

# Through the Bible - Genesis - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon explores the foundational truths in Genesis, contrasting the deceptive nature of Babylon with the faith-driven journey of Abraham.*

**Duration:** 56:21

**Scripture:** Genesis 13:7, Genesis 15:5

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Abraham and highlights the importance of obedience and trust in God. He emphasizes that God watches every transaction and attitude between people. The speaker also emphasizes the significance of giving up worldly possessions and rights to follow Christ. He uses the example of Abraham's willingness to help Lot, despite being cheated by him, as a demonstration of godliness. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises, as seen in the descendants of Abraham inheriting the land promised to him.

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## Transcript

Well, we want to turn today to where we stopped yesterday. What we're going to do is go through the whole Bible. We won't be covering every chapter.

That would take 500 sessions at least. But in fact, it's easier to take 500 sessions. I would rather take 500.

It's more difficult to select that which contains the most essential message. So my burden has been to pick out that which is most essential. The reason I spend more time in Genesis is because there's a lot there which is very fundamental to our understanding of God, the way things began, and how just like when you see a tree, you know that all of that tree was in a small seed way back in the beginning.

And it's something like that in Genesis. You have a seed there of everything that comes out later. We saw Cain, we saw Enoch, people who walked in two different ways.

We saw Adam, we saw Noah, people who walked in two different ways. Let's turn to Genesis chapter 10. What we see here in the coming chapters that we'll be looking at today is a continuation of those two streams that began with Cain and Abel.

I told you with Cain and Abel, there were two streams. One of religiosity, not of atheism, but of religiosity. And the other of spirituality.

If it were atheism and spirituality, it would be very easy. It would be black and white. But when you try to compare the color of this wall with pure white, it's a little more difficult.

It's off-white with white. That's the devil's method. Nobody will give you a brown paper and say it's a 500 rupee note.

You won't be deceived. A counterfeiter makes currency as far as possible like the original. And the devil also, when he counterfeits Christianity, he makes it as far as possible like the original, but going in completely different directions.

The gate to the broad way does not look broad. It looks very similar to the gate to the narrow way. And a lot of people walking along the broad way don't realize they're walking along the broad way.

They think they're walking along the narrow way. That's why we got to be careful. And I'm talking about believers who are deceived.

Let me just mention one thing before I go into scripture. How many believers do you think there are who really believe what Jesus said? You cannot serve God and money. Do you know the number of preachers, full-time workers, Christian workers, Christians who believe that you can serve God and money? That's just an example of the tremendous work that Satan has done of deceiving people.

There are people who love money and who think that they love God. There are probably people sitting here who love money and who think that you serve God. Don't you think Satan has done such a fantastic work? Even though Jesus said it is impossible to love God and money.

That's just one example. If you want to be saved from deception, study the scriptures carefully and honestly. That's my burden in these sessions, to open up the scriptures in such a way that Satan will not be able to deceive you.

I'm not saying that you will choose the way I show, but at least you'll know the truth. We stopped at Genesis 9 yesterday. We go to Genesis chapter 10.

In Genesis chapter 10, you read about the beginning of Babylon. Babylon is finally destroyed in Revelation 18, the end of the Bible. It begins at the beginning of the Bible and ends at the end of the Bible.

I'm not going to go into every verse. It says here about a man called Nimrod, Genesis 10 verse 9. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, or I would say against the Lord. Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter against the Lord.

The beginning of his kingdom was Babel or Babylon. Babel originally meant the gate of God. He was not an atheist like Cain.

He was not an atheist. He was professing to lead people to God. This is how Babylon works.

Babylon is not a monetary system primarily. It is a monetary system, but it's primarily a religious system, Revelation 17. And an economic financial system, Revelation 18.

The two are put together. That's how Babylon is formed. That's how people are deceived.

They think they are going for true Christianity, religion, but they are drawn towards it because there's also money in it. There's also fame in it. Don't you see Christendom like that today? When you see great preachers standing up on platforms with a spotlight on them, traveling in the most expensive cars, living more like film stars than like Jesus Christ and the apostles.

What do you think? We're not to judge them. The Bible says don't judge and I don't want to judge. But what I say is don't judge.

I also say don't follow them. Leave them alone. Leave their judgment to God.

Follow Jesus. That system which brings fame, power, money, wealth is Babylon. It began here.

