eternity will be related to our learned Bible doctrine and applying God's Word to our lives (also known as, *living in the Word*). For some believers, this has meaning. For other believers, this means very little. Some believers are concerned with the here and now; others live knowing that this is a step toward eternity. Our concept and thoughts

concerning eternity are very much like Jacob and Esau's attitude toward this birthright. Jacob wanted it and Esau was willing to live without it.

So that there is no misunderstanding, God does not take away your salvation for leading a dismal spiritual life. God does not look down at Charlie Brown and remark, "That Brown kid never did get with the program; he defines spiritual mediocrity. I need to revoke his salvation." God does not do that and He cannot do that. He cannot deny Himself (2Tim. 2:13b).

When it comes to eternity future as compared to the here and now, one could make a similar contrast between believers and unbelievers; between that which God has promised versus the here and now.

Lesson 289: Genesis 25:19–34 — Esau Sells his Birthright to Jacob

So far, we have studied Gen. 25:19–32:

These [are] generations [genealogies, families, history, origin] of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac. Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah—the daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramæan—as his wife. Isaac entreated Y^{e}howah on behalf of his wife because she [is] barren. Therefore, Y^{e}howah was supplicated by him and Rebekah, Isaac's wife, conceived. The sons within her struggled together, so she said, "Behold, therefore, why [is] this [happening to] me?" Consequently, she went to see Y^{e}howah. Y^{e}howah said to her, "[There are] two nations in your womb and the two peoples inside of you will be divided. [One] people will be stronger than [the other] people; and the elder will serve the younger one." And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, twins were in her womb! And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment. And they called his name Esau. And after that his brother came out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. And the boys grew. And Esau was a man with a thorough knowledge of hunting, and Jacob was a simple man, living in tents. Now Isaac loved Esau, for he ate the wild game that Esau killed. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

We have very little information about Esau and Jacob growing up, apart from one of them being close to Isaac and the other one being close to Rebekah.

One day, Jacob was making soup as Esau came from the field, and he was faint. Esau said to Jacob, "I beg you, Let me eat of the red, this red [soup], for I am faint." Therefore his name was called Edom. And Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today." And Esau said, "Behold, I am at the point of dying, and what profit is this birthright to me?"

This birthright is the responsibilities and privileges of the firstborn; and Esau was the firstborn, even though they were twins. Furthermore, because he is Isaac's favorite son, Isaac is going to want the privileges of the firstborn to fall upon him.

The complete **Doctrine of the Firstborn** is found here: (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); this is the abbreviated version.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Firstborn

1. Two of the related Hebrew words are:
   a. In the Hebrew, the word *firstborn* is b^{e}kôwr (בְּכוֹר) [pronounced *b^{e}KOHR*]. Metaphorically, this word is used for *anything which is chief* or *first* of its kind Strong's #1060 BDB #114.
   b. The feminine noun is b^{e}kôwrâh (בְּכוֹרָה) [pronounced *b^{e}koh-RAW*], which means *rights and responsibilities of the firstborn, privileges of the firstborn, birthright [of the firstborn]; primogeniture*. By virtue of being born first, each firstborn has certain rights and privileges which are bestowed upon him. We have several instances in the Bible where this is taken away. There was never, by God's Law, a set of definite rights and responsibilities which belonged to the firstborn. That was a matter of tradition and culture, but not Law. See Gen. 29:26. Strong's #1062 BDB #114.
2. The related Greek words:
   a. The noun/adjective prôtotokos (πρωτοτόκος) [pronounced *proh-tot-OK-oss*], which means *firstborn [of man or animals]; the beginning [first] [of a new series]*. Used as an adjective only in Luke 2:7; elsewhere as a noun. Strong's #4416.
   b. The neuter noun: prôtotokia (πρωτοτόκια) [pronounced *proh-toht-OHK-ee-ah*], which means *birthright, right [or privilege] of primogeniture, the right or advantages of the firstborn son*. This references the religious leadership of a family (the firstborn belongs to God); and the double-portion of the father's wealth went to him. Strong's #4415.
3. Webster gives us two sets of definitions for *first-born,* which is important in order to interpret the next point:
   a. First brought forth; first in the order of nativity; eldest; as the first-born son.
   b. Most excellent; most distinguished or exalted. Christ is called the first-born of every creature.[1]
4. It is very important in the Bible, the first time a word is used. This often sets the tone and/or the parameters for the word.
   a. When the first man born to a woman occurs in Scripture, he is named Abel but he is not called Adam and Eve's firstborn. We associate this term with the firstborn of Abel's flock which he brings to God to be sacrificed, a sacrifice which God respects (which sacrifice speaks of Jesus Christ). Gen. 4:4
   b. The first time *firstborn* is used in the New Testament (Luke 2:7), it also refers to Jesus Christ (the only use of that term in the gospels).
5. It is in Gen. 25 where we have our first indication that being the firstborn carries with it some privileges. This is the chapter where Esau, the firstborn, and Jacob interact with Isaac, their very old and mostly blind father. Jacob is after the blessing of the firstborn. As we go over the sub-points, bear in mind that the

Mosaic Law is not been spoken yet and what we are examining here is all about tradition.

a. Esau and Isaac were twins, with Esau being delivered first. Isaac came out next, holding onto the heel of Esau. God spoke to Rebekah concerning these two, saying that they would become two nations who would struggle against one another and that the older would eventually serve the younger (Gen. 25:22–26).

b. Unfortunately, both Isaac and Rebekah developed favorites—Isaac preferred his firstborn, Esau, the hunter; and Rebekah preferred Jacob, who apparently learned to cook (Gen. 25:27–29).

c. When Esau came in from the field, he was starving—hungry to the point of great weakness. Jacob had made a stew. When Esau asked for some, Jacob made Esau give up his birthright for a bowl of stew. Esau's rationalization is that he was so hungry, he was about to die and what good is a birthright after death? Just exactly what this birthright entailed is not told to us. We also do not know who was later told about the exchange of the birthright. It is never disclosed whether this was simply between Esau and Jacob, or whether Jacob informed his parents of this information; however, it is implied that this was known in their family in Gen. 27:36. Gen. 25:29–34

d. In Gen. 27, Jacob steals the blessing of his father to Esau. He pretends to be Esau (at the urging and help of his mother), and receives the blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau. This is not necessarily related to one being firstborn or not. Isaac simply, prior to his death, was going to bless Esau, but he blessed Jacob instead. Jacob, when masquerading as his brother, identified himself several times to his father as his *firstborn*.

6. Jacob, when he becomes old, also blesses his own sons, referring to Reuben as his firstborn. Then he tells Reuben that he is spineless. Reuben lacked character and judgment and leadership. When he comes to Judah, Jacob says that his brothers would praise him and bow down to him, meaning that the descendants of his brothers would bow down and praise his Descendant. Actually, this has a double-fulfillment: it is fulfilled in the royal line which extends David to the last king of Judah; and this is fulfilled in our Lord as well, Whose humanity is in the line of Judah (Luke 3:23–33). What had happened was that Reuben, due to his lack of leadership, particularly with regards to the brothers' treatment of Joseph, lost his birthright. He lost the leadership aspect of his birthright to Judah and the double portion to Joseph. We touch on this in 1Chron. 5:1–2 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

7. Although, traditionally, the firstborn was seen as the primary continuation of the line of the father, and often due more blessing and inheritance, God blessed men based upon their regeneration and cursed men if they were negative toward Him. Gen. 41:51 49:3–4 1Chron. 5:1–2

8. The Passover: The final judgment against Egypt was to kill their firstborn. The

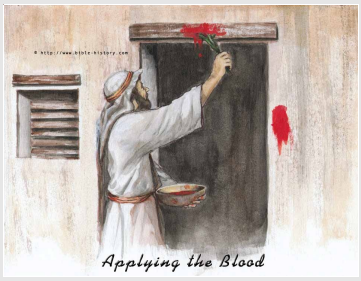
Passover is a type of Christ; it looks forward to the crucifixion. Ex. 11–12 Num. 8:16–18 9 Deut. 16:1–6 Psalm 105:36 135:8 136:10 (which passage associates God's love with striking them down) 1Cor. 5:7 Heb. 11:28

a. God calls Israel His *firstborn* in Ex. 4:22. The implication is that there could be another born of God. However, God used it in this way: Pharaoh was to let God's firstborn go or He would kill Pharaoh's firstborn (Ex. 4:23).

b. God has Moses threaten the Pharaoh with this in Ex. 11:4–6.

c. Death of the firstborn is a type of Christ, as Christ is the Firstborn of God. 1Cor. 5:7 Heb. 1:6

d. Prior to the carrying out of this curse, God instructs Moses in the Passover. All of Israel is to, by household, slaughter a lamb. What God says is chilling: "The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight." (Ex. 12:6b). The blood of the lamb is then smeared on both sides and at the top of the door frame (Ex. 12:7, 22). The location of this blood would foretell the crucifixion of Jesus, as it matched the blood on our Lord's hands, head and feet.



Graphic from Bible-history; accessed May 13, 2014.

e. That believers were passed over because of the blood about their door, is a picture of God not judging us because He has judged His Firstborn in our stead. When God saw the blood of the Passover at the entrance of the house, God would not go into the house and kill the firstborn (Ex. 12:13, 23). Then they were to roast the lamb with fire without removing any part of it, and then to eat the lamb (Ex. 12:7–11). Fire speaks of God's judgment, which is put upon His Lamb rather than upon mankind, who deserves death.

f. Easton tells us about the Egyptian Pharaoh who was probably the one whose firstborn died during this time: *Menephtah is probably the Pharaoh whose first-born was slain. His son did not succeed or survive his father, but died early. The son's tomb has been found at Thebes unfinished, showing it was needed earlier than was expected. Some of the records on the tomb are as follows: "The son whom Menephtah loves; who draws towards him his father's heart, the singer, the prince of archers, who governed Egypt on behalf of his father. Dead."* [2]

9. The Levites were taken as God's firstborn, instead of the firstborn from every family, as a tribe dedicated to Him. Num. 3:12, 45, 50 The close association with the number of Levites as compared to the number of firstborn was to indication (1) that redemption was involved in setting apart the firstborn; (2) setting apart the Levites as firstborn was analogous to God setting apart Jesus as His firstborn; and (3) the redemption had to be exactly the right amount. Jesus could not just go and suffer on the cross for awhile, and that would do the trick; He had to pay for the sins of all mankind.

a. *Redemption,* by the way, means *payment*.
b. The Mosaic Law required that the firstborn to be redeemed. Num. 18:15
c. Again, the idea was to connect redemption with the firstborn with a specific amount (a specific redemption amount).

10. Jesus Christ is called the firstborn in Psalm 89:26–27. "He [Jesus, David's descendant] will call to Me [God], 'You are My Father, My God, and the Rock of My salvation!' I will also appoint Him [as] My firstborn, [He will be] the highest of the kings of the earth.
11. Jesus is called the *firstborn* in the New Testament:
    a. The first occasion, already mentioned, is Luke 2:7.
    b. Paul associates Christ as the firstborn of many brothers with election. For those whom He foreknew 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 (Rom. 8:29–30).
    c. Jesus is called the *firstborn of all creation* in Col. 1:15–16: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him.
    d. He is also called the *firstborn from the dead* in Col. 1:18–20: And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. He has this same title in Rev. 1:5
    e. Heb. 1:5–6: For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and He shall be to Me a son"? And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all God's angels worship Him." (Psalm 2:7 2Sam. 7:14 Deut. 32:43 LXX?).
    f. We should glean two things from these references: Jesus is not actually born or created, but He is preeminent among all that which has been created. Secondly, His title *Firstborn* is also to tie Him to the Passover event, where the death of the firstborn, redemption, the blood of the Lamb and the passing over all those under His blood are all gathered together as a type, for which Jesus is the antitype.

This is the abbreviated version of this doctrine.

[1] Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary of American English from e-sword; topic: first-born.
[2] M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary;* 1897; from e-Sword, topic: first-born.

Genesis 25:29–32 One day, Jacob was making soup as Esau came from the field, and he was faint. Esau said to Jacob, "I beg you, Let me eat of the red, this red [soup], for I am faint." Therefore his name was called Edom. And Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today." And Esau said, "Behold, I am at the point of dying, and what profit is this birthright to me?"

Genesis 25:33 And Jacob said, "Swear to me this day." And he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob.

So, for a mess of pottage (that is, a bowl of bean soup), Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. This birthright of being the firstborn and receiving the promises which God gave to Abraham were sold for this bowl of bean soup. Jacob valued this birthright and Esau did not. Esau reasoned, *if I die from hunger, what good is some inheritance from a God I have never met?* Jacob, on the other hand, saw this birthright as a thing of value, to be gotten by any means possible.

Again, recall who has raised these boys into manhood—Rebekah spent her time with Jacob and Isaac spent his time with Esau. This suggests that Rebekah understood, to some degree, the value of this birthright and how it related to the divine promises made to Abraham, and she taught this to Jacob. Esau was obviously aware of it, but it was not as greatly valued by him.

Genesis 25:34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and soup of lentils. And he ate and drank, and rose up and went his way. And Esau despised his birthright.

Jacob and Esau came to an agreement. Jacob would give Esau the soup; Esau gave his birthright to Jacob.

Then what follows are 5 actions which take place sequentially (or coterminously). That is, when wâw consecutives are strung together a series of imperfect verbs, then each verb describes a subsequent (or, coterminous) action to the previous verb. So Esau eats and drinks. The latter verb can indicate sitting down at a banquet, rather than drinking per se. Esau, perhaps even before sitting down, shovels some large mouthfuls of lentil soup into his starving self. As he is doing this, Jacob prepares a place for him to eat, or Esau takes the bowl over to this place. There seems to be no ceremony to this eating; what Jacob had, Esau wanted more than anything else in the world right then. And Jacob wanted that birthright.

We continue with the wâw consecutive followed by an imperfect verb. In all of this, coterminous with the action, and subsequent to his eating and leaving, Esau despises his birthright. Prior to the meal, Esau thought little of this birthright; following the meal, Esau hated his forfeited birthright.

Have you ever seen a guy who is jilted by his girl, and then, instead of pining away for his old girlfriend, he hates her and says ugly things about her? This is Esau's reaction. He

did not value the birthright much in the first place; and now this lack of valuation has become animosity, insofar as one can have animus toward a promise.

It is possible that Esau *despising* his birthright did not indicate necessarily some great welling up of emotion on Esau's part; it simply reveals that Esau did not value his birthright enough to retain it.

Graphic of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage. Illustrators of the 1728 Figures de la Bible, Gerard Hoet (1648-1733) and others, published by P. de Hondt in The Hague in 1728.

An illustration of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage. Taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Figures_Esau_Sells_His_Birthright_for_Pottage_of_Lentils.jpg

Essentially, we are looking at the difference between the temporal and the spiritual, and the value system of these two brothers. To Esau, his life was worth far more than his birthright, and that is what he believed was at stake. Jacob, on the other hand, was willing to do whatever it took to take this birthright to himself. Jacob obviously went about this in the wrong way, but he understood what was important.

The New Testament makes reference to this event in Heb. 12:14–17 Pursue peace with all men, and separation without which no one will see the Lord; watching carefully that no one fall short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and through this many become defiled. [See to it] that there be no prostitute or profane person like Esau, who for a single meal gave away his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for a change of mind, though he sought it diligently with tears. Heb. 12 appears to be a final list of admonishments, which include **rebound** (naming your sins to God and being

restored to fellowship) and a return to the **production of divine good** (Heb. 12:12–13). Believers are not to attempt to alienate every person that they meet; we are to pursue peace with all men (which includes, of course, women). Every person is to pursue holiness as well, which is first, salvation through faith in Christ; and secondly, a life marked by the production of divine good (which comes from knowing the Word of God and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through you).

God's grace is overwhelming and available to all believers; and the writer of Hebrews warns us not to fall short of it. When sins crop up, such as a root of bitterness, this is what causes trouble, and through bitterness, which sin is used here as an example, many people are defiled.

The writer gives two examples of those who fall short of the grace of God: the person who is sexually immoral and men who are simply ungodly or profane, and then the example of Esau is given. Esau falls short of the grace of God. For a mess of pottage, for a meal of lentil bean soup, Esau sold his birthright. In the context of Heb. 12, we are not speaking of unbelievers, but believers who are sexually immoral and believers who are ungodly—they can fall short of the grace of God. Esau illustrates this: he does believe in the Revealed Lord; but he has taken his life no further. God gave him an inheritance as the firstborn, and Esau saw this one meal as being more important.

