

# (Genesis) - Part 14

by Zac Poonen

---

*The sermon highlights the dangers of material wealth and the importance of seeking God's kingdom first, using the examples of Abraham and Lot to illustrate the marks of a man of God and the consequences of choosing for ourselves.*

**Duration:** 1:00:42

**Scripture:** Genesis 13:2-17, Genesis 14:18-20, James 1:17-20

**Topics:** "Abraham"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Genesis 13 and the consequences of Abraham's journey to Egypt. One result of this journey was that Abraham became rich, which initially seemed like a blessing. However, it caused a problem between Abraham and his nephew Lot. The preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing that every good and perfect gift comes from God, as stated in James 1:17. He also highlights the belief that God richly supplies us with all things to enjoy, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 6:17. The sermon concludes by noting that although God promised the land to Abraham, it was his descendants who eventually occupied Canaan.

---

## Transcript

We were looking at Genesis 13, the first few verses. We saw that one of the results of Abraham going to Egypt was that he became rich, and what the world would consider a blessing became a cause of a problem in the family between Abraham and Lot, and this is why it's dangerous to have more than what we need, particularly if we are so foolish to think that when we get more than what we need, that it is a blessing of God, and it is a sad thing indeed. And we read here that Lot, verse five, went with Abraham, and he also had flocks and herds and tents.

He also made money in Egypt, like his uncle, and the land could not sustain them. In the beginning, before they went to Egypt, it was all right, they could live together, but now that they had become rich, they could not live together. And when we think of the reason why Lot and Abraham were separated, it's so sad to see that it was due to money, that it was due to material wealth, that they had to part their ways and could no longer be together.

And also we read their possessions, verse six, were so great that they were not able to remain together. Sad, and that's been repeated many times. Many people who have had lifelong bitterness against one another because of money and property, Abraham and Lot, their possessions were so great.

Think what a blessing it would have been if they didn't have so many possessions. Don't think that the abundance of possessions is necessarily a blessing. It wasn't here.

And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. There's always strife when there is abundance of money. And it's very significant that it says there, now the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land, while these two people who claimed to have received revelation from God, their servants were fighting because of material things.

The Canaanites and Perizzites apparently were living peacefully there, but those who claimed to have revelation from God, their servants were fighting. And there again we find that history is repeated even today. But there we see the greatness of a true man of God.

Abraham didn't get into a fight. He was detached from those riches. They didn't mean anything to him.

But for Lot, it meant a lot. And when we think of Abraham and Lot, we must remember what the Bible says in 2 Peter 2. It says there in verse 7 that Lot was a righteous man. It says in 2 Peter 2.7 that the Lord rescued righteous Lot oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men in Sodom, for by what he saw and heard, that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds.

Three times the word righteous is used in reference to Lot in these verses. So Lot is not a picture of an unbeliever. He's a picture of a believer who just didn't make it to be a part of the bride of Christ, whose interests and affections were on this earth.

His doctrines may all have been right, but his heart was set on earthly things. And so when we see the contrast between Abraham and Lot, we must not assume, oh well, we are of course like Abraham, because we are not unbelievers like Lot. No, Lot is not described as an unbeliever.

The Holy Spirit calls him a righteous man, and yet a righteous man who was an absolute compromiser, a righteous man who sought his own, a righteous man who went after money and tried to make it good for his family here on earth, and thus brought his family to ruin. But Abraham, he had a different attitude. He says in verse eight, Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

Notice the word he uses. He says, we are brothers. He doesn't say, I'm your uncle.

He was his uncle. But he doesn't take that position, and I believe that's the mark of a man of God. He has no desire for any status or position, and it's very difficult to find people like that.

We, we, there's a tremendous lust for titles in our flesh. We like people calling us uncle or elder brother, particularly in our Indian vernacular languages. There are special titles for elder brothers and various grades of uncles, big and small, and they can be pretty offended if you don't put them at the right level.

If they are on level one and you put them at level two in the title you give. Now, that's all right. It's when such people call themselves believers that they are just fooling themselves when they think they are disciples.

They are far from being disciples. Or a sister who likes to be called as an elder sister or some special name. Garbage! You want to be a disciple of Jesus? Follow Abraham.

Say we are brothers. You don't want any of these respected titles. He made himself of no reputation, and it is his disciples that we have become.

And the test is when somebody doesn't give me that respect I think I deserve, what is my inward reaction? Even if I have controlled my tongue, if I find that inwardly I'm a bit hurt by that, that is God speaking to me that I have to die there. I have to die because I did get a little disturbed that somebody didn't give me the title and put me in the status that I deserve. I've still got a little bit of garbage in my heart that I need to throw out.