It professes to show you the gate to God, but it is not. Jesus said, I am the door. He's the door to that true Jerusalem, the church of God.

It says here from that land he went into Assyria, verse 11. And later on we read in chapter 11, how they built a tower there called the Tower of Babel. Nimrod is a picture or a type of the antichrist who is going to come up in the future.

You know it says he was a hunter. Perhaps a lot of people were being killed by wild animals those days. And Nimrod was the great deliverer who delivered them from these wild animals.

And so he became famous. He became great. And he became accepted.

And he became a leader. The antichrist is going to be somewhat like that in the last days. He's going to deliver people in some wonderful way and going to get the respect of a lot of people.

He's probably going to offer religion. Revelation seems to indicate that. That there's going to be a false prophet who's going to be very closely associated with the antichrist.

Religion and politics are going to be very close in the last days. You can be sure. Whether it's in elections in India or elections in the United States.

Religion and politics. Political leaders know that using the religious card they can get more votes. And it doesn't matter if it claims to be the Christian religion.

It's not the faith of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. That is the true faith.

Don't ever think that you could get Jesus or his apostles to be politicians or to be secular leaders like Nimrod. They are servants. When they tried to make Jesus a king, he ran away.

He would not be a king. In Genesis 11 we read about these people saying they wanted to build a tower. Verse 4, they said, come let us build for ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach to heaven.

The gate of God, they wanted to reach heaven by their effort. False religion always has human effort as a very major part of it. It's a religion of works.

It doesn't have much place for faith or dependence upon God in helplessness. The leaders of false religion are mighty men, strong men, wonderful personalities like film stars. They are not weak men like Paul.

They are not people with no reputation like Peter. The leaders of false Christianity are people who seek a lot of fame, acceptance. The true prophets were always misunderstood, were called heretics and cast out by the world.

That's how Jesus was. That's how the apostles were. It begins here.

Babylon, this great system, there's unity in Babylon. It says the whole earth used the same language, 11 1. Not just the same language in terms of a particular speech, but also the same language of human might, human ability, human glory, human cleverness. That language.

And that is the language spoken by the world and that is the language spoken by a lot of people in Christendom. And I want to say it is false. Jesus Christ was crucified with weakness.

There was no beauty in him that we should desire him. This is the true faith. He washed people's feet.

He was not general director or superintendent or Pope. He was a servant. He had no title.

Babylon, they said, come. They don't need to consult God. Let us make a way to heaven.

That's how false religion is. There's no prayer. There's no waiting upon God.

I mean, there will be prayer. I mean, all religions pray, but it's a meaningless prayer. You can have an all night prayer, which is not a prayer.

Another man prays for one minute. That's a real prayer. I'm talking about real prayer.

You know how the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed for hours and nothing happened. And Elijah prayed for one minute. Fire came.

That's what I'm talking about. Some of us glory in hours spent in prayer. It's good.

Jesus spent all night provided it's real prayer, waiting on God to say, Lord, what do you want me to do? But these people don't need. They have, they've got a clever mind. Counterfeit religion depends on a man's cleverness.

It begins with man. It doesn't begin with God. The language of counterfeit religion is in the beginning, man, not in the beginning, God, like we saw yesterday.

Come, let us make bricks. Verse four, come, let us build. It originates in man and it is done through man's power.

We will make the bricks and we will build. And it is built for man's glory. You know, Paul speaks about wood, hay and straw.

Three things are gold, silver and precious stones. And the answer to that is in Romans 11 36 from God, through God and to God are all things that's gold, silver and precious stones. The opposite of that is from man through man to man are all things that's Babylon.

This is Jerusalem. How is this Babylon built from man, man's idea? Do you know how much of man's idea that is in Christian work today? Oh, man has discovered better ideas. They follow the principles of Coca-Cola company rather than the teaching of the apostles.

They run their organizations like business enterprises and not like the apostles built the church. That's the trouble from man, man's clever ideas. Why didn't Jesus give his gospel to an advertising agency? They've done a better job than those 12 apostles.

That's man's method. God's methods are different. Very few people know God's methods because very few people know God.

Man is a religious creature and he would rather have religion than God. It's uncomfortable to live with God. It's comfortable to live with religion.

You can't live with God and be a great man in the world. You can have Christianity and be a great man. People don't want God.