What would have happened had Esau not done this? In the short term, Esau probably would have fainted before Jacob, and then Jacob would have to determine whether or not to try to revive him. I suspect that, whether they were alone at this time or with family, Jacob could not simply allow his brother to die. Therefore, the worst case scenario for Esau would be to faint in front of Jacob, and this would require Jacob to revive him.

Genesis 25:34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and soup of lentils. And he ate and drank, and rose up and went his way. And Esau despised his birthright.

The final phrase is quite interesting. Years later, when receiving the blessing from their father Isaac, Jacob again supplanted Esau, receiving the greater blessing from their father Isaac. However, there was no undoing what Isaac said in blessing Jacob, despite the emotional investment of Esau. See Gen. 27:27–41 (which passage we will exegete in the future).

Lesson 290: Genesis 26:1–5 — God's Promises to Isaac

There are 3 very similar narratives in Genesis. Abraham twice lies about his relationship with his wife to strangers that he is worried about; and Gen. 26 is about Isaac doing the exact same thing. There are many significant differences between these narratives; but it is interesting that God the Holy Spirit chose these events to record.

Sometimes, we learn a lot about a person when we see them in the same circumstance, but years later; or when we see two different people in the same circumstance. We are

going to also learn a lot about the Philistines. The narrative of Abraham and Isaac both going into the land of the Philistines indicates that there have been sociological changes among the Philistines themselves. However, it is going to take us some time before we get there. One verse is going to stop us dead in our tracks. It is a verse you may have read many times, but did not realize just how out of place it is.

Genesis 26:1 And there was a famine in the land, besides the famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines to Gerar.

This verse is worded in such a way so that we do not think that this is simply a recycled story about Abraham, but with Isaac's name in its place. There will be several similarities. They both lived in the land during a famine; they both went to another place where the drought had not been as destructive; and they both lied about their wives to the authorities of that place. Because of these similarities, critics of Scripture would make the unwarranted claim that these are just stories floating about, and that the Bible used the same story twice, but just plugged in different names instead. However, the person recording this information (Isaac or Jacob) knew that this was a famine in the lifetime of Isaac and that this was different from the famine which occurred during the life of Abraham. Therefore, the differences between these accounts are pointed out from the very beginning.

A famine in the land is going to be based upon a drought. Sometimes these droughts can continue for years, which increases the severity of the famine; and sometimes they continue only for a few years. But a famine in the Old Testament is equivalent to an economic downturn in modern times. Many times when such a thing occurs, it is a result of God's judgment on the land or upon a specific population.

In such economic downturns, people often move from one place to another. We have thousands of people moving out of California and New York to Texas and Florida.

I should also point out that we do not have a time frame here. Are Jacob and Esau young adults at this point? If so, where are they? Or, have they simply not been born yet? I don't see anything yet in this narrative to tie it to a specific point in time. Assuming that most of Genesis is in chronological order, this is taking place after Jacob and Esau have been born.

V. 1 gives us the big picture: And there was a famine in the land, besides the famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines to Gerar. Isaac will go to Gerar because of what God will tell him in the next verse.

Genesis 26:2 And Jehovah appeared to him and said, "Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land which I will tell you of.

Therefore, when the famine began, Isaac first considered going to Egypt. God tells him not to go to Egypt. Instead, God will have Isaac move a relatively short distance away into the territory of the Philistines.

After the Jews moved into the land as a nation, being led by Moses, their relationship with the Philistines quickly degenerated into great animosity. However, during this time period, Abraham had a good relationship with the Philistines and Isaac had a so-so relationship with the Philistines.

Unlike Abraham, God did not appear to Isaac very often. This is one of the few times that God did. It appears that when Abraham went down to Egypt, that was a mistake. This was because God did not give that land to Abraham (not in the near future). God wanted Abraham and his seed to remain in the Land of Promise. So, apparently Isaac is about to repeat this mistake, and God guides him in a different direction.

God does not tell Isaac to ignore the drought or to act as if it is not happening. But God is going to lead Isaac to an area not too far from him, which is not suffering the same drought. We who live in Texas understand that completely. We might get 4 inches of rain in one day; and yet, 10 miles away, they only get an inch of rain.

God also reiterates His promise to Abraham and transfers this promise to Isaac.

Genesis 26:3 Reside in this land, and I will be with you and I will bless you. For to you and to your seed I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

Despite the famine, Isaac was to remain in the Land of Promise. He had to maintain faith that this land is given to him from God. God made a series of promises to Abraham, which we will study again; and He is reestablishing these promises with Isaac, as Abraham's heir of promise.

Isaac's response would be a response of faith; and God blesses those who trust in Him.

Genesis 26:4 And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed,...

Although this promise is repeated, this is the first time that God gives this promise directly to Isaac.

I love the reference here to the *stars of the heavens,* because, in the ancient world, human viewpoint would suggest that they knew of a few thousands stars at most. God making a promise that Abraham's descendants would number in the thousands is not that big of a deal. However, we have seen this put side-by-side promising that Abraham's descendants would be as the sand of the seas (and, according to many estimations, there are more stars in the heavens than there are grains of sand of the seashore and deserts).

We understand that both of these figures of speech refer to a huge number, but not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence. Abraham and Isaac understood this in the same way. This is known as hyperbole; and hyperbole is found, from time to time, in the

Bible. When God promised them that Abraham's descendants would be like the stars in the sky, Abraham and Isaac understand that this was a huge number.

Genesis 26:5 ...because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Laws."

God blessing Abraham went hand-in-hand with Abraham's spiritual growth. When God originally made His promises to Abraham, when he was still in Ur of the Chaldees, you may recall that Abraham did not completely and fully follow God's commands. He did not go as far west as he was supposed to, and he was supposed to separate from his family, and he would not do that either. God still made promises to Abraham and God still intended to keep those promises.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we receive salvation forever on the basis of grace alone (Eph. 2:8–9 Titus 3:5). However, as we continue in life, we either grow spiritually or we don't; which means that God blesses us or He does not. We do receive some blessings in life simply from having believed in Him; but there are also blessings which are commensurate with spiritual growth. This was illustrated with Abraham, who became a very wealthy man. But this is even illustrated more by his fellowship with God, which increased around the time that Isaac was conceived, and included a meal with our Lord.

Genesis 26:4–5 And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Laws."

This is a fascinating passage, as God would give to Moses a plethora of laws and regulations 500+ years hence—not Abraham. Abraham certainly followed God's instructions. When God told him to go west; when God told him to walk through the land; when God told him to offer up his son, Abraham obeyed God (tentatively and incompletely at first; but completely later on). So, in this way, Abraham obeyed God's voice and kept His charge.

God, in speaking to Isaac, said: "I have multiplied your seed as the stars of the heavens and I have given to your seed all these lands; furthermore [lit., *and*], all nations of the earth of blessed [themselves] by your seed. [This is] because Abraham listened to My voice and he kept My charge, My commandments, My statues and My laws." Therefore, even though we are reading most of these specific words for the very first time in the Bible, they have to mean something to Isaac and they have to have meant something to Abraham. There has to be more here than *"Abraham listened to what I said, and so, He did what I told him to do."*

The applicable verb here is shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which means, *to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. Let me suggest that Abraham did more than *keep* these things of God—Abraham guarded them, he watched over them and he preserved them. Let me suggest to you that there were laws

in place, not necessarily given in Scripture; but some of which can be unearthed both in Genesis and in the book of Job, as these men did have an understanding of God's standards in the world. These are standards of right and wrong which we pass along to our children.

Remember that Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and this could be translated the Tree of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong. Apart from eating the fruit of this tree, there was nothing which Adam or the woman could do that was wrong. However, after eating from it, then there were a myriad of things which they thought of to do that were wrong, as did their sons and their sons' sons.

In the time of Abraham, there was a uniqueness to life: that, for a time, nearly every person who had been born since the Great Flood was still alive. Even though God had caused man to split up, while Abraham was alive, his progenitors Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah were all alive as well, and, almost all at once, one set of generations died out; and before Jacob dies, all the patriarchs will be gone. But most importantly, Shem (the son of Noah) and his son, grandson, and great grandson were all still alive, all dying out about the same time as Abraham does.

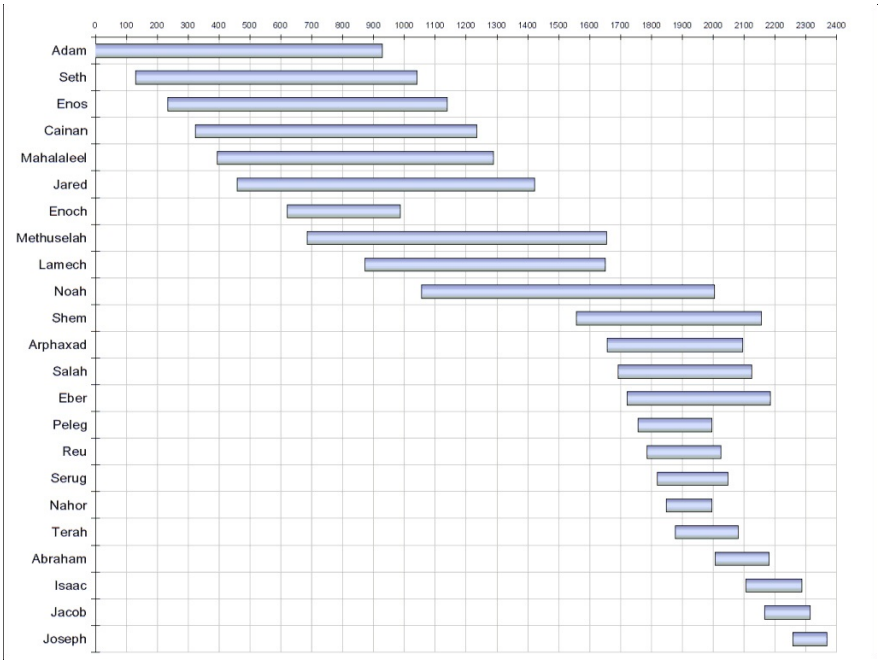


Chart of the Ages of the Patriarchs comes from Church Ages.com, accessed February 3, 2013. You will note that from Shem on down, all of Abraham's ancestors are alive when Abraham is alive. The first four generations out from the ark do not die out until after Isaac is born.

Also, during the life of Abraham and before, many kingdoms had been established, and there were laws established in those kingdoms. In fact, it appeared as though there was an attempt in these kingdoms of codify the concept of right and wrong in each kingdom. You may recall that we acknowledged ancient law codes back in **Gen. 17** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Where did these codes come from? They have many similar concepts. Let me suggest that God told Noah more than simply, Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood will be shed by man, for God made man in His image (Gen. 9:6; HCSB). And let me suggest that there is more in the souls concerning right and wrong of mankind during this time

period, in part because even Shem is still alive (and his brothers), who lived prior to the flood and during the flood. So he would have had a very well-defined sense of right and wrong which he no doubt passed down to his sons and grandsons; and you will note that those in the line of Abraham—Arphaxad, Salah and Eber—are all still alive. All of them would have the moral sensibilities of their forefather, Shem, and this would give a solid foundation to human morality in that time period; as well as a solid foundation in the correct worship of the Creator God.

This would suggest that the first four generations from the ark of the 3 strains of the human race, because they are all still alive, that their influence being made upon their many ancestors. However, they will die out, and there will be a loss of consistency when it comes to morality in the human race. But that will not take place until the time of Jacob.

If there is any question as to what is right and what is wrong, anyone could appeal right back all the way through 9 sets of ancestors, to those who were on the ark. Having all of these men alive at the same time made the concepts of right and wrong reasonably consistent.

I should also point out that, in the Mosaic Law, there are consequences clearly outlined, for those who break the criminal laws which are listed. This is given to Israel and not to Abraham because Israel was a nation, and Abraham was the head of a compound of a few hundred people. The state is to mete out punishment for criminal behavior. This is not something which is to be decided by a group of individuals who are mad about what someone has done. The Bible does not condone vigilante behavior.

Furthermore, human behavior in small groups and small villages is different than human behavior in larger groups and in cities. In small towns, there is often very little by way of violent crime. In large cities, violent crime can envelop such a city. So, when Israel becomes a nation, have a more complex set of laws will be more appropriate.

Therefore, when God assembled a nation to represent Him, He then gave that nation laws, laws which are appropriately enforced by a national entity. Those laws have legal consequences. Those laws are also appropriate to the time and place and culture of that day. These laws are appropriate to a national entity, but not to a tribal compound (as Abraham or Isaac presides over). However, many of the concepts of right and wrong were understood by the people to whom these laws were given. In other words, when God told the people of Israel, "Do not steal" or "Do not murder;" this was not brand new information which took everyone by surprise. No one said, "You don't want us to steal? When did that happen?" Everyone has an internal concept of morality.

I recall stealing some toys from my best friend when I was 5 or 6. I knew it was wrong and I hid the toys that I stole because I knew it was wrong. This was, in fact, one of the first things which I did that I knew was unquestionably wrong, and it is why this incident has stayed with me, nearly 60 years later. I have no idea if anyone told me the importance of the concept *do not steal;* but I fully understood that concept when I stole from Eric. I did not need anyone to tell me that after the fact about how wrong I was.

Furthermore, during the time of Abraham, there were external social controls as well, concerning that which is right and wrong. Nearly all of the ancestors are alive, going back to the ark. This provides a consistency of morality.

The United States is an excellent example of a changing morality. When I was younger, there was no question about homosexual acts being wrong; and no community would have tolerated an overt homosexual as a teacher of children. Today, homosexuality is accepted (and those who do not accept it are written off as bigoted and hateful); and there is a lot more out-of-wedlock sexual behavior occurring, between a variety of genders. Essentially, we have made up our own morality, which is not anchored to anything except to the lusts of a particular political constituency. In the time of Abraham, this was much more difficult to do. There was a consistency which spanned many generations because many of these generations were all alive at the same time.

So, even though God will, 500 years hence, give the children of Abraham a set of laws, none of these laws are going to be a surprise to them. They may have disobeyed these laws in the past, but their conscience also bore witness against their own actions. They understood, for instance, the sanctity of marriage; and *do not commit adultery* was not some idea out of the blue. In fact, these times when Abraham and Isaac have moved into another culture, it is clear that the prohibition of adultery is fully understood by these other cultures.

Therefore, whether there is a set of laws designed for a particular area or not, it is clear that there is some fundamental agreement on what is right and what is wrong among the peoples of Canaan, Aram and Egypt.

Lesson 291: Gen. 26:4–5 God's Charge, Commandments, Statutes and Laws #1

This is what we have studied so far:

Genesis 26:1–3 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, to Gerar. Yahweh appeared to him, and said, "Don't go down into Egypt. Dwell in the land which I will tell you of. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you. For to you, and to your seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. (WEB)

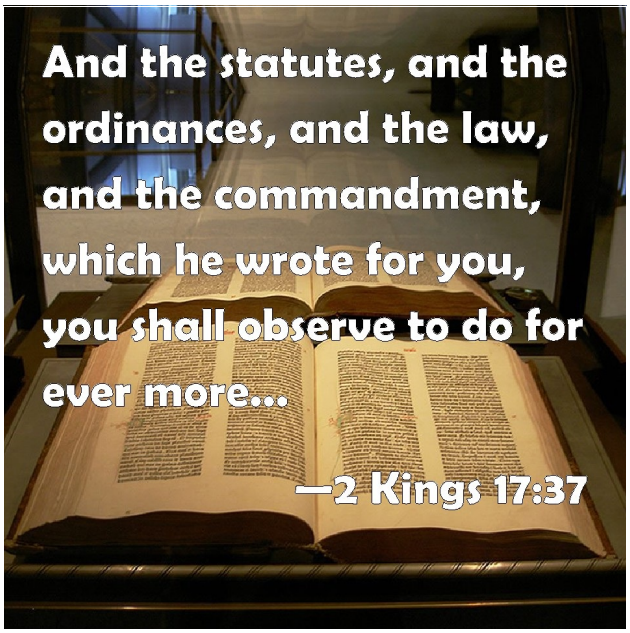
In a circumstance reminiscent of his father's history, Isaac faces an economic downturn, and decides to move. God guides him to Philistia, at a time when the relationship between the Jews and the Philistines was much better.

Genesis 26:4–5 And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Laws."