So Abraham says we are brothers, and then look at his graciousness and his generosity. Always the mark of a man of God. Graciousness and generosity.

When it comes to earthly things, no grabbing, no fighting. Take it brother. You take the first choice.

I'll take what you don't want. It's one thing to do that for the sake of honor. It's quite another thing to have a heart like that which does not want the best for myself.

The others are welcome to have it. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right.

If you go to the right, I'll go to the left. Think of all the things that Abraham could have told his nephew Lot. He could have said, listen, I'm your uncle, and so I'll choose, and then you can take what's left over.

He could have also said, listen, I was the one whom God called. God didn't speak to you. You just tagged along.

So this land God's supposed to have given to me. It's amazing how people fight in the name of religion and use God's name also in order to fight for their property. They say, this is my God-given right.

Abraham could have said that. Didn't God tell him, I'm going to give you this land? He could have said, listen, God's told me this is mine. He's brought me here, and I'm going to fight in the name of God.

When our heart is set on covetousness, the devil will even give us scriptural foundation for our covetousness and for our strife and for our fighting. We have to beware in such situations. No, he doesn't say any of that thing.

He doesn't stand on his right. One of the marks of the men of God we see in scripture is this, that they never fight for their rights. They let God give it to them.

Think of David. He never killed Saul, even though Samuel had anointed him to be king. He never grabbed it, even though all his followers said, kill him now, when he was sleeping in front of him.

He said, no, I won't do it. He says, if God wants me to have this position, He will give it to me. That was Abraham's attitude.

I will not grab. I will not grab. I will let God give it to me.

And when it says that if we seek the kingdom of God first, all these other material things will be added to us, it should therefore imply that all the material things that we have were things added to us, not things we pursued after, and after great struggle and sweating and perspiring, we managed to get it. That's all

right out in the world. But for a believer, it must be that he's spent his life seeking God's kingdom, and God just added these things to him.

That should be our testimony, that God has added all these things. I never sought any of them. I'm not interested in any of them, but God added them.

Not by grabbing, not by pursuing, not by running after, not by scheming, manipulating. These are all the ways of the world. Lot had that mind.

And remember, Lot's a believer. Lot's a picture of a believer who's got this scheming, manipulating mind in relation to other believers, who think, what can I get for myself? Where can I grab? It can be in matter of marriage. Some brother's got his eye on some sister, and he's going to grab her before anybody else gets there, or vice versa.

Some sister's got her eye on some brother and waiting for a chance to grab him before somebody else grabs him. That is all Lot. I'm not talking about unbelievers.

I'm talking about believers who've got this grabbing attitude, who cannot, do not have faith that what God wants them to have, they'll get. They don't have to grab. The same thing with all material things.

So it's a profitable study to see the contrast between Abraham and Lot. And Lot, it says in verse 10, lifted up his eyes. He didn't have to pray.

He didn't have to see God. When we are getting a gift, when somebody gives us first choice, it's amazing. We don't have to pray.

We can just lift up our eyes, look around and choose the best for ourselves. That's Lot, the righteous Lot, who lifted up his eyes and grabbed the best for himself. He saw all the valley of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere.

What should Lot have done? Lot should have said, Abraham, you are the one whom God called. You choose. That would have been real righteousness.

He was a bit unrighteous there when he was grabbing what God never called him for. But he didn't do that. He said, ah, now is my chance to grab.

And this chap said, I'm not fighting with him. He's offered it to me. Something, sometimes even when something is offered to you, it can be a test from God to see whether you'll grab it or whether you'll seek God about it.

Think of that, that when something can be offered to you which you want so much, you may not see it as a test. You may say, I didn't go. But in your heart there is this grabbing attitude, you're so happy that you got the chance to get this, and quickly put your hands on it before somebody else gets it.

That's Lot, believer, righteous Lot. And it says this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Like the garden of the Lord, it looked so beautiful to the eyes.

And notice this phrase, Lot chose for himself. He didn't let God choose for him. And that is the characteristic of all worldly believers.

They choose for themselves. In all areas, they choose for themselves. And Lot journeyed eastward, and thus they separated from each other, and Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

But God, when He looked at Sodom, He didn't look at the lush, green valleys and the beautiful cities and the tremendous opportunities to make money there and to become a big man in the world. God didn't see all that. What God saw is destroyed in verse 13.

This is God's view. The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners, exceedingly wicked and sinners, exceedingly great sinners against the Lord. You see, God doesn't see as man sees.