I'll tell you, even most believers, they want Christianity. They don't want Jesus Christ. They don't want to walk with the yoke of Jesus upon their necks.

From man through man, man's power. We don't need the Holy Spirit anymore. If we've got good music, if we've got electronic gadgets, we can serve God.

Anointing of the Holy Spirit, supernatural gifts. No wonder we are so powerless because we don't know the real secret of power that those early apostles knew. The baptism in the Holy Spirit that a lot of people speak today of to me is a counterfeit.

There is a genuine baptism of the Holy Spirit which few here and there have experienced. I would urge you to seek for that. An endowment of power that few men here and there have known which has transformed their life, which has made them into true servants of God.

But a lot that goes on by that name today in Christendom is all counterfeit. Why do I say counterfeit? Because by their fruit you shall know them. I see the fruit.

These so-called spirit-baptized people are lovers of money. How can that be? The Holy Spirit is not a lover of money. These people are lovers of power and position.

That's not the Holy Spirit. That's some other spirit. Through man and to man.

It is for man's glory. Let us make us a name. Verse 4. Years later in Daniel chapter 4 verse 30, Nebuchadnezzar said when he looked at this wonderful city of Babylon, I think it was 60 miles, 100 kilometers square.

Huge, 25 miles by 25 kilometers square city built by him with huge thick walls. I understand they were 87 feet thick and 350 feet high. A huge city with a beautiful hanging garden is one of the wonders of the world.

He looked at it and he said, is not this Babylon which I have built by the might of my power for my glory from man through man to man. Nebuchadnezzar is nearly 2,000 years after this. It's the same spirit.

And 2,500 years after Nebuchadnezzar today, it's the same spirit from man through man to man. It's the opposite of Jerusalem. I want to just say one more thing before I move on.

In 11.5 it says, and the Lord came down to see what men had built. It's been true throughout the ages. Please remember that all your life, whatever you build, the Lord will come down to see it, examine it.

And he's not examining the size of this organization you've built or the church you've built or the building you've built. He's going to examine the motive for whose glory is this. I mean, if he were examining size, boy, the tower of Babel was so impressive.

He wasn't looking for that. He's not looking for that today. We move on to the beginning of Jerusalem in chapter 12, verse one begins with Abraham through whom came the nation of Israel that occupied the land, the capital of which was Jerusalem.

It began with Abraham. Remember that this is where Jerusalem begins. There would have been no Jerusalem if there was no Abraham.

And you see in Abraham something completely different from what you see in Babylon. It says the Lord said to Abraham, go forth from your country, chapter 12, verse one, from your relatives, from your father's house to the land, which I will show you. He didn't suddenly get a bright idea.

One day, like these people in Babel saying, I think I'll move out. I've lived in Ur of the Chaldees long enough. Let's move out and let's do something.

No, it was 100% from God. Abraham was 75 years old and it's good to wait 75 years to hear God and move. Moses waited 80 years and then moved and think what he accomplished.

I'm not saying you've got to wait until 75 or 80. What I'm saying is the principle, wait until you hear from God and then move. You think busy 20th century man has time for that.

I'm thankful that when I was a young man of 20, God taught me one lesson. Don't be moved by men. Let me move you.

Don't be moved by men. Let me move you. Many men have tried to move me.

Even good men, my coworkers in my own churches. Yeah, I listened to them. I don't move.

I wait to hear God because I know I'll go into calamity. If I move at the opinions of men, I'm not saying I don't consider it. I'm not so proud to say, well, I want to consider what people say and don't ever be like that.

But I say, learn to wait on God. God said, go. And he went.

God said to Moses, go. And he went. One day, God said to Paul, go.

And he went. These are the people who accomplish something in life. Today, people run around doing this, that and the other, and they accomplish nothing.

Statistics wise, it's impressive. It's not Jerusalem. It's Babylon.

Come, let's go. Let's do something. Let's do something for the Lord.

Let's make brick. Let's make mortar. Let's do something.

And you can impress men. Let's make us a name. And you may do make a name and you die with a great name.

Having built Babylon like Nebuchadnezzar, it's happening in Christian work. That is the message of Revelation 17 and 18. But Abraham, he originated with God.

Now you realize I don't have time to tell you all about Abraham, but I want you to understand this principle that wherever Abraham moved without the leading of God, he got into trouble. For example, the Lord told him to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go where I tell you to go. And it says in verse 31 of chapter 11, Terah, that is Abraham's father, took his son and moved.