There is something about the sentence structure here which stands out, but I don't know exactly what it means. What tends to be common in the Hebrew is to list one thing after another with the wâw conjunction in between (or one action after another with the wâw consecutive in between), but it is rare in the Hebrew (and common in the English) to have a list where a copulative is used one time before the last item on the list. This is what we find here, and so far, I have been unsuccessful in determining what sort of meaning ought to be attached because of this (Bullinger talks about *no-ands* and *many-ands;* but not about *one-and*).[128] This is just how we speak and write in English; but this was not the way that Hebrews spoke and wrote. They threw in *ands* in between every noun or clause. That is just the way that they did it.

Genesis 26:4–5 And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Laws."

Interestingly enough, these final 3 feminine plural nouns are only found together one more time in the Old Testament, and that is Neh. 9:13 (and, actually, the word translated *statutes* is similar to the one found here; it is not the exact same word). However, 3 of the 4 nouns (sometimes with mish^{e}mereth) are found here: Gen. 26:5 Deut. 30:10 1Kings 2:3 2Kings 17:13, 34, 37 2Chron. 19:10 Neh. 9:13–14 10:29 (some are in the singular; and sometimes there is the alternate word for *statutes*). These words occur in pairs in many places throughout the Old Testament.



2Kings 17:37 graphic from Biblepic.com, accessed April 23, 2014.

Verses in the Bible are not thrown it at random. We have 4 words here, at least 3 of which are generally associated with the Law of Moses; and they all show up, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, in this one verse in Genesis. Only one of these words shows up again in Genesis (in the next verse); which word also occurs once in Job. Apart from that, none of these words are found prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law. Let's look at the words which are found here:

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[128] Seow was not helpful in this regard either.

Genesis 26:4–5 And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My Laws."

Introductory Points on Genesis 26:5

1. The Mosaic Law has not been given yet. This will not come on the scene for another 500+ years.
2. There is nothing to indicate that we have a previously enumerated set of laws, statutes and commandments from God. That is, there might be a clear set of moral standards which most of the Jews understood prior to receiving the Law of Moses; but there is no indication that God has already laid out a system of laws to Abraham as He did for Moses. That would have been quite significant, and it is not found in the Bible. What we do have in the Bible is God delineating His promises to Abraham. Furthermore, Abraham appears to have recorded each and every meeting with God. How much sense would it have made for him to forget that meeting where God lays down a whole system of laws?
3. A system of laws is imperative for a society or for a nation. In most organizations, there are bylaws which the members are expected to adhere to.
4. Up to this point in time, there are several people spoken of favorably because of their behavior before God:
    1) And Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he fathered Methuselah. And he fathered sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God, and then he was not, for God took him. (Gen. 5:22–24; MKJV) We are never given a specific set of behaviors or actions; but that Enoch was translated; he walked with God while on earth and just continued this walk into heaven. What Enoch did that was good and right is never specified; what he avoided that was sinful and wrong is never enumerated.
    2) All flesh on earth was corrupted, with the exception of Noah and his family (Gen. 6). Noah did all that God *commanded* him to do (Gen. 6:22 7:5, 9, 16, 23 Heb. 11:7). Noah is also called righteous, which means that he has trusted the Revealed God (Gen. 15:6). God then establishes a covenant with Noah and gives him one law of retribution: a man guilty of murder must be executed (this consequence had not been given before). Gen. 9:6–13
    3) So we know some of the things which Noah did which were right (he obeyed God in building the ark). However, we know nothing specific about Noah's behavior prior to the building of the ark.
    4) In Noah's day, he was one of the few men who had not been corrupted by the fallen angels. See **Gen. 6** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
    5) Many generations later, God began to give a series of commands to Abram. At first, his obedience was partial; and then he learned to fully obey what God told him to do.
    6) Given the information that we have about Noah, Enoch and Abraham, we

may conclude that man, generally speaking, at this point in time, had the ability to recognize good and evil, right and wrong; and without having a specifically delineated list of commandments.

7) Logically, knowing right from wrong is not a result of God laying out a clear set of laws to anyone, as this does not appear to have been done until the time of Moses.

8) However, up to this point in time, men have a fairly clear and consistent set of moral standards, which are passed down from Noah to his sons, then from his sons to their sons. Furthermore, Noah's sons are still alive during the time of Abraham.

5. Now, if Abraham is to obey God's voice, and to keep His charge, His commandments His statutes and His laws, then there must be more going on here than mere obedience to what God says that has been recorded.

6. Rom. 2:14–15 reads: For when 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... (ESV) The point Paul is making is, gentiles did not receive the Law of Moses, and yet they do by nature what the law requires (that is, people have a concept of right and wrong in their souls). They are therefore responsible to God for breaking His laws as well. Furthermore, we have briefly studied several sets of laws which were in existence in various nations before God gave the Law to Moses.

7. During the time of Abraham, there were nations all around him where laws were being developed for organized and lawful societies. Man is not willy-nilly about this determination of laws. One society did not make laws prohibiting murder and stealing while another society said that these things are good and should be rewarded. These laws developed in a variety of societies were very similar in nature, *as if* God has written the laws upon their hearts.

8. Having standards and holding to these standards are two very different things. You have no doubt believed in Jesus Christ (otherwise, why would you be reading this?). But there was a time when you did not. Were you completely lawless at that time? You no doubt had ideas of right and wrong, and sometimes you kept to these ideas and sometimes you violated your own concepts of right and wrong (*everyone* has). I had a friend who had moved away from Christianity; and I tried to pin him down on having some fundamental norms that he believed in, and he finally agreed that he believed that we should treat all other men with dignity and respect. However, at the same time, he was carrying on an affair with a married woman, so his respect and dignity for all mankind obviously did not include her husband. My point being, no matter what our norms and standards are—even if they are very weak standards (such as, treating every person you know with dignity and respect), we still violate them. Our violations, however, do not mean that we are lawless. We have a law; we have standards. We just don't always keep to them.

Introductory Points on Genesis 26:5

9. It is when societies as a whole move away from such standards that there are problems. We have two early examples in the Bible: the antediluvian population and Sodom and Gomorrah. Those societies had become lawless.
10. In modern-day America, there are tremendous forces at work in our land to redefine the concepts of morality, hatred, tolerance; changing traditional values dramatically. I know people who believe that, if you think that traditional marriage is the right and proper thing, and if you believe that gay marriage is unnatural, you are intolerant and hateful. Good organizations like *Focus on the Family* are referred to as Christian bigots, Extremists and a Borderline Hate Group, and pro-bullying (really!).
11. However, back in the day, Abraham has a conscience and in that conscience were norms and standards which he learned as a young boy, and he stayed within those norms and standards. The Bible includes his failures along these lines as well.
12. Most of his norms and standards would be in line with God's norms and standards; and his adherence to these norms and standards was Abraham's keeping God's commandments, statutes and laws.
13. Furthermore, these norms and standards would be believed in and adhered to by many of the societies of that day, because the sons of Noah were still alive, as were their sons and their sons' sons. The fact that they were alive and respected and that they brought up their own children with a certain sense of morality, suggests that, throughout the world, at that time, there was a reasonably consistent standard of right and wrong. This did go awry in some distinct societies (witness Sodom and Gomorrah); but there were a lot of things which were clearly understood as right or wrong.
14. For the most part, societies tended to have fairly consistent morals and laws. 3 times, Abraham or Isaac will move to different societies, and in all of these societies, the institution of marriage is respected. Truthfulness is expected. In the final case, which we have not yet studied, it will become clear that the King of Gerar (a Philistine area) will even recognize that God blesses his land because of Isaac.
15. But, bear in mind, all of this that we are studying is taking place while these elders are dying out—and they are all dying out at once. The first four generations since the ark (Noah's sons and the next 3 generations) will all die out during the lives of Isaac and Jacob. So, even though the people spread out over the land, they would have ties with someone from those 4 generations which provided some moral consistency.
16. Interestingly enough, the 4 or 5 generations which followed them had already died out. The first 4 generations out of the ark, after Noah, died out before the birth of Isaac or Jacob. So, during their lives, all ties to those who exited the ark were broken.
17. A lot of this may help to explain the sort of ancestor worship which arose in the far east.
18. This also helps to explain why God is instituting a new program. We have a

Introductory Points on Genesis 26:5

consistency of human morality defined because there are 4 generations of men from the ark all alive during the time of Abraham. However, they will all die out during the time of Isaac and Jacob. They, as the final human arbiters of morality and human righteousness, will all die at about the same time, so God will have to step in and establish a very specific set of laws, which we often call the Mosaic Law.

Lessons 292–293: Gen. 26:5 Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Judgments

Preface: The Bible has 4 different words which are very similar; and all of these words are found early on in the book of Genesis (although some of these words occur only in this particular verse). This is an attempt to draw some distinctions between these words.

When God is speaking to Isaac, and He says these words to him:

Genesis 26:4–5 "And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My **voice** and he **kept** My **charge**, My **commandments**, My **ordinances**, and My **Laws**."

This is a very odd place in the Bible to find these particular words. We generally associate them with the Mosaic Law. However, God will not give the Law to Moses for another 500 years, and yet here, we are told that Abraham obeyed God's voice and kept God's charge, as well as His commandments, statutes and laws. Which laws, commandments, and statutes are we talking about and what do these various terms mean?

We should take a look at the second verb found here, which is the Qal imperfect of shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which means *to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. We more or less understand this in relationship with Moses and with the people of Israel—the Law of God was kept, guarded, protected, preserved and taught from generation to generation. We ought to understand roughly the same thing with Abraham, except that he did not pass this along to a nation as we think of one, but to his wife, his children and to the people who were slaves to him or who worked for him. We do not have, however, a list of specific laws and commandments which God gave to him and which Abraham preserved, other than the promises which God made to him.

Therefore, let's first see what Abraham was actually responsible for, according to the Word of God:

I found it interesting that God did not sit down with Abraham at one point in time, give him all of the promises, and then let Abraham take over from there. There are several reasons for this: (1) doctrine is built upon doctrine; (2) repetition is important to the spiritual life; (3) God gave Abraham enough to apply, and then let Abraham apply it; and (4) God is not a deist. That is, God does not set everything in motion, and then walk away from it, letting us fend for ourselves with what He left us. God is intimately and regularly a part of Abraham's life; therefore, we will expect God to contact Abraham regularly.

You will notice that God's message to Abraham becomes more complex with time.

The reason that we are looking at these all at once is so that we can see just what things God told Abraham. What follows is every recorded word of God to Abraham.

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture	Commentary
Abraham is in Charan (or Haran), which is about 1700 miles northwest of Ur of the Chaldees. Ur is Abraham's likely birthplace, which is not far from the Persian Gulf. God is telling Abraham to move a few hundred miles to the southwest into the Land of Promise.	
Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Get out of your country, and away from your relatives, and away from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you, and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1–3).	God first tells Abram that he must move—that is a command. Then God promises that He will make a great nation from Abram and bless him and make him famous. Furthermore, Abram would be a blessing to others. Then God promises to bless those who bless Abram and curse those who curse him. Finally, God promises that *in Abram* all the families of the earth would be blessed (which is a promise of Messiah).
As we have studied, God first spoke these words to Abraham when he was in Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2–3). Abraham half-obeyed God. He moved west, but he stopped at Charan; and he brought much of his family with him. Abraham was not quite up to complete obedience until his father, Terah, died in Charan (Gen. 11:32). It appears that God came to Abraham again, while he was in Charan, and spoke these words to him a second time (Gen. 12:1–3). Or, Abraham called these words to mind. Abraham then almost completely obeys God, except that he will take his nephew Lot with him.	
Abraham enters into the Land of Promise.	

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture	Commentary
Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, at the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. But the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your offspring [= *seed*]." So he built an altar there to the LORD Who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and worshiped Him (Gen. 12:6–8).	God first tells Abram that He will give his seed (Seed) the land in which he stands. Abram goes into Canaan and God tells him that this will be the land of his offspring. These are all promises from God to Abram; and Abram has preserved them. He preserved them and taught them to his wife and eventually to his son Isaac. Apparently Rebekah, his wife, will be aware of these promises; and they both taught them to their sons, Jacob and Esau.
God waits for Abram to first separate from Lot, which he chooses to do from his own volition.	
Yahweh said to Abram, after Lot was separated from him, "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 will give to you, and to your offspring [= *seed*] forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then your seed may also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it to you." (Gen. 13:14–17).	God then promises Abram a huge chunk of land, which would be as far as Abram could see in all directions. Furthermore, those who have been descended from Abram will be like the dust of the earth (i.e., an old and childless Abram would have millions of descendants). Therefore, God has expanded upon His promises from Gen. 12. Then God tells Abram to wander throughout the land which He has given him—a *commandment* which Abraham obeyed (and which he preserved in the book of Genesis).
For the next passage, Abram has just enjoyed a tremendous military victory and he has met with the great High Priest, Melchizedek, Who is a type of Christ. There is a chance that Abram was given the Holy Scriptures at this point as well (the first 10–12 chapters of Genesis; and perhaps the book of Job). Or what Abraham had and what Melchizedek gave him made up together the first portion of Genesis and the entire book of Job.	

God's Covenants with Abraham	
Scripture	**Commentary**
After these things [the rescue of Lot and the great military victory] the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Don't be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [and] your exceedingly great reward." (Gen. 15:1)	God explains to Abram what He is to him. God is Abram's shield, as was proven in the previous chapter when Abram and his men defeated a great army and literally changed world history in that battle. Furthermore, God is Abram's 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." (Gen. 15:2–3)	However, rather than show gratefulness, Abram starts out by complaining that he is childless and that his heir will be someone to whom he is not even related.
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, "Now look toward the sky, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." (Gen. 15:4–5a)	God makes it clear that Abram's heir will come directly from him. Then God *repeats* His promise, that Abram will have billions of descendants (using stars this time as an illustration).
He said to Abram, "So will your seed be." He [had] believed in Yahweh; and He [God] imputed it to him [Abram] for righteousness. (Gen. 15:5b–6)	Abram's faith is counted to him as righteousness. Abram had believed in God back when he was in Ur. That was when God imputed righteousness to Abram. Here, God speaks, and Abram believes Him; that is righteousness imputed to Abram in time. You will note that, even in time, God does all the work, God makes all of the provisions, and Abram is allowed to take from that—and it is considered righteousness to Abram. Abram is the model for all believers in this.
He said to him, "I am Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it." (Gen. 15:7)	God then *repeats* the promise that Abram would inherit all of the land upon which he stands.

God's Covenants with Abraham	
Scripture	**Commentary**
He said, "Lord Yahweh, how will I know that I will inherit it?" He said to him, "Take me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon." (Gen. 15:8–9).	What God is doing here is making a covenant with Abraham. This is how Abraham *knows* that God will keep His promises.
He took him all these, and divided them in the middle, and laid each half opposite the other; but he didn't divide the birds. The birds of prey came down on the carcasses, and Abram drove them away (Gen. 15:10–11).	God illustrates what will happen in the future. The land will be given to the Jews, and various groups will continually try to take this land away from them, and God, through the Jews, will continually have to drive them away. The birds of prey are the heathen nation; and Abram symbolizes God here. God is not dealing with Abram's unbelief, at this point, but the unbelief of the generations which will follow him.
When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. Now terror and great darkness fell on him. He [God] 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 four hundred years. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great substance. (Gen. 15:12–14).	Then God prophesies to Abram what would happen to his descendants over the next 400+ years. Again, God is not as concerned with Abram's lack of faith as He is with the generations which will follow him. God tells Abram what the future will be for his seed.

God's Covenants with Abraham	
Scripture	**Commentary**
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." (Gen. 15:15–16).	Much of the Bible is prophetic, and this information would stay with Abraham and his son Isaac and his son Jacob. And because Abraham keeps, guards and preserves these words, they are known to the children of Israel over the next 400+ years. The Jewish slaves in Egypt will call out to this God of Abram for their deliverance. This means they had to know about Abram and about his God. This is indicates that Abram preserved God's commands and ordinances.
It came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. (Gen. 15:17).	The smoking furnace and the flaming torch are ways that the Preincarnate Christ and God the Father revealed Themselves to Abram. These things represent judgment, and God's judgment will always be a part of His relationship to mankind.
In that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites." (Gen. 15:18–21).	God becomes very specific about the land which He is giving to Abram and to his descendants: the land which lies between the Nile (the River of Egypt) and the Euphrates River. This would include a small portion of modern Egypt, along with all of Jordan, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and most of Iraq. Right now, Israel occupies approximately 0.2% of the Middle East; God is giving to them approximately half of the Middle East (this is because most of the Arabs who occupy this land today will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire).
Unfortunately, at the urging of his wife, Abram will misapply this doctrine in Gen. 16 and he will father a child by Sarai's personal servant girl, Hagar.	
God appears again to Abram to straighten him out about who his true heir will be. God comes to Abram at a time when he is 99 and his bastard son Ishmael is about 13 years old.	