Man sees the opportunities to make money, the opportunities to live a comfortable life, the opportunities to advance in the world, and the opportunities to really make it good for me and my family here on this earth, and at the same time be a righteous lot who will go to heaven when I die also. But God's view of Sodom was quite different. And there we can say Lot did not look at Sodom the way God looked at it.

He looked at it from the human standpoint, and that is the mark of many believers who are following the footsteps of Lot. But the thing that's come to me is, see how Lot had been affected so quickly. He had been to Egypt, and he saw all the wonderful things in Egypt, and it got a place in his heart, and he was waiting for an opportunity in Canaan to really make it comfortable and easy for him.

The spirit of Egypt had gotten to him, and he couldn't be free. And we see here that he chose for himself. Just think, we know the subsequent story of Lot.

He went to Sodom, and he lost his sons-in-law. They died in Sodom. He lost his wife on the way out of Sodom.

His daughters became immoral. He lost his whole family. And when you think that the whole thing centered around one decision that he made, to make more money.

Just think of that. How much depended on that one decision that the father made. It affected his whole family.

We don't realize sometimes how much one decision that we make in a particular direction can affect our whole family. We know that the rich young ruler who came to Jesus took one decision when Jesus confronted him. That affected his whole future.

You know that Esau, when he saw that bowl of porridge, he took one decision that affected his whole future. And we don't realize how much in all of the future can sometimes depend on one decision that we take. And that's why it's important, brothers and sisters, whenever we take decisions that are major.

I don't mean decisions like whether you should travel in the train tomorrow or day after tomorrow when you're going home for a holiday. I don't mean things like that. I mean major decisions like when you're considering marriage or when you're considering moving to some place or some decision concerning your work or profession or further studies.

So many things. One decision can ruin the rest of your life. If that decision is based on this principle, he chose for himself.

That's the point. Lot didn't choose Sodom because he was not earning enough in Canaan to support his family. There are some people who have to go to some place to earn a little more because they're sort of struggling to support their family.

I'm not talking about those who are never content with what they have, who are always thinking, coveting, coveting, coveting, and affects their decisions and ruins not only themselves but their whole family. We read verse 14, and the Lord said to Abraham after Lot had separated from him, notice this, God waits until we are fully separated from all our relatives. God had to separate him first from his father by death, but still there was this other compromising relative hanging on, and God had to separate him from him also.

And sometimes God's purposes in our lives are delayed because we don't allow ourselves to be separated from compromising relatives. Compromising relatives can be a hindrance to the fulfillment of God's purpose in our life. After Lot had separated from him, now God said, now I can lead you further.

And God waits for that separation. Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and then I will receive you. 2 Corinthians 6.17. And then we can say here, after that, the Lord said, now you lift up your eyes.

Lot lifted up his eyes on his own. He looked on his own, but Abraham lifted up his eyes only when God told him to do so. And he said, look from the place where you are, north, south, east, west, for all the land which you see, I'll give it to you and to your descendants forever.

Who's going to give it to him? Verse 15, I, I, the Lord God Almighty, will give it to you. You contrast that phrase with what we read in verse 11, Lot chose for himself, and God chose for Abraham, and God said to Abraham, I will give it to you. And if I decide to give it to you, do you think a man can grab it out from your hands? Not only will I give it to you, and to your descendants forever.

No, there are many people through the years who have tried to grab that land out of the hands of the Jews, the descendants of Abraham. And when you read the history of the last 3,500 years of the Jews, we find that many times the Jews have been thrown out of that land. Others have grabbed it, the Romans, the Greeks, various people have grabbed that land which God said, I will give to the descendants of Abraham.

For many years, the Muslims grabbed it, the Arabs ruled it for many years, the British for a period, but the descendants of Abraham have got it today. You see, when we think of the nation of Israel living in the land of Palestine, that's the world in the newspapers, they read, you read that that's unrighteous and that the Jews have occupied territory which doesn't belong to them. But it says here that God gave it to them more than 4,000 years ago, before any Jew was born.

He gave it to their father Abraham. This is that for you. So God has given it to them, and though various people have tried to grab it, Lot tried to grab it at that time, he couldn't get it.

Where are Lot's descendants today? Lot's descendants are not in Canaan. Lot's descendants from Moabites and the Ammonites, they are all in other countries. But the Jews, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they are the ones who are in Canaan.

God keeps His word, and whatever God has intended for me, no human being can grab it. He may grab it, but it'll come back to me finally. He can't keep it forever.

He'll grab it, but it'll come back to me. If only we had faith in this, we would be at rest. Think of so many believers who are bothered about promotions, and whether they'll be able to get that house, or the other one, or this thing, or the other thing.