Now, what had God told him? Leave your relatives and leave your father's house. Can you imagine a 75 year old man holding his daddy's hand and walking? That's Abraham. I tell you, some of the people who are going to hinder you the most from doing the will of God will be your relatives, your parents, your brothers, your sisters, your wife, your children.

Jesus said, if any man comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, brother, sister, wife, and children, he cannot be my disciple. Because you may want to go the way your father tells you to go. Terah has to tell you where to go.

And it says Terah decided they went and they came as far as Haran, chapter 11, verse 31, and settled there. That was not God's will. Why did they settle there? Man's idea.

Haran is a good place, but it is not God's place. And Abraham settled down. He was a man who made mistakes.

And his first mistake was he listened to his father at the age of 75. And then what does God do? God can deal with those situations. He just kills Terah, verse 32.

Terah dies. Terah died and then, verse 4, chapter 12, so Abraham went forth as the Lord had spoken to him. Do you have to wait till the Lord does something drastic like that before he can get you to move on? If he loves you, he'll do something drastic.

If he sees you're a compromiser, he'll allow you to stay in Haran and die in Haran and miss the will of God. Learn to move with God. Don't listen to relatives who do not know God.

Learn to a father if he's a godly man who knows God. But not to a father who doesn't know God in spiritual things. And Abraham went forth and he came to Canaan.

It says in the last part of verse 5, chapter 12, 5, they came to the land of Canaan. And the Lord appeared to Abraham, verse 7, and said to your descendants, I'll give this land. And he built an altar there.

And he was going on okay until a test came. God tested Adam and he tested Abraham. And he will test you and me.

And the test was, verse 11, verse 10, there was a famine. Now, what do you do when God has told you to go to Canaan? There's a famine in Canaan. You either live by the witness of your senses or you live by what God has told you by his spirit.

Right? There's a wonderful verse about Jesus in Isaiah, chapter 11, verse 3 and 4, which says he would not make a judgment by what his eyes saw or his ears heard. You hear about a famine and you see a famine and you make a judgment. And if you make a judgment by what you see and what you hear, you will say Canaan is not the place.

Maybe I need to move on. You don't need to consult God now. Verse 10.

So Abraham went down to Egypt. Who told him to go to Egypt? That's not where God led him. Can't God preserve a man in famine time? Sure.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. He will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water and will not be barren even in time of famine. That is Jeremiah 17, verse 5 to 8. He will not be barren.

The man who trusts in the Lord and says, Lord, I will not move until you tell me. That's how Jesus was in the wilderness when he was tempted. Turn the stones into bread.

There's a famine here. Of course, there's a famine in the wilderness. There's no bread stores.

There's no bread, nothing. And 40 days of fasting. Turn the stones into bread.

And Jesus said, No. Man shall not live by bread. Man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

God says, And I move. But Abraham did not live by that. He decided to live by bread.

There's bread in Egypt. So let's go there. This is how a lot of Christian work goes on today.

They don't go where the Lord tells them to go. They go where they can get a good salary, where there's bread. Organizations where there is no famine of money.

The famine today is not of bread. It's of money. So we choose an organization where there is no famine of money.

That's a comfortable place. Egypt is a good place to be in. Is that the place where God wants you to be? That's the question.

I quit my job 34 years ago. I'm not just speaking as a 25 year old. I've seen quite a bit of Christian work.

And I'm telling you after what I've seen in 34 years of moving around. Most people, when there is a famine, they go to Egypt. And if you don't remember what you heard this morning, you will do the same thing when you face the test.

Learn to live by the mouth of God what comes from the mouth of God. Like Jesus said, it's better to die. Bread is not necessary for me.

To obey God is necessary. That's the temptation the devil came even to Jesus with. Don't you think he'll come to you with that? There's no bread here.

There's bread in that organization. There's no money here. There's money in that organization.

There's money in that church. Go there. God have mercy on you that you don't make that mistake.

What was the result? I don't have time to go into all the details. He went to Egypt. We read there that he had to tell a lie there that his wife was his sister.

You get into a lot of problems when you go to Egypt. You'll have to tell lies, send false reports, tell things that are not true, compromise your conscience. Even when Pharaoh took Sarah, Sarah must have been about 65 or 70, but she must have been a very attractive woman even at that age for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to take the 70-year-old woman into his harem.