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture	Commentary
When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty. Walk before Me, and be complete [spiritually mature]. I make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly." Gen. 17:1–2).	God tells Abram to walk as a mature believer before Him. God tells Abram to pay close attention to what He says. Over this period of time, Abraham has reached a point where God can command him to be spiritually mature.
Abram fell on his face. God talked with him, saying, "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you. You will be the father of a many nations. Neither will your name any more be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made you. (Gen. 17:3–5).	What had not been promised before is, Abram would be a father of many nations. God changes Abram's name from *Abram* (*exalted father*) to *Abraham* (*father of a multitude*).
I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you. Kings will come out of you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you. I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land where you are traveling, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. I will be their God." (Gen. 17:6–8).	God promises dried up old Abraham that he would be made exceedingly fruitful. FInally, all of the land through which Abraham is walking, would be given to him and to his seed. "I will be their God" indicates that this does not go to everyone descended from Abraham but specifically to those who have a relationship with God.

God's Covenants with Abraham	
Scripture	**Commentary**
God said to Abraham, "As for you, you will keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you will keep, between me and you and your seed after you. Every male among you will be circumcised. You will be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin. It will be a token of a covenant between me and you. (Gen. 17:9–11).	Abraham has seemed to forget what God has promised him, from time to time, so God is going to make certain that he remembers this time. Circumcision is hidden from others, but the male who is circumcised is aware of it. Every time a male urinates, he is reminded of his circumcision. As we have studied, circumcision represents the new life; taking that which was dead and making it alive once again (specifically, this is a reference to Abraham's sexual potency, which represents life where there was once death).
He who is eight days old will be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he who is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner who is not of your seed. He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must be circumcised." (Gen. 17:12–13).	Spiritually, this refers to being born again. The circumcision speaks of being born into a new life (the concept of being *born again* did not begin with Jesus speaking to Nicodemus in John 3). The idea is, the relationship between Abraham and God—which is founded upon new life—was to be passed down to all his descendants.
[God continues speaking to Moses]: "My covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. The uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul will be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant." (Gen. 17:14)	Note here that there are some commands, and with these commands are consequences. The person descended from Abraham who is not circumcised was to be cut off from Abraham's seed, because he has broken God's covenant with Abraham. The idea is, the lack of circumcision represents a lack of this new life.

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture	Commentary
God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you will not call her name Sarai, but her name will be Sarah. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations. Kings of peoples will come from her." (Gen. 17:15–16)	As has been discussed, there have been some cults out there that make a big deal out of changing a person's name when they enter into the cult. When names are changed in the Bible, generally speaking, God is doing the name change Himself.
Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to him who is one hundred years old? Will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth?" (Gen. 15:17)	Abraham has the objection that, what God is suggesting is simply impossible. They are simply too old to have children. However, this is the key to circumcision; which represents this new life being given to Abraham.
Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" (Gen. 15:18)	Furthermore, in Abraham's eyes, fathering a child by Sarah is unnecessary, because he already has a son, Ishmael (and Abraham clearly loved Ishmael).
God said, "No, but Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Listen, I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitful, and I will multiply him exceedingly. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time in the next year." When He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham (Gen. 17:19–22).	Ishmael is not going to be Abraham's heir. Recall that, he will be a wild ass of a man, indicating that he has no authority orientation. Furthermore, his descendants will be evil. God is able to know this. It is amazing that this holds true, even until today. If you were given the choice of living in some Middle Eastern nation, you would choose Israel. In fact, Israel is so different from every other nation in that region that, you may not have even associated them with the phrase *Middle Eastern nation*.
Now, how does God know, 4000 years ago, that Abraham's son Ishmael was not the family to watch, but Abraham's yet unborn son Isaac was the man to watch? God knew this 4000 years ago, and the results are clear for us to see, even today.	
The rest of Gen. 17 is a narrative about Abraham circumcising those in his encampment.	
God appears to Abraham once again:	

God's Covenants with Abraham	
Scripture	**Commentary**
Y^{e}howah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and saw that three men stood opposite him. (Gen. 18:1–2a).	The 3 men represent the Trinity, even though only one of them is the Revealed God.
When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, "My Lord, if now I have found grace in Your sight, please don't go away from Your servant. Now let a little water be fetched, wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. I will get a morsel of bread so you can refresh your heart. After that You may go your way, now that You have come to Your servant." (Gen. 18:2b–5a).	You will note that this time, Abraham immediately recognizes Y^{e}howah God. The meal is a picture of fellowship. Abraham was excited and happy to see God. With Abraham's continued spiritual growth, spending time with his LORD became more and more a time of pleasure and enjoyment.
They said, "Very well, do as you have said." (Gen. 18:5b).	Because of the dispensation in which we live, and what has gone before, we enjoy fellowship with all 3 members of the Trinity.
Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quickly make ready three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes." (Gen. 18:6)	Abraham involves his wife in this fellowship with God. God has promised Abraham that he would father a uniquely-born son through her.
Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a tender and good calf, and gave it to the servant. He hurried to dress it. He took butter, milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. He stood by them under the tree, and they ate. (Gen. 18:7–8)	Abraham organizes a large meal, and everything is made from scratch. He does not offer up leftovers, as Lot will appear to do in Gen. 19.
They said to him, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" He said, "See, in the tent." He said, "I will certainly return to you when the season comes round. Behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him. (Gen. 18:9–10)	The Revealed Member of the Trinity for the first time puts a rough date on the birth of their promised child and tells Abraham that it is Sarah who will have his child (which God told Abraham before).

God's Covenants with Abraham	
Scripture	**Commentary**
Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age. It had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old will I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" (Gen. 18:11–12)	The writer of Genesis makes certain that we know that Abraham and Sarah are past the age of having sexual relations; and Sarah is past the age of bearing children. Because God designed all the rules of biology, He can modify and overrule them if He so chooses to.
Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Will I really bear a child, yet I am old?' Is anything too hard for Yahweh? At the set time I will return to you, when the season comes round, and Sarah will have a son." Then Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid." He said, "No, but you did laugh." (Gen. 18:13–15)	In order to parallel and foreshadow the birth of Jesus, this birth needs to be miraculous. God asks Abraham if there is anything too difficult for Him to do.
I doubt that there is any race or family of people which now resides in the land which they originally lived in. Abraham, as a Jew, moved to the Land of Promise, and God gave him that land. And the Jews are still there today, 4000 years later, despite the absolute insane hatred which is felt by most of those who live around them.	
The reason that we reviewed these promises, is so that we can have a list of everything which God told Abraham that Abraham recorded (prior to the birth of Isaac). These are all the things which God spoke to Abraham, insofar as we are aware.	
I have left out Gen. 18:17–33, where God uses Abraham in order to establish the concept of a pivot; and where Abraham steps in as an intercessory between God and Sodom.	
I have left out the interchange between God and Abraham, when Sarah, having given birth to Isaac, wanted Hagar and Ishmael out of her house. God told Abraham that was okay, and Abraham obeyed Him. Gen. 21:9–13	
I have left out God telling Abraham to offer up his uniquely-born son, Isaac (Gen. 22:1–14). However, *after* Abraham offered up his uniquely-born son, God said this:	

And the Angel of Y^{e}howah called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares Y^{e}howah, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Gen. 22:15–18)	This is what God said to Abraham after he showed himself to be willing to offer up his son. We see an interaction between increased obedience and increased blessing (*your descendants will possess the gate of their enemies* is a new blessing).

Lesson 294: Gen. 26:5 Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Judgments

Genesis 26:4–5 [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham's son] "And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham **obeyed** My **voice** and **kept** My **charge**, My **commandments**, My **ordinances**, and My **Laws**."

The word translated *obeyed* is the Qal perfect of shâmaʿ (עָמַשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-MAHǴ*], 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. The word for *voice* simply means *voice*. God spoke to Abraham and Abraham listened. The things which God said to Abraham are all recorded above.

Also, the word here for *listen* is actually stronger than that, indicating that Abraham heard and acted upon what God said to him. God made many promises to Abraham and Abraham listened and believed those promises; and because he had believed God, righteousness was imputed to him (Gen. 15:6).

The second thing which Abraham did was the Qal imperfect of shâmar (רָמַשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which means *to keep, to guard, to watch [over], to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. What Abraham did was, preserve those things which God told him; he kept those things. We know what God said to Abraham 4000 years later because he preserved those words. We do not know exactly how he preserved them. It is my guess that Abraham repeated these things on many occasions to Isaac who passed them along to Jacob. We have no idea at exactly what point in time these things were actually written down, but it was likely before Moses. However, it is my contention that man, near the time of the flood, had a much better memory than man does today. He was both physically and mentally superior to man today. Therefore, hearing and memorizing the first 12–50 chapters of Genesis was much easier for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to do than it would be for us to do.

This is why we first studied the things which God said to Abraham. Abraham preserved these words; these words of God would have included God's charge, His commandments, His ordinances and His laws for Abraham at that point in time.

Now, specifically, God said that Abraham **"...kept** My **charge**, My **commandments**, My **ordinances**, and My **Laws**."

Therefore, apart from whatever norms and standards were written on the heart of Abraham, we have those actual words from God which Abraham was to preserve.

These specific words are not used and differentiated when God spoke to Abraham. God did not say, "Now, this would be a list of My commandments; and tomorrow, I will give you a list of my statutes." He just gave the words recorded above; and then God tells this to Isaac, who has surely received all of these commands and promises of the covenant from his father Abraham. Therefore, in this way, Abraham has guarded and preserved this covenant. Furthermore, Abraham recorded and kept a report of all the things which resulted from his interaction with God. He recorded what God said, and he recorded what he did as a result.

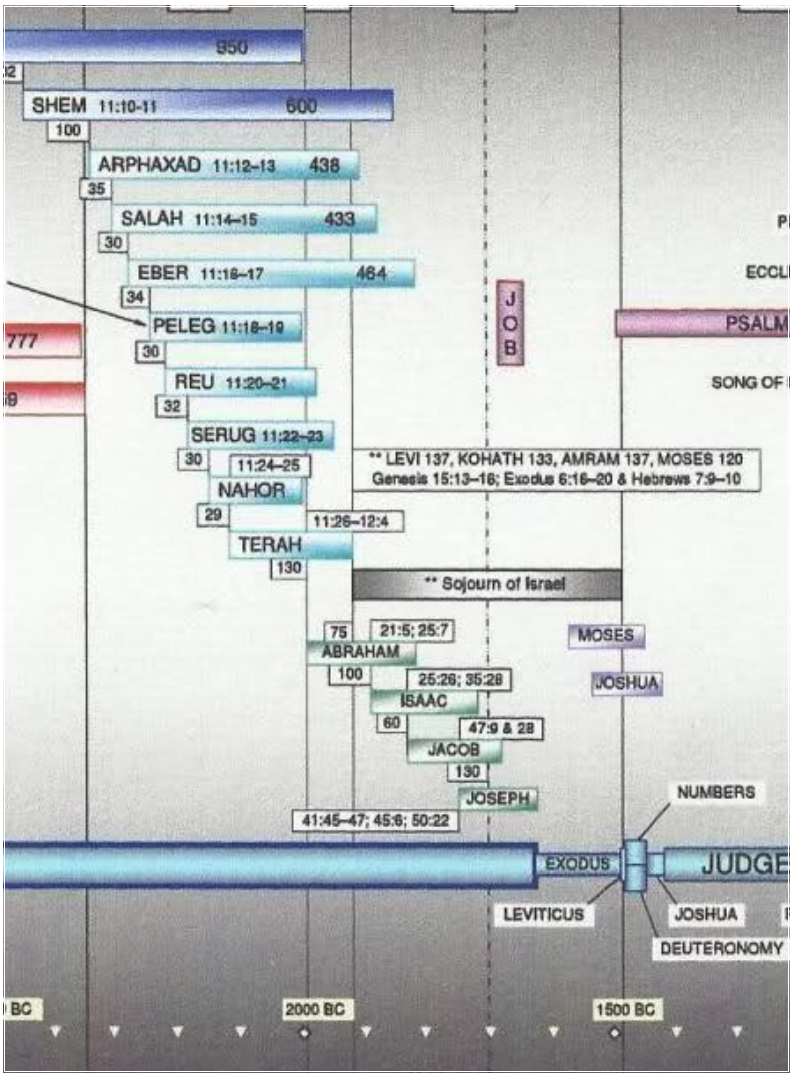
These words of God would have been preserved because Abraham taught them to Isaac.

The **book of Job** (HTML) (PDF) reveals to us how men with positive volition thought about God's charge, commandments and ordinances. We hear Job's opinion and the opinions of his 3 friends as they discuss suffering and moral issues. Job would have lived a few generations prior to Abraham, so he and his friends are good gauges as to what man knew and believed in that era. We might consider them messengers from the age of the gentile patriarchs (that is, sons of Shem, Ham or Japheth prior to Abraham).

Before going any further in our study of the meaning of the words *charge, commandments, ordinances* and *laws,* we also need to notice something which is unique about the time of Abraham. His ancestor Shem, who lived on earth before the flood, was still alive. So were Shem's son, grandson and great grandson in the line of Abraham.

The Patriarch Overlap Chart is from TinyPic.com, and was accessed May 19, 2014. You will note that the patriarchs Shem, Arphaxad, Salah and Eber are all alive during the life of Abraham; and all of them will die during the lifetime of Isaac.

What this means is, there was a far greater consistency of morality and social contracts in that era, because all of these men were still alive. It is much different than today where each new generation can essentially makes up its own concept of morality and right and wrong, to some degree. Many organizations and movements make every effort to insert themselves into our learning institutions so that their views might be taught to children from the earliest age. That was not the case with Abraham. His oldest living relatives actually lived when God judged the earth with the flood. God definitely spoke to Noah, Shem's father. So, even though it is 9 generations later, the wisdom of Shem and the next 3 generations following him essentially provided the concepts of right and wrong all the way down to the time of Abraham. It would have been difficult to argue about matters being right or wrong, as these elders were still alive and could be consulted at any point in time.



Genesis 26:4–5 "And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My **voice** and **kept** My **charge**, My **commandments**, My **ordinances**, and My **Laws**."

At what point does these words make sense to mankind? When God spoke these words to Isaac, did Isaac understand them? If so, I see several general options here: that God had given out a set of laws, only spoken of in part in Gen. 9, but with a great deal of specificity. This would suggest that there was a great deal of revelation given by God—likely to Noah and to his sons—which they did not bother to write down (except for the one command of Gen. 9). God, through His interaction with mankind, said what was right and wrong. I see this option as highly unlikely.

Another option is, Adam and the woman came with a very nearly perfect concept of right and wrong, after eating from the fruit of the tree (it is this tree that gave them this knowledge). And the first thing that they realized is, they were naked. They would have passed these norms and standards along to their children and grandchildren; but even with Cain and Abel, there was a problem: Cain killed Abel. Perhaps many of these laws were so self-evident to Adam and the woman that it never occurred to them to tell their children, "Do not kill each other." Furthermore, no person had ever died up to that time. So they may not have even realized that people could actually be killed.

Concerning the idea of this concept of right and wrong being in their souls from the beginning, these concepts would no doubt be distorted by the sin nature.

If you examine any of the age charts of the patriarchs which preceded Abraham, you will notice that most of their lives overlapped the life of Abraham, but that they all died out during Isaac's life. And about the time that God began speaking to Abraham and guiding him was about the time that those in the flood and their sons and sons' sons began to die off. So, there was this great wisdom—this knowledge of right and wrong—to come from Noah and his sons—all of whom lived before the flood. However, there came a point where all of the *ancestors* began to die out, almost all at once. Therefore, God took a new approach, coming first to Abraham and then to his son and grandson—and eventually speaking to Moses and to nation Israel, all of whom came from the loins of Abraham.

Application: When it comes to children, and then to their children, this would have been a different matter. Although we develop some limited concept of right and wrong, much of this comes from our parents and much of it comes from our environment. We can see great generational shifts occur before our very eyes, with children doing things which we find unimaginable. Our youth can be incredibly affected by what they are taught in school, something which many interest groups have discovered. For the 2012 election, some polling indicated that same-sex marriage and gay rights was the #1 issue among the youth. You would think that any young person with half a brain would realize that the economy and the debt of the nation *should* be most important political issue to them, as they would inherit that debt and possibly have their lives destroyed by it, but it was not. Now, you may wonder, *where does that come from?* One of the strongest political forces in the United States today is the various groups of the LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual Transgendered), who, despite being perhaps 3% of the U.S. population have a political strategy and fight constantly to put their message into the schools.