Think if they could believe that when God says this phrase, I, verse 15, I will give it to you. What more do you want? According to your faith, be it unto you. Is it better to choose for yourself, or is it better to let God choose for you? Well, Lot finally ended up losing everything that he got.

Sodom and Gomorrah, he lost all the money and property that he had earned in a moment. You know, the danger when we choose something for ourselves is that we don't know what lies ahead. When you are confronted with a decision, shall I do this, or shall I do that? Who knows what lies ahead along this pathway, and who knows what lies ahead along that pathway? You don't know.

No human being can guide you there. There is one person who knows everything that lies ahead in this pathway, and everything that lies ahead along that pathway, and that's God. And therefore it's always best to let God choose for us.

Because God looked at what lay ahead for Sodom and Gomorrah, and He knew that's going to be fire and brimstone. So He kept Abraham away from that. He said, Abraham, I won't give you that now.

I'll give that to your descendants some hundreds of years later. But right now I'll give you something else. I don't want you to get fire and brimstone.

And if Lot had only sought God, God would have said, Don't go to Sodom. Fire and brimstone is ahead there. If we seek God and not our own, if we don't choose for ourselves, there are calamities, pitfalls, dangers along the way that He can protect us from, that He can say, Don't go that way.

That's not good. There's something I see which you don't see right now. Right now as you look along that pathway, it all looks so rosy and so nice and so beautiful, but you don't really see what is over the horizon on the other side, that there's something along that pathway which is not good.

I see it. So don't go that way. It's better to let God choose for us.

Always, in everything in life, small things, big things, in everything. And the Lord said to Abraham, verse 16, I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. In other words, there'll be so many.

And He made that promise to Abraham at a time when he didn't have any children. That was a tremendous promise. God said, You're going to have descendants when He didn't have any.

He didn't have any at least for another 15 years or more. Not the promised seed anyway. But He said, I'll make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, your descendants will be numbered.

Now He said, Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth, for again this phrase, I will give it to you twice. This is a very beautiful phrase in James chapter 1, which we must always bear in mind. James 1.17, it says, in the exercise of the will of God... God.

I'm sorry, James 1, 17. Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of life. That teaches us that a gift, if it is to be good and perfect, it must come to us from God.

If it does not come to us from God, yes, it may be good, but it won't be perfect. It just cannot be perfect. If you want something good and perfect, you've got to get it from God.

Every good and perfect thing comes from above. Only the Father can give us that which is good and perfect. There's a song we sing in Christian songs.

One verse of it says, Ill that he blesses is our good, and unblessed good is ill. That means a lot of evil things, if God blesses it to us, it becomes good to us. All things work together for good.

The evil that the brothers of Joseph did to him worked out for good. If God blesses it, that evil becomes good. But a good thing without God's blessing can turn out to be evil.

Ill that he blesses is our good, and unblessed good is ill. Never forget that. It is not the thing itself that determines whether it's good or not.

The thing is, has God given it to me, or have I grabbed it for myself? That is what determines whether it's good and perfect or not. We read in 1 Timothy, 6.17, that God... The last part of verse 17. God richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

There are a lot of people who think God is a sort of spoil sport, who wants to spoil all our fun in life, and He's determined to make our life miserable. But it's not true. This verse says... Paul is writing that after many years of being a Christian.

He says, God richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Do you believe that God gives us things to enjoy? I believe it, because I believe the word of God. He richly supplies me with all things to enjoy.

If we seek His kingdom first, we'll find He takes care of what we need. And there are certain things which may harm us at one stage in life, which He won't give it to us then. He'll give it to us five years later, when it won't harm us.

Think of the wisdom of God. Think of the wisdom of God. I remember just about a year after I became a Christian, year and a half after I became a Christian, I wasn't much interested in the study of the Bible, and I wanted to buy an accordion to learn some music.

And though there was one available, and though I had the money to buy it, I asked God for a sign, whether it was His will, and the sign was not fulfilled. And so I decided not to buy it, because the sign was not fulfilled. That was about twenty-five years ago.

And so I didn't buy it. It sort of virtually dropped into my lap. But now when I look back, I see it would have harmed me.

That same instrument would have harmed me one and a half years after my conversion, because I would have become so taken up with music that I wouldn't have had time to study the Scriptures. So God didn't allow me to have it, and then gave it to me six years later, when it could not master me. That's just an illustration.

There are certain things which are good for you, but not yet. If you get it now, it may harm you. You need to probably wait four or five years.

Leave that to God. Let Him give it to you. If you grab, you may get it, of course.