She was a godly woman. Even when Abraham sees his wife being taken into a harem to be polluted and corrupted, this man is too scared to say, hey hang on, that's my wife. He's afraid of his life.

Some of us who think we are very spiritual in a tight spot, we discover whether we will speak the truth or not. That's an encouragement for us that Abraham was not a super spiritual man who never made any mistake. He was a man who made mistakes.

He was a man who held his daddy's hand at the age of 75. He was a man who told a lie even when his wife was going to get polluted and corrupted. God saved him from both situations.

God did not allow Pharaoh to touch his wife and saved him. And I believe God will save you if he sees that your heart is sincere like Abraham's, even if you make mistakes. That's my encouragement.

And the other problem that he had there was, and you know, just one more thing I want to say that Pharaoh was the one who rebuked Abraham. Verse 18. Can you imagine a heathen king rebuking a prophet of God and saying, why are you telling me a lie? Sometimes God's people get into compromising situations where the worldly people have to correct them.

It's all because he went to Egypt. And now I'll tell you something which was much more serious than all this. These are only temporary things.

Something else happened in Egypt that has produced consequences for 4,000 years. You know what that was? When he went to Egypt and he saw all these rich people and the rich people had servant women in their house, he picked up an Egyptian servant woman called Hagar and came back from Egypt. Now with the helper in the house, his wife didn't have to do all the work.

Hagar was there. And lo and behold, a little later, when Sarah doesn't have children, he decides to have a child through Hagar. And through Hagar came Ishmael.

And I don't want to talk about all that came through Ishmael. All I want to say is, it all started with one man not listening to God once. You say, well, most of the time I listen to God.

Okay, but see here the consequences of not listening to God once. And I hope that will hit home to us the seriousness. How is Jerusalem built? It must be from God.

When there is a famine, you've got to wait on God and say, Lord, what do you want me to do? Maybe God will tell you to go somewhere. That's fine. If God tells you to go, go.

If God tells you to turn the stones into bread, turn it. If God tells you to move to another place or another church, do that. Wait for God.

That's the point. And now I want to show you something good about Abraham. I mentioned these things at the beginning just to show that Abraham was an ordinary man like us.

We shouldn't be discouraged by our failures. In chapter 13, we read there was a strife between him, between his servants, actually not between him. Abraham was the type of man who wouldn't fight with anybody.

But it says in 13 seven that there was a strife between the servants of Abraham and the servants of Lot. And it's very interesting what it says there. There was a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's livestock and Lot's herdsmen of Lot's livestock 13 seven.

And now the Canaanite and the parasite were dwelling in the land. Why that sentence? What's the connection? The connection is that the heathen people living in the land were watching these so-called godly men fighting with each other. It's very relevant to today's situation.

Absolutely relevant to today's Christendom. The Canaanite and the parasite are dwelling in the land. The heathen are dwelling in the land.

And what do they see? Two Christian groups fighting with each other. That's what they say. And in the midst of this, can we find a godly man like Abraham today, who will call Lot the worldly person who loves money and say to him, let there be no strife between you and me.

We are brothers. They were not brothers. Abraham was an uncle.

Lot was his nephew. See the graciousness of this 75 year old man to this 35 year old nephew of his. We are brothers.

A godly man is a humble man. He may be 75 years old. He can look at a man 35 years younger to him and say, you're my brother.

You're equal to me. I'll give you first preference. Choose what you want.

This is how Jerusalem is built, by such men. Christendom needs such leaders. And they are not easily found.

We have leaders who assert their authority and say, do you know who I am? I'm 75 years old. I'm your uncle. I'm the one whom God called, not you.

You just tagged along and came along with me. You don't get people like Abraham much around these days, unfortunately. And that's why Christendom is in the shape it is in.

And he said to Abraham, Abraham said to Lot, if you go to the right, I'll go to the left. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right. You take what you want first.

And Lot, greedy man that he was, with the spirit of Babylon, he grabbed. He looked at the lovely fields of Sodom, the opportunity to make money there, the rich people there. And he said, I'll move there.

And I'll serve God. There are people who like to move to wealthy countries to serve God. They usually lose out spiritually.