Application: Political groups have found the youth to be a great fertile ground for recruitment, as we have seen with the Nazi and Communist youth; with the liberal appeals in schools, and in this example, the gay agenda movement in the schools and media[129]. This combined with a positive gay message in television and movies (even though the presentation of various gay characters was often very inaccurate) changed the thinking of

[129] One of the brilliant political moves of the gay movement was to go after both the Disney name and enterprise as well as after the youth in schools.

a generation. They have managed to take something which has been understood to be sin and confusion for generations, and have turned it into a moral positive.

My point here is, Adam and the woman were physically mature when they partook of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; but their children were born like all other children, just with superior intellects and bodies. They had to receive their teaching from somewhere—which would suggest Adam and the woman, as well as from the Revealed Lord.

It ought to be noted, however, that experiments have been done to show that children, before they can speak, have moral sensibilities. They have concepts of right and wrong, even in infancy.

So, somehow, Abraham knew and kept God's commands. "I have multiplied your seed as the stars of the heavens and I have given to your seed all these lands; furthermore [lit., *and*], all nations of the earth of blessed [themselves] by your seed. [This is] because Abraham listened to My voice and he kept My charge, My commandments, My statues and My laws." Abraham had an internal guidance system; he had the teaching of his parents; he had the teaching of the patriarchs, going all the way back to the ark.

Finally, Abraham spoke one-on-one with God. These things taken together made Abraham's understanding of and preservation of God's charge, commandments, statutes and laws.

Lesson 295: Gen. 26:5 Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Judgments

Taken from **Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Statutes** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)

The Shortened Doctrine of Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Statutes

1. This entire topic comes from: Genesis 26:4–5 [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham's son] "And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because **Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My Laws**." The problem is, we do not associate these words with Abraham, but with the giving of the Law to Moses. What we will attempt to do is to determine what these various words means and then associate them with Abraham.
2. God spoke to Abraham and Abraham heard what God had to say and he obeyed God's voice. He did not obey God fully at first (he was supposed to leave his family and go all the way to Canaan, but he took his family and moved about ¾^{ths} of the way there. However, after a few years, Abraham believed God and obeyed Him fully in what God required of Abraham.

3. Secondly, Abraham *kept* God's charge, commandments, ordinances and laws. *To keep* is the Qal imperfect of shâmar (רַמָשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which means *to keep, to guard, to watch [over], to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. What Abraham preserved was the first third of the book of Genesis, along with all of the things which God said to him; and possibly the book of Job.
4. The first thing that Abraham was to keep was the ***charge*** of God, which word means: *guard, charge, function, obligation, service, watch; guard, injunction*.
    1) Apart from this passage, the next time this word is used is in association with the observance of the Passover (Ex. 12:6). It is also associated with other ritual (symbolic) observances: the Sabbath (Ex. 16:23); the manna (Ex. 16:32–34); the Tabernacle and the testimony (Num. 1:53), and with cleanness (Lev. 22:9). It is associated with not doing the abominable things which the heathen did in the land (Lev. 18:30).
    2) One interpretation for this passage has been that, the words which follow mish^{e}mereth represent the *responsibility* or *obligation* of Abraham, which he kept.
    3) The second interpretation is, Abraham continued the sacrifices to God, as Adam had done, as Abel had done and as Noah had done. The sacrifices look forward to our Lord's work on the cross on our behalf.
    4) Another obligation which Moses kept was, God told him before Isaac was conceived, that Moses needed to be circumcised, as did all of the males in his compound. Circumcision was a one-time ritual which represents the new life, or life where there previously was no life. This is regeneration, which comes as a result of believing in the Revealed God (in our era, that is Jesus Christ).
    5) God also had Abraham offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice, and Abraham obeyed God, ready to slay his own, uniquely-born son. This foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. See the **Offering of Isaac** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
5. The second thing that Abraham is said to have kept or guarded is the **commandments** of God. This word is the feminine plural of mits^{e}vâh (הָוצִמ) [pronounced *mits^{e}-VAH*], which means, *commandment, prohibition, precept, that which is forbidden, constraint, proscription, countermand*. Strong's #4687 BDB #846. This is nearly always translated *commandment* or *commandments* in the KJV and as *command* or *commands* in Young's. It is most often found as a plural.
    1) Although we do not find this noun except here in Genesis and then in the Law, its verbal cognate is found many places in the book of Genesis. It is the Piel of tsâvâh (הָוִצ) [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]. This is a verb found almost exclusively in the Piel. Strong's #6680 BDB #845.
    2) Regarding the noun translated *commandments:*

(1) This is the word used with the *Ten Commandments* in Ex. 20:6 34:29 Lev. 27:34 Deut. 4:13 5:10, 29 10:4.
(2) These commandments are often associated with life and death. Prov. 4:4 7:1–2
(3) These commandments are often associated with the Jews prospering in the land of Canaan. Ex. 15:26 Deut. 4:40 5:29 6:17ff Deut. 11:8
(4) These commandments are often associated with blessing and cursing. Lev. 25:14ff Psalm 89:31–34 Isa. 48:18
(5) Keeping these commandments was showing love toward God. Deut. 5:10 7:9 Joshua 22:5 Daniel 9:4

3) These appear to be the most important mandates to come from God.
4) Based upon the points above, I would associate the commandments with the **laws of divine establishment** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). It is these laws which are to the benefit of the people in the land, which would be naturally associated with blessing and cursing (cursing when the commandments are not kept).
5) Adhering to the laws of divine establishment result in blessing from God as well as natural blessing, which a nation can expect from following the directives of God.
6) During this era and to the time of Moses, we have a number of emerging countries, and they all seem to have one thing in common—they have a leader who attempts to put together a set of unifying laws which will guide and protect the people of the country. This does not mean that these laws would be carbon copies of each other—particularly those laws developed after the death of the patriarchs. Bear in mind that there is always the distortion of the sin nature of those who formulated the laws.
7) Logically, such laws are also appropriate to us today—particularly commandments #5–10, most of which were probably known and understood by Abraham without having God delineate them. That is, when God said, "You will not steal;" this should not have been a great shock to any of the Israelites. No one objected, saying, "But I thought that stealing was a good thing!" We did not have a variety of societies where some thought stealing was good; others saw it morally neutral; and others saw it as wrong. This, along with the other commandments (#5–10) were generally fundamental to most societies. We have already studied two instances of where two different groups (the Egyptians and the Canaanites) clearly understood the sanctity of marriage (Gen. 12:18–19 20:1–10).
8) We may assume, based upon this verse, that Abraham adhered to these commandments in some form or another. He would have learned these as a young man, likely from his father or grandfather; and he held to these establishment values for all of his life. As we have discussed, these

concepts of right and wrong would have come down from Shem the son of Noah, and his sons and his sons' sons, who were all still alive during the time of Abraham.

6. The third word is chuqqâh (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khoo-KAWH*], which means, *that which is established or defined; statute, ordinance, law*. Strong's #2708 BDB #349. This is the feminine plural found in our passage. Found 106 times in the Bible. It is only found this one time in Genesis and not found at all in Job. The masculine form of this word found more often in the Old Testament: chôq (חֹק) [pronounced *khoke*], and it means, *decree, that which is decreed; statute; boundary, defined limit; an appointed portion of labor, a task*. The key concept here is the setting of a boundary or a limit. Strong's #2706 BDB #349. Sometimes these kinds of words can have very different meanings and sometimes the shadings are lost to us. These seem to be used almost the same number of times. The masculine version is found 126 times. For the points which follow, I will follow out the masculine and feminine occurrences.
   1) We find this word used twice in Job 23:12–14, where Job is speaking about God to his associates: "I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my **portion** of food. But He is unchangeable, and who can turn Him back? What He desires, that He does. For He will complete what He **appoints** for me, and many such things are in His mind." (ESV, capitalized) The concepts of specificity and limitation are found here.
   2) Job uses chôq in a way that we would easily recognize it in Job 28:26–27 When He made a **decree** for the rain, and a way for the flash, the thunderclap, then He saw it, and declared it; He prepared it, and He also searched it out. (Green's literal translation) Job is saying that God designed a set of laws which go along with the falling of rain, which includes lightning and thunder. That is, these were not random events, but they followed a set of laws.
   3) God uses this word when describing the limitations that He placed upon the oceans: "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed **limits** for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?" (Job 38:8–11; ESV)
   4) In these two examples, God is establishing natural law; or what we call today *scientific laws* (which is a misnomer, as *science* did not originate these laws nor does science enforce them).
   5) In short, the key to understanding this masculine version of this word is *limitations and specificity*.
   6) The word chuqqâh (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khoo–KAWH*], which means, *that which is established or defined; statute, ordinance, law*. Strong's #2708 BDB #349.

(1) Chuqqâh is mostly translated *statute, statutes, ordinance, ordinances* in the KJV.

(2) It appears to be associated with much of the ritual found in the Mosaic Law. Ex. 12:14, 17, 43 13:10 27:21 28:43 29:9, Lev. 3:17, Lev. 7:36, Lev. 10:9, Lev. 16:29, 16:31, 16:34 17:7 23:14, Lev. 23:21, 23:31, 41 24:3, Num. 9:14 10:8 15:15 18:23 19:2, 10, 21 27:11 31:21 35:29

(3) For this reason, the word would be best associated with the rituals which Abraham observed—the animal sacrifices which he offered up to God.

(4) The various rituals were very specific in how they were to be performed.

7. The final word is ţôwrah (תּוֹרָה or תּוֹרַת) [pronounced *TOH-rah*], which means, *instruction, doctrine; [human and divine] law, direction, regulations, protocol; custom;* it is transliterated *Torah*. Strong's #8451 and #8452 BDB #435. It is nearly always translated *law, laws*. Gen. 26:5 is the first time that this word occurs in Scripture. God has always had instruction, doctrine and laws for mankind to follow. It is this word which is used to describe the first 5 books of the Bible, which are often called the Torah of Moses.

8. However, up to this point, God has not given an enumeration of His laws and requirements or the consequences for violation of same (with the exception of mankind needed to have a consequence for murdering someone, that consequence being execution—(Gen. 9:5).

1) Like most English words, there are a variety of ways in which this word is used. It can refer to the principle of an over-arching principle from God; as well as to an enumeration of regulations concerning a variety of things, which may be ceremonial or moral.

(1) Therefore, there is the Law of God written on the hearts of men; and this is the concept of right and wrong. Whether these laws would be similar or equivalent is another matter; but there are clearly standards—sometime very nebulous ones—which men have. Law can refer to the overarching principles of right and wrong, known to God, but written on the hearts of men. Rom. 2:14–16 For when 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. (ESV)

(2) It can also stand for the content of all that Moses taught the people, as we find in Deut. 4:44 17:11, 18–19 23:3, 8 27:26 28:58, 61 29:21, 29 30:10 31:9, 11–12, 24, 26 32:46 33:4. Deut. 23:3

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reads: [Moses is giving a command to the people] "And you shall write on them all the Words of this Law when you have crossed over, so that you may go into the land which Jehovah your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah the God of your fathers has promised you." This use of the word tôwrâh has become the most common way that this word is used.

2) In this primary usage, Moses said that this law should be recorded in a number of formats, even by a future king for himself, and it should be both read and taught to the people. Deut. 31:11–12 32:46 33:10

9. In short, Abraham heard the voice of God and he obeyed Him. He also preserved God's charge (rituals and obligations), His commandments (God's prohibitions; those things which are associated with cursing and blessing), His ordinances (rituals and animal sacrifices) and His laws (God's instructions, doctrines and protocol).

10. As a result of what Abraham preserved, we have one of the greatest books in human history, the book of Genesis, within which is the seed of nearly every doctrine that is related to God and man. His son Isaac and his grandson Jacob continued to preserve these words.

The complete doctrine of **Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Statutes** is found here: (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Lesson 296: Genesis 26:1–14 — The Envy of the Philistines

So far, this is what we have studied:

Gen. 26:1–5 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and I will bless you, for I will give all these lands to you and to your offspring, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and I will give to your offspring all these lands. And by your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

This sent us on quite an excursion, determining the meaning of God's words to Isaac about Abraham.

When this takes place actually changes the color of this narrative considerably. The discussion of Abraham makes it sound as if he has died and that God is now dealing with Isaac. That would make Isaac at least 75 years old, which would make Esau and Jacob

at least 15 years old (they will not be in view in this narrative). Isaac is probably older than this.

There is no reason for God to speak to Isaac, if Abraham is still alive—particularly about what God had promised Abraham and about Abraham having obeyed God's voice, etc. Abraham is spoken of in what appears to be the past tense (although there is no *past tense* in the Hebrew, per se).

Abraham will be spoken of as having died when we get to Gen. 26:18. At the end of this narrative, Esau will be said to be 40 years old when he marries. Although we do not have a clear transition from the Gerar narrative to Esau's marriage, this sets up at least the limits of Isaac's age—he must be at least 75 years old but no more than 100 years old, which is when Esau would take a wife.

As an aside, Isaac will live to be 180 (Gen. 35:28). So, his physical appearance at age 100 might be like a 40 or 50 year old today. The same would be true of his younger wife.

Genesis 26:6 And Isaac lived in Gerar.

Instead of moving down to Egypt, during this drought, Isaac moved his family to Gerar. God told Isaac not to move to Egypt, and Isaac obeyed God.

This narrative only focuses on Isaac, Rebekah and Abimelech, the king of Gerar. However, you may recall that Abraham had a very large encampment, so it is reasonable to assume that Isaac, as his heir, has a very large entourage as well, along with a great many sheep.

A Map of Isaac's Journeys. This excellent map is from the Berean Bible Study Group (accessed December 3, 2012). This city is right on the Philistia border, depending upon the era. Therefore, Isaac will be dealing with the Philistines, and he will carry with him some of his father's attitudes about the Philistines. Interestingly enough, we are going to have the 3rd historical narrative about one of the patriarchs being somewhat dishonest about his own wife. Bible critics claim that this are just 3 takes on the same story; but there are

many things in history with eerie similarities (like the assassinations of Lincoln and Kennedy[130]).

Let me add that, Abraham may have been in the habit of speaking about his wife in this way when in heathen territory; and it is not out of the question that Isaac followed in his father's footsteps. Therefore, the similarities of these three historical events is not something which is that remarkable or apocryphal.

What interests me more is, why would God the Holy Spirit include this similar set of events in the book of Genesis?

This does reveal that both men were not perfect. Lying to your host country or host king would be a sin. There is a lack of faith expressed in this as well.

Genesis 26:7 And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister." For he feared to say, "She is my wife; lest the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she was beautiful of form."

This is an interesting blessing that both Abraham and Isaac married extremely beautiful women; and at least one of Jacob's wives was extremely beautiful. Rebekah is perhaps 20 years younger than Isaac, putting her between 55 and 80 years old; and she, at that age, is apparently still very attractive with a good figure (the Bible tells us this). Given the life span of that era, she might be similar to a very attractive woman in her late 30's or early 40's today.

The Philistines would become quite a warlike people, and they fought Israel constantly over various portions of the land (after Israel became a country). However, this was not the case during the time of Abraham and Isaac. They did have their issues, and they were involved in a great many mental attitude sins. So, Isaac was concerned about what they might do—and perhaps Abraham warned him about their ways. But, there was not this great and constant animosity between Abraham, his descendants and the Philistines. However, in the chapters of Genesis, we will see the relationship between them deteriorate.

Genesis 26:8 And when he had been there a long time, it happened that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through the window, and saw; and behold! Isaac was laughing with Rebekah his wife.

This is also interesting—we have an obvious show of affection between Isaac and his wife, not something which we find very often in the Bible. The word found here is the Piel participle of tsâchaq (צָחַק) [pronounced *tsaw-KHAHKH*], which means, *to jest; to make sport of; to toy with; to make a toy of; to play; to laugh with, to reveal intimacy with shared humor*. This verb is not necessarily one of sexual intimacy, although many Bible

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[130] Some of these similarities are trivial; and a couple of them are incorrect. However, the simple fact is, there can be situations which are similar in a person's lifetime.

translations take it in that way. This word is used in Ex. 32:6, which may have a sexual connotation (And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to **play**. —ESV). In the Qal stem, this verb usually means *to laugh;* however, the Piel stem is intensive, and it means *to mock, to sport, to entertain,* and possibly *to laughingly enjoy sexual intimacy with*. Strong's #6711 BDB #850. The final couple definitions are based upon this use in Gen. 26:8 Ex. 32:6. Interestingly enough, this is the verb upon which Isaac's name is based. So Isaac and Rebecca were *Isaac-ing* together.