I could have gone to that shop. I had the money. I could have bought it.

But I'd asked God for a sign. It was not fulfilled. So I knew it was not God's will.

I could have got it. Jonah had enough money to buy a ticket to go to Tarshish. Some people think that if I have enough money to buy a ticket, that means it is God's will that I travel there.

Jonah had enough money to buy a ticket to go to Tarshish. It was not God's will. No, it's best that God gives us all things in life.

That's the best attitude to have towards all material things, brothers and sisters. And so God told Abraham, Arise, walk through the land of length and breadth, and I'll give it to you. And God didn't give it all to Abraham in his time.

He gave it much later, at the right time, to his descendants. Abraham, we know, did not occupy Canaan. In fact, Canaan was not occupied for another five hundred years nearly.

There was a right time, and it's best to leave it to God to give it to us at His time. Whatever you desire, delight yourselves in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart at the right time, so that you don't get ruined by it spiritually. Then we read further.

Then Abraham moved his tent, verse 18, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron. And there he built an altar to the Lord. There again we find worship and sacrifice.

The altar speaks of worship and sacrifice. And we find that frequently characterizing Abraham's life. Worship and sacrifice, two things that should characterize our life also.

Then we come to chapter fourteen, and here we read about an attack that certain kings made against Sodom. And this was the beginning of Lot's troubles in Sodom. It came about in the days of Amraphael, king of Shinar, Ariok, king of Elasar, and the other kings mentioned there.

They made war with Bera, king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah. And then all these came as allies, verse three, to the valley of Sidin, the salt sea. In twelve years they served Kedarleomer.

In the thirteenth year they rebelled. And in the fourteenth year Kedarleomer and the kings that were with him came and defeated all these other people. And then they turned back, verse seven, and conquered all the country of the Amalekites.

In verse eight, and the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the other kings came out and they raced for battle. And Kedarleomer, four against five kings, the valley of Sidin was full of tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, verse ten, fled. And they fell into them, but those who survived fled to their country.

Then these other kings captured all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply and departed. And they also took Lot, Abraham's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom. Did God see that danger over the horizon? He did.

Did Lot see it when he chose for himself? That's why it's wiser to let God choose for us in all situations. We don't see what is going to happen next year in that place we have chosen for ourselves. So he got into trouble there, the beginning of his trouble.

Like it says in 1 Timothy 6.9, those who seek to become rich pierce themselves through with many sorrows. They have many problems. When somebody who is rich, not satisfied with what he has, is trying to make more money... I came across someone like that the other day.

Having problems, and they come asking for prayer, Brother, please pray that these problems will be solved. So what do you say to such people? Well, all I could say is, Brother, God says, if you seek the kingdom of God first, these other things will be added to us. And what we need to learn is to seek God's kingdom first.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. But those who want to become rich pierce themselves through with many sorrows. And there are enough false prophets roaming around this country who are ready to pray for you, that your fields will prosper and that you will make more money and that you will get still more money.

There are plenty of false prophets like that. Let them go to them. No, those who go Lord's way will suffer the problems Lord faced also.

Verse 13, Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Ishkal, the brother of Manan. These were allies with Abram.

And when Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he could have said, serves him right. Now he must learn that you reap what you sow. You see the greatness of this man Abram, that he didn't go to find lots to tell him, I told you this would happen to you.

That's not what he went to tell him. He went to help him. It's amazing, this man who lived even before the old covenant, leave alone new covenant, he didn't even have the old covenant, that he could have such an attitude to a fallen brother that he had no lust.

If he had a lust to go and tell him, like because he had our flesh, Abram didn't have some other flesh. And you know what a lust there is in our flesh when we have seen that somebody has taken advantage of us in some financial transaction? He took advantage of our goodness, took advantage of our generosity like Lot, grabbed for himself, took the breast and walked off with it. And then he suffers the loss of all that.

All that he walked off with he has lost. And what a lust there is in our flesh to say, serves him right for grabbing from me. You think Abram had the same flesh? Of course he did.

How is it he didn't go and tell Lot that? He overcame that. So that's not the way for me to act towards my brother. This is the thing, my brothers and sisters, that when I read the Old Testament, it really puts me to shame when I see what these people accomplished, even without an old covenant.

And then it becomes so clear to me that a clear understanding of doctrine means nothing. Absolutely nothing. These chaps had a life.

If you had gone to Abram and asked him to explain about how Christ is going to come in the flesh and the old man in the flesh, he wouldn't have had a clue. There are selfish Lots today who know the answer to that better than Abram of old. No, it's not the form of godliness.