I'll tell you that. I've seen it again and again and again and again and again. Do you move because God led you or because there's something else that attracts you? I'm always amazed how people who live in the United States can have a burden for India.

I mean, you can have burden for the United States, but how can you live there and have burden for India? I can't understand that. It puzzles me. Jesus didn't live in Rome and have long distance ministry to Palestine.

Well, we're not here to judge them. I'm only here to warn you. What I want to say here is after Abraham took this decision and Lot went again, just like in Babel, it says the Lord came down to see what they were doing.

The Lord was watching how his servant was going to behave with Lot. And when he saw Abraham conduct himself in such a godly way, after Lot was separated from him, 1314, the Lord said to Abraham, that's very important. God first separated his father by death.

And then he separated another relative who was a hindrance by that man's covetousness. Okay, Abraham, now you're alone. Now I can get you to go where I want you to go.

Now I can get you to be what I want you to be. And the Lord said, now I saw exactly what happened. Do you know that every transaction that takes place between people, God watches it? He watches your attitude.

Have you given up something because you want to be a Christian? Have you given up your rights? God says, I saw that. Now, Abraham, just stand here. Look north, south, east, west.

All of this will be yours. I promise it to you. It won't be the descendants of Lot.

God said that to Abraham 4000 years ago. Look at that land today, 4000 years later and ask yourself who's living there. It's the descendants of Abraham, not the descendants of Lot.

God keeps his word. He keeps his word. Thousands of years may go by, but if God said to Abraham, this land, which you see, verse 15, I will give it to you and your descendants forever.

It will be like that. And then we see here further in chapter 14, Lot got into trouble in Sodom. You always get into trouble when you go outside the will of God.

He got captured by the enemies and Abraham could have said serves him right. The fellow grabbed something from me, but he doesn't do that. And there you see another test for Abraham.

What will be Abraham's attitude when he sees this man who cheated him getting into trouble? You know, when somebody who cheated you gets into trouble, you discover whether you're a man of God or not. Abraham said, let me go and help him. That's a godly man.

Okay. He cheated me. But what did he cheat me off? The garbage of earthly things.

That's nothing. I've got heavenly riches. I feel sorry for that poor man, Lot.

He went after earthly things. Now he's in trouble. Let me go and help him.

That's the attitude of a godly man. These are the type of people who build Jerusalem. And he went and he helped him and delivered him.

And on his way back when he was exhausted after the battle, and possibly proud that just with 318 servants, he went and destroyed so many armies of so many kings. Exhausted. Proud.

Third, in danger of collecting all that wealth that he accumulated through winning this battle. In those days, if you won a battle, all the gold and silver was yours. So he was in danger of exhaustion.

He was exhausted. He was probably in danger of pride and danger of covetousness. At that time, God sends a servant of his to Abraham.

Isn't that wonderful to see that? Some unknown man living out there who is in touch with God called Melchizedek. You read about him in chapter 14 verse 18. Now, the reason why Melchizedek is important is because in Psalm 110 in verse 4, Jesus is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

And in Hebrews 7, that is confirmed. And Melchizedek comes here. It's the only place in scripture where Melchizedek comes.

From verse 18 up to verse 20. How many verses is that? Only three verses. That's all.

Melchizedek comes, disappears, and he's done his ministry. And God says to Jesus, you are a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, not according to Levi or any of these other people. How is it this man who appears just for a few verses in the Bible has become so important? That's why it's important for us to see it.

First of all, he was king of Salem. Verse 18, Jerusalem. I told you we are talking about Jerusalem, the opposite of Babylon, the true church.

And there was a priest in this church. All of us are supposed to be priests according to the order of Melchizedek. Jesus is the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

And we're supposed to be priests according to that order. He was the king of Salem. We are called to be kings too.

He has made us kings and we shall reign on this earth. We're called to rule over sin. We're called to rule over our passions.

What did he do? He first of all brought food. Christianity is 100% practical. If a man is exhausted, he doesn't need a sermon, he needs food.

And there's nothing unspiritual about that. The most spiritual thing you can do for an exhausted man is give him food. When Elijah was exhausted, it says the angel came and gave him food.

After the resurrection, when Jesus saw the disciples coming back after a whole night of fishing, he had already prepared breakfast for them, John 21. That is spirituality. That's the spirituality we need to learn.