In any case, what Abimelech observes suggests a relationship between Isaac and Rebekah which was intimate beyond being brother and sister.

Genesis 26:9 And Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Listen! She surely is your wife. And why did you say, She is my sister?" And Isaac said to him, "Because I thought that I might die because of her."

Dishonesty, in the Bible, is a serious transgression (unless it is counterinsurgency, and then lying is allowed). Isaac had prejudged his hosts as being heathenistic enough to kill him and take his wife. Here is the big problem with Isaac's theory: God has promised his father, Abraham, a great posterity. Furthermore, God promised Isaac: "Don't go down to Egypt [because of the drought]; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you [that is, go to Gerar]. Remain in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father." So, this incident reveals an underlying distrust by Isaac in the promises of God. Isaac has remained in the land, as God required of him. Therefore, Isaac should have no reason to fear.

Genesis 26:10 And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."

Abimelech reveals that he has a very clear sense of right and wrong. In the ancient world, unlike today, even heathen understood the importance of marriage and fidelity. Knowing that this woman was Isaac's wife would have automatically made her off limits to the males of that city. This indicates that this place was not nearly as heathenistic as Isaac believed it to be. Abimelech also believed that there would possibly be retribution brought upon them, had any of them laid with Rebekah. What this suggests is, there was a firm morality in Gerar—some of it based upon a fear of God—but there has been some loosening up of sexual mores. Abimelech is acknowledging here both respect for marriage and a disdain for lying, but he also leaves open the idea of a sexual union outside of marriage (which might even include rape).

Obviously, Rachel would not have personally consented to a sexual relationship outside of her marriage, whether they lied about their marriage or not. So, if one of the people had relations with her, that would have been forced.

In any case, Abimelech being concerned about guilt being brought upon the city, suggests that these people feared God as well. He understood then—better than people do today—that the immoral acts of a society can have consequences for that society. In other words, he understood that God does judge and that He does discipline cities and nations as a whole. And he fully understood that taking the wife of a man of God could be disastrous.

Genesis 26:11 And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He that touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death."

Abimelech makes it known that Isaac is married to Rebekah and that they are not to be bothered. This tells us that the Philistines not only had a healthy respect for marriage, but they also knew about the Jews and the God of the Jews (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not necessarily called *Jews* at this time). Abimelech knew that they did not want to be judged by the God of Abraham and Isaac.

Abraham had been in the land for 25 years and had Isaac; and Isaac was 75 or older at this time. So, for at least a period of 100 years, Abraham and/or Isaac have been in the land; and the Philistines were well aware of them and their God.

This tells us that many of the heathen in the land were moral and feared God. However, they were not above covetousness. This is the chink in their armor.

Genesis 26:12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold. And Jehovah blessed him.

After Isaac gets all of this straightened out, then God blesses him. Once the deception is done and over with, God multiplies Isaac's crops.

People do not understand other people. For instance, it is in the DNA of the Koch brothers or of Donald Trump to take risks and to make money. It is what they do, and they make decisions which are compatible with increasing their own wealth. It has nothing to do with greed; it is simply what they do.

I know that the Koch brothers give a great deal of their wealth away, and I would guess that the same thing is true of Donald Trump; but making large sums of money is partially in their DNA and it is partially the blessing of God. Being jealous of their wealth is a sin and a waste of time. Trying to take away their wealth by force is going to result in them figuring out a way to keep their wealth. This is going to be true of any large corporation or of any wealthy individual. In most cases, when these men give away money to charities, they will look for charities which are well run and compatible with their own norms and standards. None of them give money as charity to the government. Even rich liberals do not do that.

When the government attempts to confiscate their money through excessive taxation, rich and successful men will react to that like they react to any business problem; and if it

requires them to move, they will do that as well. They will make smart, business decisions. They weigh their options and act accordingly.

In this case, Isaac has grown up in this business of farming and livestock; and, on top of that, God blesses him tremendously. Being jealous of his prosperity does not help anyone or anything. This is why covetousness (*feeling or showing a very strong desire for something that you do not have and especially for something that belongs to someone else*) is a sin.

Genesis 26:13 And the man [Isaac] became great. And he went forward and grew until he grew very great.

Take a look back at Gen. 24:34–35 "I am Abraham's servant," he said. "The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become rich. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys." God is not stingy with His blessings. Psalm 112:1–6 Hallelujah! Happy is the man who fears the LORD, taking great delight in His commandments. **His descendants will be powerful in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever**. Light shines in the darkness for the upright. He is gracious, compassionate, and righteous. Good will come to a man who lends generously and conducts his business fairly. He will never be shaken. The righteous will be remembered forever. God blesses His Own. The examples given are material blessings, and there are all kinds of blessings in life besides material blessings.

This does not mean that God always blesses growing believers with material blessings. In this life, there are a myriad of categories of blessings. In the United States, although most people do not realize this, we have been greatly blessed materially. The lifestyle of the average person in the United States is the greatest lifestyle known to mankind, with our balance of material blessings and freedom.

It is at this point in the narrative where we find out what will destroy the Philistine people:

Genesis 26:14 And he had possession of flocks and possession of herds, and many servants. And the Philistines envied him.

Lesson 297: Genesis 26:1–17 The Envy of the Philistines Causes Isaac to Depart

So far, this is what we have studied:

Gen. 26:1–5 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and I will bless you, for I will give all these lands to you and to your offspring, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and I will give to

your offspring all these lands. And by your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

Note that, although God is making these promises to Isaac, they are based upon what Abraham has done. God does not tell Isaac that *he obeyed His voice*. Abraham was a great believer; Isaac, not so much.

Genesis 26:6–13 And Isaac lived in Gerar. And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister." For he feared to say, "She is my wife; lest the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she was beautiful of form." And when he had been there a long time, it happened that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through the window, and saw; and behold! Isaac was laughing with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Listen! She surely is your wife. And why did you say, She is my sister?" And Isaac said to him, "Because I thought that I might die because of her." And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He that touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death." Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold. And Jehovah blessed him. And the man [Isaac] became great. And he went forward and grew until he grew very great.

Isaac lied to his gracious host about Rebekah. She was not his sister but his wife; and he explained that he was worried that the Philistines would take her and kill him. However, once Isaac was there, and the truth was out, then God blessed Isaac greatly. Even though the text says that Isaac's wealth increased a hundredfold, that does not mean that his wealth increased exactly (or even approximately) by a factor of 100. The Bible does use hyperbole and the Bible uses a variety of figures of speech. However, he is prospered to such a great degree that all of his Philistine neighbors notice it.

Notice that Isaac being blessed did not mean that God took away from the Philistines. There is not this big pie and Isaac found himself with most of it; the Philistines now having less of it. The pie grew larger; and Isaac reaped a hundredfold; and, because Isaac was among the Philistines, they received greater blessings as well. However, they were not prospered a hundredfold, so, even though their wealth increased, it did not increase as quickly or as dramatically as Isaac's wealth. By comparison, the Philistines believed that they got the short end of the stick.

It is as if you live in a nice house, and you could afford to re-do your bathroom and kitchen; but then, right next door, your neighbor adds a second story to his house—by comparison, you don't feel like you are doing very well.

Genesis 26:14 And he had possession of flocks and possession of herds, and many servants. And the Philistines envied him.

Here is the second place where problems with the Philistines are observed. The 99% were jealous of Isaac, who had become a member of the 1% (using the liberal vernacular of today). This was not necessarily all Philistines; but it was apparently a very large percentage of them.

Just like his father Abraham before him, God blessed Isaac with great material blessings. Now, note the mental attitude sin: some of the Philistines envied Isaac. This is one of the greatest things wrong with the liberals of today. They envy those who are successful and rich. They treat such people as though they have cheated others to become successful (except for sports stars and movie and television people and liberal politicians—most liberals do not mind that they are rich). However, if you are a liberal, and you both lust after material things and, at the same time, despise the rich, you need to confess those sins to God—possibly every minute that they pop up. That is a violation of the 10th commandment. Even though we are not under the Law, inordinate desire for what someone else has is a sin (Rom. 7:7). If you think money ought to be taken from the rich so that, you can have free or less expensive welfare; or free food for your children, or whatever, that is envy.

There are always rich people and there are always people who are richer than you. In *every* society there are people who are poor and people who make a million times what you do. It is a fact of life. Legally taking their wealth and spreading it around does not necessarily improve your lot or the lot of those to whom the wealth is spread.

Why is Isaac wealthy? God prospered him. That is what the text actually says. And God doesn't even prosper him because he is great; God prospers Isaac because Abraham was great.

Genesis 26:15 For all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them up and filled them with earth.

Some Philistines simply hated the rich. They were jealous of their success. Just like liberals today, they believed that if they gave the rich a hard time and even drove them away, that this would somehow make their own lives better. If they can take away from the rich in some way or another, they view that as a good thing; as if this were somehow a blow for the working people.

Many evil philosophies are based upon stirring up jealousy or hatred for certain groups of people. Communist revolutions are often against the successful professionals and intellectuals; liberalism has this hatred for the 1%, who, even if they are paying the lion's share of the taxes, it is still not enough (it will never be enough). Anytime a movement gins up hatred against successful people, you know that movement is evil.

Today, there are millions of liberals who believe that somehow, CEO's and business owners have cheated them and have ruined their lives, even though, most of the time, they have a job and are making a living because of these CEO's and other business moguls. So they fight to have them taxed more and to have their corporations taxed more, thinking

that this will somehow make their own lives better. Taxing a rich man exorbitantly is not a valid method of making your life better. In fact, what happens in some countries is, these rich people just move away. This has happened in both France and England. Often in the United States, rich people and corporations often park their money overseas, so that it is not taxed by the extraordinarily high tax rates in the United States. These kinds of men understand business and investment. They know it is more prudent to hold this money as cash elsewhere and, when a better business climate opens up in the United States, then they can use this money to make more money. Liberals do not understand that some people are very good at making money; they are very good at knowing when and where to invest for the greatest income and for the greatest growth. Such businessmen also know when it is right to park their money, and wait for investment opportunities. When a country moves toward socialism, these businessmen will simply sit on their money, because you cannot make money in a socialist system (except through cronyism). The last thing a rich person wants to do is see the profits which he has legitimately earned get flushed down the government toilet (government is famous for its waste, fraud and abuse). It is completely against their nature to see the money they earned legitimately wasted away.

When there are allowable ways to make money (the government chooses not to overly tax this or that business; or the government pours money into the stock market), the rich will take the cue to make money that way. The less the government tries to regulate the economy, the more business opportunities there are. This does not mean that we ought to operate without any laws—we need laws because people have sin natures. However, the government does not need to be involved in the minute details of the business world.

For instance, my area of expertise for many years was selling real estate. Our state and local government, as well as the federal government should have standards, but they ought to work in this way. They set the standards—possibly in several areas—and a homebuilder can choose to conform to those standards or not. Private inspectors could confirm that these standards are being held to. I would prefer state and county standards, so that a builder could advertise, “My homes conform to Texas and Harris County standards” or “These homes meet or exceed all Texas and Harris County standards.” Private inspectors would confirm this and they would contact Texas and Harris County if such a home failed to meet these standards. We simply need the standards; we do not need an army of bureaucrats to make the standards and to enforce the standards.

About the only thing that we lack is the cognizance of the buying public that all houses should be inspected; including new ones. Many a new home owner has had to argue with his builder for months after moving into his house. A private inspector lessens the likelihood of that.

Furthermore, this is in conformity with the Mosaic Law; where one building code was given, and no specific punishment was given for violating that code.

4000 years ago, the Bible tells us that it is a bad idea to be jealous of those whom God has blessed. The Philistines, because of their envy, would drive Isaac and his prosperity away; and they, as a society, would be the worse for it.

This is an easy way to tell if this or that organization is in line with the Bible. If they proclaim envy of the rich, they are anti-Biblical.

Genesis 26:14–15 And he had possession of flocks and possession of herds, and many servants. And the Philistines envied him. For all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them up and filled them with earth.

The Philistines would have enjoyed great blessings by association with Isaac; and he would have continued to be a boon for their economy. Instead, their envy and short-sightedness drives him away. Do you see how the Bible is relevant to today?

Isaac was wealthy because God prospered him. He probably did a lot of business with the Philistines, as having wealth requires maintenance. He may have hired some Philistines to work for him. But, what bothered the Philistines is, by comparison, Isaac appeared to be much wealthier; and he appeared to be getting wealthy at a much greater rate.

The Philistines do exactly the wrong things in dealing with Isaac's prosperity. Because he is prosperous, they attempt to fill up his wells with earth. All that is done is based upon envy and vindictiveness; and no good action proceeds from mental attitude sins.

This also tells us about the changing attitudes among the Philistines. Remember when Abraham did this, that things were all straightened out and he continued to live in that general area. However, this is no longer the case. With Isaac, those who are jealous of his wealth are giving him a hard time and trying to drive him away. They somehow believe that lessening Isaac's wealth is a good thing, that driving him away is a good thing, and that will somehow improve their own lives. Devising economic policies based upon jealousy is a foolish approach to life, and attitudes like that will bring down the economy of any society.

There is a radio personality who made millions of dollars and paid millions in taxes when he lived in New York. He got soaked for so much in taxes that he finally moved; and the governor commented, "If I'd have known that Limbaugh would leave, I would have raised taxes even sooner." This sort of thing is absolutely silly. The New York government enjoyed great revenues from his taxes, but kept raising them until he just moved away. New York did the same thing to Sean Hannity. Driving rich people away does not make your life better, which is one of the points being made in this narrative.

Genesis 26:16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are mightier than we are."

In this chapter, it appears that Abimelech is a reasonable leader. However, here he appears to be pushed by the people into a course of action which is not right. It is likely that Abimelech personally did not want to get rid of Isaac, and there will be clues in this narrative which support that.

Even Abimelech, who was willing to forgive Isaac for his dishonesty, was pressured by the people, apparently, to take an anti-Isaac stance. So he asks Isaac to leave. Isaac went along with their request. Wherever Isaac goes, so goes all of this blessing by association. If God is blessing Isaac, then this blessing would overflow to those around him.

We know Abimelech's heart and thinking. We already know from the previous paragraphs that Abimelech respected Isaac and had a good relationship with him. However, it is apparent that his people have become jealous of Isaac's wealth.

One of the things that we do not grasp is, wealth is a very much a matter of what people around you have. In that era, Isaac was considered to be so wealthy that the people hated him and were jealous of him. Now, for the average American today, Isaac's lifestyle would seem quite primitive and rugged. I don't know if he lives here in a house or a tent, but he does oversee his own wealth; and he has a number of people who are his slaves or employees. But his actual lifestyle compared to the average poor American today, would be deplorable. Compared to the Philistines around him, his life seems incredible to them; compared to what we are used to and take for granted, his life is not enviable in the least.

My point is, wealth is very relative. Many of the people of Gerar are jealous of Isaac's wealth—they believe that he is too wealthy—and they want him gone because of it. However, to the average American today, Isaac's lifestyle would seem to be very rugged and difficult.

Much of this depends upon your mental attitude. You may drive vehicles which are 10 years old and live in a 2000 sq. ft. house. Now if all of your neighbors drive vehicles that are 15 years old and live in a 1500 sq. ft. house, you might feel blessed and successful; but if all your neighbors drive cars that are 3 years or newer and their houses are typically 3000 sq. ft., then you may feel as if God is holding out on you.

I know many liberals who feel as if they and others are messed over by the capitalist system and that they believe that their lives are crap compared to this or that executive; and that these business executives need to cut loose of more of their profits and salary to make things fair. However, throughout the world, the average salary is probably closer to $1–5/day. What these same liberals would *never* agree to is to see their own lifestyle reduced in order to make things more equal worldwide. They don't mind taking some CEO's money and spreading that around; but they don't want their money taken from them and spread around. They are very concerned about the wealth of those above them and they think that wealth should be reduced in order to equal things out, but reducing their own wealth? That's not what they signed up for. If everyone in the world was suddenly made equal in wealth, using today's resources, every liberal in America would be living on

a tenth or even a fiftieth of the income they are used to having. All of a sudden, their love of internationalism and wealth equality would end.

The average liberal thinks that if he could snap his fingers and equal out the wealth in the world, that would be a good thing. Most of them have no idea what a reduction that would be in their own personal wealth and lifestyle. Just as quickly as they snapped their fingers, they would be kicking their heels together, wishing that they were back in Kansas.