It is that inner power. And there we can learn from Abram that he didn't say, serves him right. He didn't say, he's reaping what he sowed.

He didn't say, God is chastening him. We got to leave him alone. We mustn't trouble these prodigal sons.

They are, they must learn, get some discipline now. He didn't say any of these things. Because when we say these things, we are actually revealing the selfishness of our own heart.

No, neither did he find some convenient excuse to stay where he was. You know, when we have, when we hear that there's some calamity with someone whom we are not particularly too happy with, there's always a convenient excuse. Maybe I've got a headache, or I'm not feeling too well, or I've got some urgent things to do right now.

There's always a convenient excuse to avoid going out to help that person, because I'm not too keen on helping him. That's the real reason. But Abram did not find any of those convenient excuses.

He just dropped everything. It says, as soon as Abram heard, verse 14, that his, and I want you to notice something here, in the margin it says, his brother. That's really amazing.

These translators of even the New American Standard Bible, they didn't have the guts to put brother, because Lot was not his brother. They thought the Holy Spirit made a mistake there. So they put it in the margin.

Literally, it means brother, but we, the translators, say relative. Garbage. It means brother, because Lot was his brother.

That's how he looked at him. Even in this state, he looked at him as a fallen brother, had been taken captive. He heard that his Sometimes you may hear that your brother has been taken captive in some situation.

He dropped everything, headache or no headache. He led out his trained men, born in his house, 318, and went in pursuit as far as Dan, and he divided his forces against him by night. Think of what he did.

He risked his life. Think of this love, to risk your life to help a brother who duped you a few weeks ago. Can you beat that with all our new covenant doctrine? I tell you, if we reach that far, it will be tremendous.

You see how doctrine doesn't help? Abraham had that life without all this doctrine. The doctrine should lead us even higher. That's a warning and a challenge.

He risked his life against these powerful kings. That would have been a convenient excuse for Abraham. I've got only 318.

I'm not a soldier. I've never battled. None of my people know how to fight.

How can I go against all these trained armies of these great kings who have finished off so many experienced armies of Sodom and Gomorrah? No. He had a heart like gold, full of love for Lot, who had duped him and cheated him a few weeks ago. It didn't make a difference to him that he duped him and cheated him.

You know, when we have a bitterness against somebody who has cheated us and duped us, it doesn't tell us something about that person. It does tell us something about our own heart, that we loved those material things which that fellow cheated us of. Otherwise, why should we be so disturbed about it? We may say, I have forgiven.

We may say, it doesn't matter to me. But the fact is, I am disturbed that he duped me. It proves that I love those material things.

And here is the proof that Abraham did not love those material things, that when Lot took it, he said, fine, take it. It doesn't mean anything to me. And the proof is that when Lot suffered, he was ready to go and risk his life to save him.

Tremendous. And he defeated them, these powerful kings, with God on Abraham's side. God is always on the side of such an unselfish man like Abraham.

Always, with God before us, who can be against us? Abraham had a right to save us. We can't save when we are steeped in selfishness. No.

But if we are unselfish like him, we can certainly save God before me, who can be against me, because I am going to help my brother who has duped me. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relatives, Lot, with his possessions, and also the women and the people. And one would think that at least now, Lot should have left Sodom, and, and, oh, well, I've learned a lesson now.

This choosing for myself has landed me into trouble. Let me now go back to Abraham and seek fellowship with him and seek his advice, a godly uncle, a godly older brother, as to what I should do. Don't you think Lot should have done that? God warned him through that calamity where he lost everything, and Abraham had to go and bring it all back, and he still would not hear.

Covetousness can make a man so deaf, so deaf that he imagines that he hears God's voice telling him all types of things. It's all imagination. He imagines that God is leading him and he's going in the same self-chosen direction that he always wanted to go in, like Balaam.

And Lot, he wouldn't get a, take a warning from God. He went in that direction. If he had taken that warning from God, he would not have lost his family.

Sometimes we go in a particular direction. It's not a good one. We've sought our own, and some calamity comes, and God gives us a warning through that, but we don't listen.

Covetousness has made us deaf. At least then, if Lot had turned, he could have saved his family. Even though the first decision was a mistake, at least he got a second chance there to leave Sodom.

He didn't. Think of that, brothers and sisters, that God may speak to us sometime after we have gone the wrong way, after we have taken the wrong decision. In his mercy, in his goodness, in his love, he warns us.

What a calamity is when we still don't listen. And then God leaves us there. He's not going to grab us and pull us out.

He says, go. You want to go back to Sodom after all that? Go. And it's the mercy that he did pull him out finally, but only he got saved.