To help one another with food, with material things, where there is a need. That's the first thing which is a mark of the order of Melchizedek. And then it says he blessed him.

Verse 19. He didn't criticize him. There is no criticism in the order of Melchizedek.

There's no accusation. It's blessing. And how does he bless him? He says, blessed be Abraham of God, most high possessor of heaven and earth.

What's he trying to tell Abraham? Listen, Abraham, your God in heaven owns heaven and earth. What is this little bit of gold that you've got back from the war? That's what he's trying to put into Abraham's head. To deliver him from his covetousness.

Secondly, and blessed be God, most high, who delivered your enemies into your hand. If you didn't get that victory, God gave it to you. Delivering him from pride.

Now, how did Melchizedek know that Abraham had these three problems? That he was exhausted, needed food, that he was in danger of covetousness, that he was in danger of pride, that he comes with exactly the right ministries, like an arrow that went straight to the bull's eye. You know how? Because he was a man who listened to God. Not a man who lived by his bright ideas.

A man who listened to God and when God told him there in his tent, get up, take some food. I give you a two-sentence message for a servant of mine whom you have never seen, who's coming down that road. Go.

And like Philip went to meet the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza, Melchizedek got up and went, not knowing whom he was to meet. When he went there, he saw this man whom he's meeting for the first time in his life. He said, God told me to give you some food.

Praise God who owns heaven and earth. Praise God who delivered your enemies into your hand. Praise the Lord.

Abraham, I'm off. What a ministry to bless people and disappear. Not to hang around there to get some honor.

No, no, no. The priesthood of Melchizedek is one that ministers and disappears. King of Salem, Abraham and Melchizedek.

This is how Jerusalem is built. I want you to see further now in chapter 16, how Sarah suggested. No, before that, I want you to see chapter 15, verse five.

One day the Lord took Abraham outside and said, look at the heavens as the stars there. If you're able to count them, that's how many descendants you're going to have. And he didn't have even one.

Then you're going to have, and there are millions of stars in the sky. And it says here, Abraham believed in the Lord. Verse six.

He said, I'm in the word believe in Hebrew is a man from which we get the English word. I'm in. It means it shall be so.

What that verse means. Abraham's when God said, you're going to have seed as the stars of the sky. Abraham said it shall be so.

Yeah, that's it. And it was like that today. It is like that.

The children of Abraham physically and spiritually are in millions. He said, I'm in. And that's faith.

Faith means when God has said something, you say, I'm in faith. Always is based on the word of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

That's what we read in Romans 10, 17 faith comes by hearing. You will never have faith. If you don't learn to listen to God, Abraham heard God.

Now, a lot of people today are trying to have faith for something. God has not spoken. I want a Mercedes car and I'm going to have faith and it's going to be green color or black color.

I'm going to have faith for that. This is garbage. This is not faith.

This is presumption. It's tempting God. Faith is based on God speaking first and I'm saying it shall be so.

Please remember this all your life and you'll be delivered from false faith. It begins with God, not with you. God says you're going to have this or you're going to do this.

I say, I'm in. It shall be so. It will be so, Lord.

What begins with you will be Babylon. What begins with God will be Jerusalem. So God said, you're going to have stars.

He said, I'm in and you must keep saying I'm into God all your life. Now, the problem in chapter 16 was after God had said that, Sarah said, now 16 verse 2, the Lord has prevented me from having children. Please take my maid, have children through her.

Have children through her. And what did Abraham say to Sarah? I'm in. That's the problem.

You say I'm into God and then you go and say I'm into Sarah and then you're into real problems that last for 4,000 years. Have you learned a lesson? Will you remember it all your life? Stop saying I'm into men when God has said something else. God can take care of his problems without man's ways.

You don't need Sarah's advice. God can do it. Otherwise, you can cause problems for a lot of other people.

Think of the problems Abraham has caused for people today because he said I'm into Sarah. You know, you cause problems not only for yourself. If you cause problems for yourself, that would be okay.

But you cause problems for other people. That's the thing. And so Ishmael is born, verse 15.

And I want you to notice something here. When Ishmael is born, verse 16, Abraham is 86 years old. And what does the next verse say? Abraham was 99 years old when the Lord appeared to him.

What happened during those 13 years? Silence. You wanted to say I'm into Sarah? Okay, you got to learn a lesson now. I won't speak to you for 13 years.