Isaac complies with his host, Abimelech, and leaves the immediate area. I can guarantee you that many of the jealous liberal Philistines rejoiced on that day. But Isaac will take with him the overflowing blessings of God.

Genesis 26:17 And Isaac departed from there, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and he lived there.

Lessons 298–299: Gen. 26:12–22 The Envy of the Philistines/Mental Attitude Sins

So far, this is what we have studied:

Genesis 26:12–16 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. (Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

Isaac was living in Gerar, which was a Philistine community. He moved there because of a drought. Furthermore, he had lied about his wife; however, that was now straightened out. Once Isaac came clean with his host-king, then God blessed him greatly.

However, his blessing concerned many of the Philistines. They continued to stop up his wells and ask for him to be sent out of their country.

Genesis 26:17 And Isaac departed from there, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and he lived there.

Because of Abimelech's request, Isaac moved away to the nearest valley.

Genesis 26:18 And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham. And he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

One of the first things a people has to do when they choose a place to live is establish a well. Nothing can be done until there is a regular source of water. This is something that we in the United States simply take for granted. We can open up our taps and drink some

of the freshest, purest water in the world. If we want to water our lawns or our plants, or take a shower; we think nothing of it. But this would have been a luxury to Isaac and his family beyond their imagination; and this is a luxury that a majority of people in the world lack. When visiting most countries, we are warned against drinking their water or even using their ice cubes. That is because in most countries, even where the water is available on tap, it is not clean enough to drink.

Again—wealth is a very relative concept. People in America, including those who complain that they have been shafted, that the rich have somehow stolen away their money and their future—they are far better off in the United States than Isaac ever was. And yet, the Philistines were jealous of Isaac's wealth. If anyone in the United States had to live like Isaac lives, they would wail and moan to anyone who would listen to them—but to the Philistines, Isaac was too wealthy and too successful.

The Philistines had become a very jealous people. Apparently, none of them were going to live out on that land, but they still took the time to stop up the wells that Abraham had dug. This is how irrational their jealousy made them. These Philistines live near this valley, but not near enough to use the wells. However, some of them are so angry and jealous, that they filled in these wells.

This may seem crazy to you, but it is not. That is the power mental attitude sins have over us. For example, present-day Palestinians took over some land in agreement with Israel, and on that land was a large hydroponic greenhouse—the Palestinians destroyed it, apparently because it had Jewish cooties. Hatred does not produce rational behavior. At the time that I am writing, people have been firing off missiles into Israel from the Gaza strip, and Israel finally got tired of it, and has mounted an offensive against them. This is the natural outgrowth of firing these missiles every day; but hatred does not produce rational behavior.

What is the plan of the Palestinians? To locate their missile launching close to schools, hospitals, residential areas, so that, when there is retaliation, innocent Palestinians will die in the retaliation; and then they can feign great outrage. As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "The difference between us, we are using missile defense to protect our civilians, and they're using their civilians to protect their missiles." For the militant Palestinians, because of their hatred for Jews, a good outcome is for Israel to kill some innocent civilians, because that can be used as propaganda.

The Israeli offensive has destroyed dozens of homes and has killed hundreds of people; and what will happen as soon as there is a cease fire or the fighting comes to an end? Islamists will start firing rockets from the Gaza strip and begin the entire process all over again. Hatred does not produce rational behavior.

People who pose as experts often say, "Well, this animosity goes back hundreds of years; so there is little that can be done to stop it." That is 100% wrong. Here's why, every generation is a new generation. If they are taught from a young age to hate, they will hate the Jews with the same irrational hatred of their parents. This is something which one

generation teaches the next generation. Various incidents which span over a period of hundreds of years are *used* to justify hatred and barbaric behavior, but it is wrong to think that these incidents are the source of this animosity. The source of this behavior is mental attitude sins; and these mental attitude sins are taught by one generation to the next generation. Hatred for Jews is a learned; it is not just a natural outgrowth.

How do we know this? The holocaust. There are few things as evil as the holocaust, where principally German soldiers rounded up Jewish citizens and put them into concentration camps, and them brutalized them in unspeakable ways. If historic incidents cause unchangeable animosity, then there ought to be an ongoing feud between Jews and Germans. There is not even the slightest question about the brutality of the concentration camps; furthermore, the reality of these camps is kept alive throughout the world with holocaust museums. So, it is not as if the Jews have simply forgotten that these incidents took place. But, the stark difference is, the Jews are not teaching their children hatred for Germans. They are not filling the souls of their children up with mental attitude sins.

Apropos to the topic that we are studying is the concept of mental attitude sins. This leads us to...

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Mental Attitude Sins

1. Definition and description
   1) Most of the believer's sinning takes place in the mental attitude. These mental attitude sins include arrogance, pride, jealousy, implacability, bitterness, vindictiveness, inordinate ambition and inordinate competition, all motivational sins, and sinful thoughts such as fear, guilt, worry, anger, judging, and hatred.
   2) The Hebrew verb shâgaʿ (שָׁגָע) [pronounced *shaw-GAHĢ*] means *to be insane, to be psychotic*. Strong's #7696 BDB #993. As Deuteronomy 28:34 says to those believers who are negative, And you shall be driven mad by the sight of what you see. The Hebrew noun shiggâʿôwn (שִׁגָּעוֹן) [pronounced *shig-gaw-ĢYONE*], which refers to *a deceived mental attitude,* was originally used by Moses to describe the Exodus generation. Shiggâʿôwn (שִׁגָּעוֹן) [pronounced *shig-gaw-ĢYONE*] took over the lives of these Jewish believers, the psychotic generation. Deuteronomy 28:28 uses shiggâʿôwn (שִׁגָּעוֹן) [pronounced *shig-gaw-ĢYONE*] when it says to those believers who are negative toward doctrine: The Lord will afflict you with [shiggâʿôwn] madness and with blindness [blackout of the soul] and with confusion of heart [split personality]. The noun and verb are used to describe what happened to Israel when they went negative to doctrine. The inside pressure of stress in the soul combined with the functions of the sin nature to destroy the spiritual life of these believers in the face of the greatest Bible teaching ever to exist in the Old Testament. Moses observed this and warned future generations of Israel.
2. Arrogance
   1) Arrogance is the antithesis of grace; arrogance is total blindness to the

grace of God. It is synonymous with vanity, which is empty pride in regard to one's person, attainments, or possessions coupled with an excessive desire to be noticed, a lust for attention, lust for approval or praise from others.

2) Arrogance deceives its victim. Jeremiah 49:16 As for the terror of you, the arrogance of your heart has deceived you. Arrogance brings dishonor in your life. Proverbs 11:2 When arrogance comes, then comes dishonor. Arrogance causes self-destruction. Proverbs 16:18 Arrogance precedes destruction, and before a fall there is a lifestyle of arrogance.

3. Pride

1) Pride involves inordinate self-esteem, conceit and a pre-occupation with self, as well as a rejection of authority. Arrogance, pride, and conceit are the original sins of the greatest genius creature of all time. We call him Satan or the devil but his original name was *Lucifer, son of the morning*. Hêylêl (הֵילֵל) [pronounced *hay-LAYL*], means *shining one; morning star; Lucifer*. Strong's #1966 BDB #237. He was the first creature to enter into this sin of pride, motivating him to rebel against God. Pride is the original sin found in the fallen angels in the pre-historic angelic conflict and pride motivated the fallen angels to rebel as well. Pride motivated the woman in the garden to sin.

2) Proverbs 8:13 The respect for the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate.

3) Proverbs 16:5 Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

4. Jealousy

1) Jealousy is a very serious mental attitude sin, causing a self-destructive mental attitude which involves a system of thinking from the cosmic system (the cosmic system is how the world thinks). Jealousy, which includes pride and arrogance, is the strongest of all the mental attitude sins and is the other side of the coin from pride.

2) James 3:14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your right lobes, do not be arrogant and lie against the truth.

3) Jealousy is older than the human race, existing in eternity past when Lucifer, the son of the morning, became jealous of God. Jealousy surfaced in the human race when Cain became jealous of his brother, Abel. This motivated Cain to murder Abel.

4) Scripture describes jealousy as:

(1) Cruel. Song of Solomon 8:6 Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD.

(2) Filled with anger and revenge. Proverbs 6:34 For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

(3) Frustrating. Proverbs 27:34 A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, but the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them. Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?

(4) A form of human viewpoint wisdom in James 3:15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. We see that today in the propaganda of the 99% versus the 1%. This is seen as wise today by liberals to oppose the 1%.

(5) Jealousy is always creating instability and disorder in the life of the believer. James 3:16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist there is disorder and every evil thing.

(6) Jealousy is self-destructive. Job 5:2 For anger slays the foolish man and jealousy kills the simple.

(7) Jealousy will actually negatively impact your health. Proverbs 14:30 A tranquil heart is life to the body, but jealousy is rottenness to the bones.

5) Jealousy is so strong that carrying a log across your shoulders while carrying a boulder under your arms is nothing compared to the burden of putting up with a fool as in Proverbs 27:3 A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, but the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them. The "stone" in this passage is overt jealousy and anger; the "sand" is subtle jealousy. Proverbs 27:4 Wrath is fierce; and anger is a flood; but who can stand before jealousy. So great was the sin of jealousy in Israel that a special offering was made for it (Num. 5:11–31).

6) It is very difficult for the believer to get over jealousy. Jealousy invariably is a symptom of neurotic insecurity. However, with rebound and application of doctrine and resumption in the pre-designed plan of God, the believer can be immediately back on the road to recovery. Only the believer himself can allow another person to make him jealous.

5. Implacability

1) Implacability is characterized by one who is impossible to please or satisfy. This takes root in the mental attitude of the soul where the person has no appreciation for life. Hell has an insatiable appetite, and lust just never quits. Proverbs 27:20 Death and hell are never satisfied, Nor are the eyes of an implacable person ever satisfied.

2) The growing believer's life should be overflowing with appreciation, especially appreciation for all that God has done for him. Many Christians yearn for more "things" yet do not appreciate what they already possess. They are so caught up in their destination that they forget to enjoy the journey; and, above all, do not have gratitude for the graciousness and the love of people that they meet along the way. It is futile for the believer to crave more things in life if he cannot enjoy and appreciate what he has in the present. It would be better to appreciate things that one cannot have than to have things that one is not able to appreciate. The apostle Paul says one of the signs of the last days is the fact that people would be ungrateful. 2Timothy 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy.

3) Implacable people refuse to appreciate. Appreciation of life itself,

becoming suddenly aware of the miracle of being alive, on this planet, can turn what we call ordinary life into a miracle.

6. Bitterness
   1) Bitterness is manifested in every believer who does not have an ongoing, experiential personal relationship with God. They eventually become a walking bombshell ready to explode at any moment and the trigger or the button which is pushed is the sin of bitterness. The believer who allows bitterness to cause the explosion, either inwardly or overtly, hurts his own life. This is called self-induced misery. Harboring bitterness produces a very serious spiritual problem, a problem which is not correctable apart from personal love for God and impersonal unconditional love for all mankind.
   2) Bitter people are caustic or sarcastic. They have shigaion—pain in the mind. Bitterness is severity of temper, biting sarcasm, a painful inward affliction, and a deep distress of mind that defiles others as well as self. Deuteronomy 28:34 says to those believers who are negative, You shall be driven mad [again shigaon] by the sight of what you see. Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.
   3) Being rejected is often the reason for bitterness in the lives of believers, especially in marriage according to Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.
   4) Bitterness lives and resides in the mind. Proverbs 14:10 The heart [mind, right lobe] knows its own bitterness, and a stranger does not share its joy.
   5) Bitterness in believers is so obvious that even strangers avoid them. Why? Because bitterness produces a complaining attitude. Complaining is simply an outward effect of an inward sin. The person who shuns the bitter moments of friends will be an outsider at their celebrations. Job 7:11 "Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul." Job 10:1 "I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul."
   6) Bitterness produces misery. Psalm 73:21-22, When my heart was filled with bitterness, and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like an animal before you. Hence the phrase, "those people are like animals."
   7) Most of you have heard the phrase, "Hell hath no fury like a woman's scorn." David taught his son Solomon the same thing in Proverbs 5:3-4 For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and smoother than oil is her speech; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Later on Solomon would write in Ecclesiastes 7:26 And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape

from her, but the sinner will be captured by her.

7. Vindictiveness, which is often a desire for vengeance.
   1) Vindictiveness is the mental attitude that desires retaliation for wrongs, real or imagined. In this carnal state, the believer becomes obsessed with seeking revenge, resulting in the desire to hurt, to be spiteful, and to try to inflict suffering or punishment as retribution for this real or imagined evil or injury. This type of person is ugly to be around because even his countenance testifies against him. Cyril Connolly said: *In the sex war, thoughtlessness is the weapon of the male, vindictiveness of the female*.
   2) Vindictiveness is also accompanied by jealousy. Proverbs 6:34 For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
   3) In fellowship, the believer can leave the problem in the high court of heaven, as in Hebrews 10:30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."
8. Inordinate ambition and inordinate competition
   1) Inordinate ambition and inordinate competition is also a mental attitude sin. Ambition and competition in life is legitimate. However, when the believer becomes obsessed with competing and comparing self with others it becomes sin. 2Corinthians 10:12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. The same verse in the Living Bible reads: Their trouble is that they are only comparing themselves with each other and measuring themselves against their own little ideas. What stupidity!
   2) This is the sin that the Lord weighs in Proverbs 16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives. Mental attitude sins are very difficult for men to quantify; but God is able to do that. 1Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, [but wait] until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of [men's] hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.
   3) The apostle Paul even tells us that if we do something great but with the wrong motives it is absolutely useless. 1Corinthians 15:32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me?
   4) We are warned about pastors or men in the position of pastors who do not have the gift, but assume this position from the wrong motivation. Philippians 1:17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. You can be a teacher of the Bible and have wrong motives.
9. Fear
   1) A whole system of sins, fear includes worry, anxiety, insecurity, all incapacitate doctrinal application, and therefore cause us to be inable to use the problem solving devices. Fear is an emotional sin and it torments

the lives of others. 1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

2) For the believer who lives in a state of fear, the fear increases like a disease. As the cancer of fear increases, that individual becomes intimidated by life.

10. Worry

1) Worry is soulish torment or anxiety regarding anything in life. It is a disquieting and painful state of mind involving undue concern over something in life. Worried people anticipate the worst, and so worry becomes apprehension or anticipation of danger, misfortune, trouble, or uncertainty.

2) Worry is a state of restlessness and agitation, producing mental disturbance, uneasiness, foreboding, anxiety, and painful uncertainty.

3) Worry is a destroyer of the soul. If unchecked, it results in mental illness. Worry in the mind causes shock to the body. Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.

4) People worry about sin which causes guilt. Psalm 38:18 For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin.

5) And worry is a sin, therefore, we are ordered to stop worrying. Romans 14:23 Whatever is not from faith is sin. Luke 12:29 "And do not seek what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and do not keep worrying."

6) These mental attitude sins are very subtle, because they blaspheme the character of God and say in effect that God is not capable of taking care of you.

11. Guilt

1) Guilt can be a devastating thing if it's not handled properly. Satan accuses God's people to try to make them feel guilty so that they hide from God and separate themselves from Him. Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. Genesis 3:7-10 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

2) In the Christian life all have failed in some facet of life and must move on with the spiritual life through rebound (the naming of one's sins to God). The believer cannot be distracted by past failures, except to learn from them, not to blame others for them. The spiritual life instructs the believer

to forget the past and move toward the high ground of spiritual maturity. Past failures must never become present handicaps.

3) All believers must learn how to handle their past including that great villain called guilt. The essential element for living in freedom from guilt is understanding grace. If the believer does not realize that God's justice and righteousness are completely satisfied and that his relationship with Him is based upon the accomplishments of the cross, then guilt will torment him until it drives him from the presence of the Lord.

12. Anger

1) Anger is expressed in antagonism, hatred, exasperation, resentment, and irrationality. It can be mental or emotional or both. Anger motivates jealousy and cruelty. Prov. 27:4 Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy? A person can't be angry without being cruel and unfair.

2) Anger is related to stupidity. Ecclesiastes 7:9 Do not be hasty to be angry in your right lobe; for anger resides in the bosom of fools.

3) Anger results in self-induced misery. Proverbs 22:8 He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury will perish.

13. Judging

1) Judging is a mental attitude sin as well as a verbal sin. Matthew 7:1–3 is the practical application to the believer's life. "Judge not, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you again."