He lost his whole family and all his property, all that he lived for. The Bible says there are going to be believers. 1 Corinthians 3 tells us that very clearly, verses 10 to 14, that there are going to be believers in the final day of judgment, when all their works are tested by fire.

Everything is going to be burnt up, but they themselves will be saved. What sort of a life is that, where a man's been a believer, and he's been a believer for fifty years, and in the day of judgment, it's fifty years of absolute blank videotapes. Nothing.

Nothing. Everything burnt up. That's lost.

The end of his life. Yeah. That's a warning to all of us.

Verse 17, And after his return from the defeat of Tereliomer, the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom, went out to meet Abram at the valley of Shaveh, the king's valley. But God arranged it that before the king of Sodom could meet Abram, the king of Jerusalem came and met Abram. Now, this is a very significant passage.

This is the first time that Jerusalem is mentioned in the Bible. We've seen in Genesis chapter 10 about Nimrod, the king of Babylon, and here we see Melchizedek, the king of Jerusalem. Jerusalem means Jerusalem.

It's the same place. The first king of Jerusalem was Melchizedek. The first king of Babylon was Nimrod.

Nimrod, a picture of the Antichrist. Melchizedek, a picture of Christ. And he's the only person in the Old Testament who was a king and a priest.

And he's the only significant person in the Old Testament whose genealogy we cannot trace. All the other people's genealogy means the connection all the way up to Adam. You can trace the connection of all the great men of God in the Old Testament, but not Melchizedek.

It's a picture of Christ. He's a king and a priest. In Israel, the king could not be a priest, the priest could not be a king.

But Melchizedek was a king and a priest. He was the first priest of God mentioned in the Bible, not the tribe of Levi, but Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. Now he was a priest of God Most High.

And I want you to turn to the book of Hebrews chapter 7 and see what it says there about Melchizedek. Because the old prevalent priesthood was through the tribe of Levi, and in Hebrews chapter 7 we are told the new prevalent priesthood is through the lineage of Melchizedek. Hebrews chapter 6 verse 20, and this is where we are interested.

Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us. And this is speaking about the new and living way, in the last part of verse 19, inside the way he has entered. And he has become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, not according to the old covenant order of Levi.

For, chapter 7 verse 1 of Hebrews, Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of a king, and blessed him. Now, I just want you to notice that phrase, he blessed Abraham. This is part of being of the priesthood of Melchizedek, that we bless others.

That people get a blessing through us, or an encouragement through us. Not a scolding, and a criticism, and a curse through us. The priesthood of Melchizedek blesses others.

And to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils. It says Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek. And it says here, the translation of Melchizedek's name is king of righteousness.

So this teaches us that the Holy Spirit believes in the significance of some of these Old Testament names. The meanings of some of these Old Testament names are significant, because the Holy Spirit says that here. That Melchizedek means king of righteousness.

And then he's also king of Salem. Salem meaning peace. He's also king of peace.

So he's king of righteousness and peace. This is a verse in the Psalms which says righteousness and peace have kissed each other. God is righteous, and that's why he could not be at peace with man who was a sinner.

But in Jesus Christ, the mediator, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. And Melchizedek is a picture in his name as king of righteousness first. Notice it says there, first, verse two.

Not first peace. First, righteousness. Then peace.

James says that in James 3.17. The wisdom that is from above is not first peaceable. It is first pure. Then peaceable.

Which is more important in your home, peace or purity? It's an important question. Because you may get into conflict with your wife over something concerning purity, and then you may say, let's have peace. Then you have not got the wisdom from above.

It is better to have no peace in the home and have purity than to have peace and no purity. It is better to have righteousness and no peace in the home rather than to have peace and no righteousness. That is a false peace.

There is a false peace. It is without righteousness. There is a false wisdom which is peaceable.

It is without purity. But Melchizedek, the priesthood of Melchizedek, are those who are first of all righteous. And then, notice the order, says it there, first of all and then.

That is an order that we must bear in mind. What are we interested in the church? Righteousness first, then peace. And sometimes, in order to retain our peace in Christ, we may have to get into conflict with relatives and people in the home.

It doesn't disturb us what to do. That is why there is one command in the Bible, in the New Testament, which is prefaced by this statement, as far as possible. You know there is a command like that? As far as possible for you.

You know that you can't have a command like that in relation to lusting after women. It doesn't say, as far as possible, don't try to lust after women. You know that there can't be a command like that.

As far as possible, don't love money. Or as far as possible, don't lose your temper. No, these are all clear customs.

