

Abraham, My Friend: 02 in the Beginning god...

by Ron Bailey

God's love for man is a constant and unchanging love that is not limited to a specific time or place, and He can take us from our past experiences and lead us to a new beginning.

Duration: 12:06

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, 2 Chronicles 33:13, Proverbs 8:22, Jeremiah 18:4, Jonah 3:1, Malachi 1:2, John 17:23, Galatians 4:19

Topics: "Abraham"

Description

This sermon is the second installment in a series on the life of Abraham, focusing on the theme of beginnings. The speaker emphasizes that every Christian biography should begin with the recognition that God is the ultimate beginning. He encourages listeners not to be discouraged by their past experiences, as God can take them from impossible situations and lead them forward. The sermon highlights the biblical concept of God's mindfulness of humanity, emphasizing that God's love and reach extends to all, even those who have strayed. The speaker references various biblical passages, including Psalm 8, Proverbs, Jonah, Jeremiah, and Galatians, to illustrate the theme of new beginnings and God's unchanging love.

Transcript

Well, hello again. You're listening to a Bible Base podcast, and I'm your host, Ron Bailey. These 60 or so meditations on the life of Abraham were first published on the sermon index.net website, where you can still find the original text versions.

The aim of the series is to discover the way in which Abraham became a praying man and the friend of God. This is the second installment in this series of thoughts and meditations on the life of Abraham. It's about beginnings.

In the beginning, God. Every Christian biography should begin with the words, in the beginning, God. Our Bible begins with these words, and on reflection, it could begin with no others.

How else would anything begin? The Gospel according to John mirrors Genesis and expands it. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. It's the only explanation for everything. Without him, there is nothing.

It's the only explanation for anything. Without him was not anything. That's a question that atheistic cosmologists usually refuse to ask.

Why is there anything? It was once said of such cosmologists by a fellow cosmologist that they are often in error, but never in doubt. Ask them how, and you'll hear the most extraordinary explanations of quantum theory and oscillating superstrings expressed with absolute certainty. Ask them why and there's no answer.

Their calculations take us to the first microseconds of the cosmos, but only revelation can take us back to the beginning, where God already was. For the child of God, this truth is both humbling and exhilarating. In comparison to the vastness of the cosmos, the human race is totally insignificant.

If those cosmologists are right, just star litter. Sometimes our confident knowledge blinds us to more profound realities. Three later wrote, When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

The Bible's timeline, too, is overwhelming. God's mindfulness of man is not some sudden thought pressed upon him by the pains of the human race. Before anything was, we were in his thoughts.

The Bible captures this sense sometimes in plain words and sometimes in amazing imagery. The book of Proverbs takes us back to the beginnings and we hear that testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy. He is conscious that he belongs to his Father before any creative acts have occurred.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old, says Proverbs 8 and verse 22. The extraordinary testimony continues as the creation is about to be brought into being. Then I was beside him like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always.

What a wonderful picture this is of Father and Son daily delighting in each other's company, and eternity ringing with joy. Father and Son in perfect fellowship, God, the only self-sufficient being, needing nothing outside himself, needing no heaven, no creation, perfectly at home and fulfilled in himself. Let's continue the wonder of this continuing testimony.

And my delights were with the sons of men. That is to say, before ever the earth was, when there were no depths, no fountains abounding with water, no mountains, while as yet he had not made the earth, his delights were with the sons of men. He loved us long before he made us.

He delighted over us. Can you hear the excited anticipation? Oh, what a heartache we have been to him! What glorious plans he had for us! What a bitter disappointment we have been! And this is no isolated text. John captures another for us in his record of Christ's prayer, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world, John chapter 17. As they say, do the maths. If he has loved us as he loved him, and he has loved him from before the foundation of the world, how long has he loved us? Our failures have not taken God by surprise, nor changed his love for us.

The Old Testament comes to the end of its record of failure after failure with a simple word of testimony from God to his own people. It's from Malachi chapter 1 and verse 2. I have loved you, says the Lord. His world has conspired together against him and against his Christ, and yet his testimony is unchanged.

I have loved you. It's from this unchanged and unchanging love that all those Bible agains come. To a prodigal world God has reached out again and again.

The book is full of them. The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, or from Jeremiah, so he made it again, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it, or this account of Manasseh and his repentance. And Manasseh prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.

Then Manasseh knew that Jehovah, he was God. And we hear it again and again in the words of those who have his love shed abroad in their hearts. This is Paul in Galatians, my little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.

While there's God, there's hope, because where there is God there exists the possibility of a new beginning. So we will discover it with Abraham. And this is a quotation, and Joshua said to all the people, thus says Jehovah, the God of Israel, your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the river, even Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.

And I took your father Abraham from beyond the river and led him, as Joshua chapter 24. Not a very promising background, is it? Far off in a pagan land, serving other gods. Many of us have had our beginnings in such places, and God took us and led us.

Perhaps as you read you feel yourself to be in such a place now, with nothing to offer and under the rule of alien powers. You feel that God may do something with others, but not with you. The English have a pessimistic old saying, you can't make a silk purse out of a pig's ear.

Don't be discouraged. God can. From your impossible situation, God can take you and lead you.

Your future is not determined by your past experiences, but by today's response to God. Where God is, there's always scope for a new beginning. They say that every journey must begin with a first step, but the pilgrim does not mark the beginning of his journey with his own first step.

In one way or another, he senses a divine imperative. He may not use the exact words, but if you look under the skin, his testimony will always start at the same point, in the beginning, God. If you'd like to find out more about Bible Base, do come and join us on www.biblebase.com. We look forward to seeing you.

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