2) Like almost everything from the Bible, this has been distorted by liberalism. This does not mean that you cannot recognize and, when necessary, shun some sins and behaviors. Homosexual acts are wrong, and believing this is *not* judging. Judging is assigning sin to someone who may or may not have committed that sin.

14. Hatred

1) Hatred is self-punishment, the coward's revenge for being intimidated, madness of the heart, the anger of the weak. Hatred does more harm to the believer who harbors it than to the object of his hatred.
   (1) Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it.
   (2) Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it.
   (3) Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it.

2) 1John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar.

3) The believer who is operating in the pre-designed plan of God is humble and does not waste time hating anyone. True humility manifests itself by the avoidance of hatred. As in 1 John 4:20, the mental attitude sin of hatred indicates that the believer does not love God. Life is too short to hate anyone!

4) Having murder in one's heart for someone else is a form of hatred. 1John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Mental Attitude Sins

that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

For a more complete **Doctrine of Mental Attitude Sins** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

From http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=358 accessed July 16, 2014. This doctrine ultimately was developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr. and much of this is probably directly quoted from his teaching.

Isaac continues to move further and further away from Gerar.

Genesis 26:19 And Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found there a well of flowing water.

Isaac parked himself over a great underground river and tapped into this river. In that era, based upon what the Bible record is, the water was much easier to tap and was much closer to the surface than it is today. All of this is in line with the idea of a recent flood and Canaan being a land flowing with milk and honey in this era.

Given the entire arc of the narrative of Genesis and Exodus, it is clear that, at one time, the Palestine area was very well-watered, as was much of the Middle East. Now, that is obviously no longer the case. The reason for most of the Middle East being a desert is the character of the people and their choice to worship a false god (Allah). Enough people in the east persecuted Christians and Jews; and they are judged for doing this.

Genesis 26:20 And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours. And he called the name of the well Contention, because they strove with him.

They are in the valley of Gerar, after all; so the Philistines decided to argue with him about the ownership of the well, even though Isaac moved away from the city in accordance with the wishes of Abimelech and dug the well himself. Furthermore, any of these Philistines could have dug their own wells.

Do you see just how much the attitude of the Philistines has changed in just one generation? By the time we get to the era of David, the Philistines will be constantly at war with Israel. The modern-day Palestinians are probably not genetically related to the Philistines; but they are philosophically related to the Philistines of old.

Genesis 26:21 And they dug another well, and they strove for that also. And he called the name of it Opposition.

What this is all about is, we have gone from the Philistines having a rather congenial relationship with Abraham to them having a relationship of personal animosity toward Isaac. It is not that Abraham was a nice guy and Isaac was not; it was a change of generations and their relationship with Abraham's God had changed. There were believers among the Philistines in Abraham's God before. There are fewer believers, apparently,

in Isaac's God. This is the next generation of Philistines, so that we are observing their downward spiral.

This does not bode well for the Philistines in this area. Their attitude toward Isaac reveals their movement away from Isaac's God.

If they were smart, they would have done everything possible to make their relationship with Isaac a good one, because his blessings would overflow to them. Their hatred and jealousy overruled good sense.

What is happening today in the Palestinian occupied territories is simple: they are filled with mental attitude sins toward the Jews. Therefore, we should not expect their actions to be rational. They act on the basis of hatred; and the fact that what they do results in hundreds of their own people being killed—and yet, they will do exactly the same thing tomorrow.

Genesis 26:22 And he moved from there, and dug another well, and they did not strive for that. And he called the name of it Broad Places. And he said, For now Jehovah has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land.

Apparently, each time, Isaac moved further away, until he had gone far enough where the men of Gerar would no longer argue about ownership with him. He had room there to expand. However, as he moved further and further away from them, he took with him the blessings of God.

Lesson 300: Genesis 26:12–28 — Abimelech Reconciles with Isaac

So far, this is what we have studied:

Genesis 26:12–16 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. (Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

The Philistines had mental attitude sins toward Isaac and his prosperity. This was the cause of the inability of the Philistines to get along with Isaac. We also studied how blaming Israel and Palestine on a centuries long conflict misses the mark. Palestinians right now have problems with the present-day Israel because their hearts are filled with mental attitude sins. Furthermore, they teach this to their children, when then teach it to their children. The problem is, what are these people thinking *today*. The problem is not, what happened 30 years ago, 100 years ago, or 1000 years ago.

If you do not think that a new generation can think differently, then you have been living with your eyes closed over the past however many years you have been alive. In the United States, for instance, previous generations understood that homosexuality is a sin and that it is not something which ought to be encouraged. Many of today's youth not only reject the idea that homosexuality is sin, but a large number of them are in favor of children experimenting if they have some same-sex attraction (which is not unusual in a child's life).

So, when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some measure of peace will come about when the Palestinians stop teaching their children to hate Israelis.

Genesis 26:17–22 And Isaac departed from there, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and he lived there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham. And he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found there a well of flowing water. And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours. And he called the name of the well Contention, because they strove with him. And they dug another well, and they strove for that also. And he called the name of it Opposition. And he moved from there, and dug another well, and they did not strive for that. And he called the name of it Broad Places. And he said, For now Jehovah has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land.

Isaac was looking for a little peace and quiet. Recall that he moved to Gerar because he was facing a drought where he was; Gerar, which was not very far away, was not. However, after Isaac came clean with his host, the king of Gerar, God blessed him; and the Philistines became quite envious of him. It is their mental attitude sins which drove Isaac away from them; and with him went blessing by association.

Genesis 26:23 And he went from there to Beer-sheba.

Beersheba is about 30 miles southeast of Gerar, so Isaac apparently moved further and further southeast until he got to Beersheba.

Genesis 26:24 And Jehovah appeared to him the same night, and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Do not fear, for I am with you, and I will bless you and multiply your seed for My servant Abraham's sake.

Although God appeared to Abraham on many occasions (perhaps a half-dozen times), this is only the second recorded instance of where God appears to Isaac. He does not tell Isaac very much, apart from promising that He is with Isaac (God is active in the life of Isaac) and that He would bless Isaac just as He had promised Abraham.

Isaac would know about the Abrahamic covenant. From what we have studied, Isaac apparently knows these promises made by God to Abraham. He is probably carrying the Scriptures with him, as they existed at the time (the first few chapters of Genesis, appended by Abraham; and perhaps the book of Job). Whether these are written or

memorized, we do not know—I would think the latter. Furthermore, there is reason to think that Rebekah, his wife, knows the Scriptures and these promises of God as well. In later chapters, it is Rebekah who will encourage her favorite son, Jacob, to pursue the firstborn blessings, which she assumed included the promises and blessings of God.

The basis of Isaac's blessings is Abraham. God is blessing Isaac based upon who Abraham was. This tells us that God's overflowing blessings can extend for several generations. By application, overflowing blessings can be familial—when one person in a family is growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, the rest of the family is often blessed in a variety of ways.

Genesis 26:25 And he built an altar there, and called upon the name of Jehovah, and pitched his tent there. And Isaac's servants dug a well there.

We have had this phrase, "He called upon the name of Y^{e}howah" and this suggests to me some sort of a worship service, possibly where the Scriptures were read and God was petitioned in prayer. We often have this phrase occur after God has appeared, so what makes no sense is for Isaac, right after talking to God, to start calling for God. The verb is the Qal imperfect of qârâ' (אָרָק) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*], which means *to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name* [when followed by a lâmed]. Strong's #7121 BDB #894. What makes more sense is for him to become involved in worship activities, which are not well-defined for us. We know that worship involved an altar and animal sacrifice, but we do not know much beyond that. Perhaps Isaac would read aloud the history of man on earth (i.e., the Scriptures as they existed in that time); and then sacrifices were offered.

What this verse does not mean is, Isaac is out there calling on God to show Himself to him, as it sounds in many translations. Isaac is not there yelling to the sky, "God, where did you go? Come back!" Instead, he is proclaiming God's Person and character and offering up animal sacrifices (which is why he built an altar). God has just spoken to Isaac, and so he is proclaiming God's Person and character, perhaps reading (from memory) the Scriptures handed down to him from Abraham.

Genesis 26:26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phicol the commander of his army.

This is fascinating. Now that Isaac has moved out of their periphery, the Philistines come and search out Isaac, not to dispute some well with him, but for other reasons. And this is not just a random group of Philistines, but the king of the Philistines as well as the commander of his army. It would be today as if the President of the United States and the Secretary of State came over to your house for a visit.

Genesis 26:27 And Isaac said to them, "Why do you come to me, since you [all] hate me and have sent me away from you [all]?"

Isaac reasonably questions them on this. “Why do you search me out since you sent me away?” Isaac moved away from the Philistines, dug a well; and then found himself being at odds with Philistines who would come in and dispute ownership of the well with him. Then he would move further away, dig a well, and the same thing would happen again. Now, Isaac has finally moved far enough away where he is not being hassled by the Philistines; and so Abimelech comes to him, hat in hand, as it were.

We happen to have a nearly exact parallel today. In a previous conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, the Palestinians asserted that they did not have full control of the Gaza strip (which is in, past time, the area occupied by the Philistines), so Israel gave them the Gaza strip. There are no Jews living there at all. This ought to be a veritable Palestinian paradise, as they control that land exclusively, and there are no evil Jews here and there to mess things up. Just as Isaac voluntarily left Gerar and moved his family away from the Philistines; so modern-day Israel moved its people out of the Gaza strip.

Did Gerar become a much happier and blessed place? Of course not! Is the modern-day Gaza a place of blessing for the Palestinians? Of course not! In the time of Isaac, there were at least 3 men who recognized that Isaac was a blessing to them; and that is what is going on in this chapter. They have come to Isaac to make amends. Today’s conflict between Israel and the Palestinians (I write this in July of 2014), the Palestinians have no such notion. They do not know that, if they chose to interact peacefully with the Israelites, that God would bless them. And what is sad is, Islam recognizes the Old Testament as Scripture (although many of their adherents do not know this). Gen. 12:1–3, written 4000 years ago, reads: 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." (ESV)

Nearly everyone in the United States recognizes that there is something seriously wrong with America. Now, we may have a great divide when it comes to defining what it is and how do we solve it, but very few people today would say, “We are doing well; America is on the right track.” And yet, we are blessed by God and we continue to be blessed, unlike any other nation that has ever been established on this earth. Our poor, no matter how some of them might bitch and moan about income inequality, live better today than kings of a century ago. Part of the reason for our blessing is Israel. Nearly all Republicans and a large majority of Democrats recognize that Israel is our greatest ally in the world, and our prayers and sentiment in these various conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians is correctly on the side of Israel.

Senator Chuck Schumer, a Democrat with whom I disagree on nearly everything, understands the problem in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He understands that Hamas, which is a hate-filled Islamic organization, must be completely neutralized in Palestine. There will be no peace as long as Hamas has any power in Palestine. What gives them power in Palestine? Hatred; hatred for the Jews. If the Palestinians would put aside their

hatred for a generation, they would survive and thrive, just as Gerar enjoyed great prosperity when they allowed Isaac peaceful-coexistence.

With Isaac comes blessing. God blesses Isaac and that blessing overflows to those associated with him. Since the Philistines chose not to be associated with him, the overflowing blessings from God ceased; their prosperity ended.

We have a similar thing occurring today in many societies. The political class see the rich and the wealthy and they want as much of that as they can take, so they "legally" steal from the rich and redistribute it to buy votes—but most of it goes into their own pockets and into the pockets of their donors and supporters. Once the amount the politicians take is high enough, the rich leave, and they take with them their wealth and their ability to make wealth. And the societies which drive the wealthy away are always the worse for it. There is a point at which, when you tax the wealthy too much, enough of them leave (for another city, another state or another country) to where the government revenues are less, even though the taxes are higher.

Abimelech and Phicol here recognize that God is with Isaac.

Genesis 26:28 And they said, "We saw certainly that Y^{e}howah was with you. And we said, Let there be now an oath between us, between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you;...

What has happened is, since Isaac left Gerar, prosperity went with him. God was blessing Isaac, which concerned the Philistines enough to drive him away. However, when they drove him away, the blessing of God went with him. There are people in Philistia who understand that. In fact, those who have come to Isaac understand that being isolated from Isaac means being isolated from the blessings of Isaac's God.

Abimelech and his cabinet had begun to reassess their relationship with Isaac after Isaac left. They looked at the pros and cons. Sending him away was a bad mistake, and there were no more blessings by association heaped upon the Philistines because of the dissolution of their relationship to Isaac. No relationship with Isaac meant no overflow blessings from God.

You may recall when Abraham and Lot split up, Abraham continued to be blessed, and Lot clearly ended up far worse off. At best, Lot parlayed his cattle business into a house in Sodom and a position as a judge; which gave him far less influence than we might think. He was out of Abraham's periphery, and outside of the blessing that God heaped upon Abraham (so much so that, they had too many possessions to keep separate). Lot, when outside of the periphery of Abraham, saw his fortune diminish to nothing. He eventually ended up living in a cave because God judged the people with whom he chose to associate. At the same time, not but a few miles away, Abraham continued to be prospered, becoming one of the richest men in Canaan (if not the richest).

Now, there is nothing magical about geography. A believer who is growing and functioning in the plan of God will be blessed by God, along with those in his periphery. This does not mean, necessarily, that he has a specific radius about him that blessed those who fell into that radius (although this is not far from right). Such a believer is a blessing to his family, even if they are separated by thousands of miles; he is a blessing to his school, his military unit, his business, his corporation, or whatever. The illustration that R. B. Thieme, Jr. often gave is, there is this great corporation and it is the end of the year, and they have just had the most prosperous year that they have ever had, and they are celebrating this year, and patting one another on the back for their brilliant and strategic business moves. However, wandering about from bathroom stall to bathroom stall, up and down lonely hallways after business hours, is their janitor, a believer who is spiritually mature and greatly blessed by God. In fact, this blessing overflows, and blesses the very business and building in which he works. He might not know 99% of the employees there; he may never see them; but God's blessing to this janitor extends to the building in which he works and to the business that employs him.

Application: Just so we are clear on this—just because you are a growing believer and you know that your school, unit or business is being blessed because of your spiritual growth, this does not mean that you have God's permission to read your Bible on the job (except on break) or that you can do a sloppy job as an employee. As a believer, whatever your responsibilities are, they should always be done to the best of your ability. Furthermore, if you are a growing believer, then you have enough sense not to be a lousy employee.

Abimelech and the couple men with him realize that they screwed up. They cut off Isaac out of envy, and that was wrong. Now, if you will recall, Abimelech[131] (Sr.) treated Abraham well, and there were no problems between the two men. However, Abimelech (Jr.) allowed himself to be told what to do from his people, and they were the ones to develop this hatred for Isaac.

As has been noted, we in the United States live in the greatest nation in world history. People come here from all over the world, have nothing in their pockets, and they make for themselves a great life here. We take it for granted—and liberals and atheists in particular take it for granted—but God has blessed the United States because there are a great many believers here and because there is a pivot of mature and growing believers.

If atheists, agnostics and liberals had any sense, they would be begging for more and more expressions of the Christian faith to be made manifest in their periphery; because with this often comes the great blessing of God. I can give a good illustration of this—when I was young and in school, Christmas pageants were the norm. Every year, there would be a Christmas pageant, and Christmas songs would be sung by us children (real Christmas songs which celebrate the birth of our Lord); and our schools were safe and well-behaved and we all received an excellent education there. Today, in the exact same geographical areas, we do not have the Christmas pageants anymore; and education, despite huge

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[131] Abimelech is probably a title and not a proper name.

increases in additional spending, is in the toilet. This is true all over the United States. We spend a much higher percentage of our monies on education today, and our schools suck.

In the school where I taught, we had Christmas pageants and, when the faculty gathered for a faculty luncheon, someone offered up a prayer of thanksgiving before we ate was the norm. And at that time, this was an outstanding school. The discipline was great, learning occurred, and there were great teachers and students there of all types (liberals, conservatives, Christians, atheists). We even had an evangelist who would come to our school on occasion. But as we moved away from this sort of celebration of Christmas and moved away from the public acknowledgment of God in prayer, the schools suffered. This particular school went from being one of the greatest schools which benefitted all the students, to a school where discipline is far worse, and academic standards are far lower (even though the *requirements* are now much higher, the teachers are much better paid and there are many more administrators). By human viewpoint, the school should be much better now; but it is far, far worse than when I taught there, despite having so much more money and staff.

This is what Abimelech has discovered. When Isaac was there, in their midst, God blessed him, and God, by association, blessed those around him. Now that Isaac has been gone for awhile, Abimelech has noticed that the blessing of God is gone as well.