But in one command, that is in Romans 12, we read, as far as possible for you, Romans 12, verse 18, if possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Why does he say, if possible? Because

peace depends on the other person too. And he may not be interested in peace.

So don't be afraid if there is conflict, or a loss of peace in some situation. If it is for the sake of righteousness and purity, it is better to lose that peace than preserve righteousness and purity. Melchizedek was first king of righteousness, and then king of peace.

Further, Hebrews 7.3, without father, without mother, without genealogy, that means, it doesn't mean he didn't have a father or mother, what it means is there's no record of who his father is or who his mother is, no record of his genealogy, that means his line, family tree. Having neither beginning of days nor end of life, that means there's no record in Genesis as to when he was born or when he died. And that's very significant, because all the other men of God in the Bible, it's recorded.

They were born when their father was so and so years, so many years old, so and so was born. And then he died at this age. That's recorded of everybody almost, all the men of God anyway.

But one man stands out in the middle of Genesis, no record of when he was born, who are his parents, and when did he die, he just comes on the scene and disappears. He says, there he's a picture of the Son of God, a perpetual priest. Now consider, verse 4, Hebrews 7, how great this man was, to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the choicest spoil.

And he says, in that sense, verse 9, so to speak, Abraham, through Abraham, even Levi, who received dice, paid dice to Melchizedek, because Levi was within Abraham's body, in a sense, when Melchizedek met Abraham. And this is the argument used by the Holy Spirit here in Hebrews 7 to say that the priesthood of Melchizedek is greater than the priesthood of Levi's, and it goes on in chapter 8 to say that the new covenant is therefore better than the old covenant. So important and interesting to see about Melchizedek, and later on we read in Hebrews 7, 17, a quotation from Psalm 110, where God tells his son, thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

In the Old Testament, Aaron was the high priest, and the priests were all according to the tribe of Levi. In the New Testament, Jesus is the high priest, and the priesthood is according to the order of Melchizedek. In the Old Testament, if you were an Israelite and you didn't happen to be in the tribe of Levi, it was just bad luck.

You couldn't be a priest. But in the New Testament, it doesn't matter which family you're born in. You can be a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, and that's why it's interesting and important for us to see something about Melchizedek so that we can see what it means in relation to our life.

First of all, righteousness. Then peace. Then you can be a priest after the order of Melchizedek in your home.

Let's turn back to Genesis 14 and see something more about this man. Genesis 14, verse 19, verse 18, Melchizedek brought out bread and wine. How did he come out like this? He was a priest of God who was in touch with God.

And I believe there must have been some prompting by God saying, go and refresh this servant of mine who is tired from the battle. And Melchizedek dropped everything and went to bless this brother. That's part of the priesthood of Melchizedek, that we are open to hear when God says to us, go and bless this brother now.

Go and refresh this brother. Or tell one of your sisters to go and refresh some other sister. Melchizedek didn't come to Abraham with a pile of exhortation.

No. He just came to bless him. He brought some food.

He didn't bring him sermons. He brought him food. He brought him something which he needed.

Bread and wine. Here's something, brother, to bless us. Think of being a blessing like us in a very down-to-earth, practical way.

Of course, we can put spiritual meanings to the bread and the wine. It's true there's spiritual meaning too. It's a picture of Jesus Christ and the Last Supper.

The bread and the wine speak of his death. But at this particular point, there was no spiritual, nothing spiritual about that bread and wine. It was just food for his body.

Think of blessing someone with food. Very, very down-to-earth and practical. He must have known the man's hungry.

He doesn't have his wife with him. Nobody to cook for him. He took him some food and blessed him.

And said, blessed be Abraham. Something like, praise the Lord, brother, how good it is to see you. Warm.

This is the priesthood of Melchizedek. Blessing people. Blessed be Abraham who belongs to God most high.

To encourage a person saying, God really helped you there in that battle. He's the possessor of heaven and earth. You see, Abraham was coming with this pile of things that he had got from the kings.

You know, all the things which were in Sodom. And Sodom is a very wealthy, it's something like the New York and London these days. All the wealth of Sodom he was bringing back, now with him.

And this brother just came and blessed him and said, remember, God possesses, is the owner of the whole earth. Just in case Abraham would have a little attachment to any of these things. It was a quick detachment.

Not with a big sermon. No, Abraham, let me give you an exhortation. Don't covet after all these things which you brought.

Nothing like that. You need wisdom in how to bless people. Wisdom.

Blessed be Abraham of God who owns the heaven and the earth. And that worked in Abraham. He began to think about it.

God's the owner of the earth. Why is it my bother to bother all this?

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**