And I'm not going to speak to you till you learn to value my voice more than anything else. Yeah, my brother, God is very strict. He teaches us some hard lessons.

13 years, he never heard a word. He thought I could produce Ishmael. By the time he was 99, he couldn't produce anything.

And God said, okay, he doesn't give up on us. He said, okay, now I'll teach you. Your name, verse 5, will no longer be called Abraham, exalted father, but you'll be called the father of a multitude.

You won't have just a name. You'll be actually the father of a multitude. And Abraham said yes.

And within one year, he got a son. When things were helpless, God gave him a son, because he finally again learned to say amen to God. He changed his name.

God said, you're going to be a father of a multitude. He said, amen. Lord, I've learned my lesson.

13 years of silence. I am in Sarah and I got into a lot of trouble. But now at last, thank God, you've spoken to me again.

And he gets a child at the age of 100. But before that, God told him to circumcise everybody in his family. And circumcision is a cutting off of the flesh.

In the New Testament, it symbolizes no confidence in the flesh. Philippians 3.3. We are the true circumcision, who have no confidence in the flesh. That's the meaning of circumcision that comes in chapter 17.

What God was telling Abraham was you must not depend on yourself. Learn to trust me. Then we read that Lot gets into trouble again.

We read a little bit of Abraham's hospitality to the strangers in chapter 18. Don't forget to be hospitable to strangers, because some people have entertained angels unaware, as it says in Hebrews 13. That's referring to Genesis 18, where a godly man is always hospitable, warm and good, even to strangers.

And there the Lord speaks to Abraham saying, I'm going to destroy Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah. And again, Abraham is concerned about Lot. See, Lot hadn't learned a lesson.

He got into trouble again. He went back into the same place. And Abraham is still the same godly man who prays and delivers Lot out of that situation and brings him out.

But his wife gets left behind as a pillar of salt. That's the thing with Jesus referred to saying in the time of the rapture, two will be in one bed, husband and wife. One will be taken like Lot.

The other will be left. You read that in Luke 17. That's referring to what happened in Genesis 19.

It's a sad story. Genesis 19. He lost his wife.

His daughters married people in Sodom. And finally his daughters committed adultery with him, incest. And it says here, they got two children.

The name of those children are in chapter 19, verse 37 and 38, Ammon and Moab, from whom came the Ammonites and the Moabites. And that's why you find the conflict between the children of Israel and the Moabites, the Ammonites, throughout. It started here, when a man who had the opportunity to go along with Abraham missed God's will and went.

I want to show you finally Genesis chapter 22, where it says here about God saying for the first time to a man, now I know that you fear me. It's when Abraham offered up Isaac. Abraham was probably 125 years old now.

And God says, I want to test you to see whether you love me still more like you loved me at first. Give up your son and take three days to think about it. I'm not asking you to offer him here tomorrow.

Walk three days journey to Moriah. Think about it. God never asks us to act in a hurry.

He walks three days, goes to Mount Moriah, lays Isaac on the altar and says, Lord, here you are. That shows Abraham's dedication. It shows also Isaac's dedication.

Who is stronger, a 25-year-old young man or 125-year-old old man? Abraham could not have tied Isaac down on that altar if Isaac had not willingly complied. It shows how that man brought up his son. Blessed is a man who can bring up his son in such a way that when he says to him, listen, I'm going to kill you, lie down here.

The son says, okay, dad, you can be sure that's a godly man, the way he brought up his son. Yeah, you see Abraham's godliness there. And God says to him, now I know that you fear me and I will greatly multiply you.

It says in verse 15 to 18, verse 12. Now I know that you fear me. The first place when the Bible where it says a man feared God was when a man worshipped God by saying, God, I love you more than my son.

I know I left Ur of the Chaldees 50 years ago, but my love for you is still the same. And blessed will you be my brothers and sisters, if to the end of your life, you can go that way. Wholehearted, dedicated.

That's the way Abraham went. Before he finishes his life, we read also in Genesis 24, he has a concern for his son and he sends his servant to get a bride for his son. Look at this man, how he lived all through his life, concerned for others, living for God and finally died.

It was through this man that Jerusalem in a new way started. And this is the one whom God calls us to follow as an example in the Old Testament. Let's pray.

The scripture is given that we might become perfect, complete, equipped for every good work. Let's respond to God. Heavenly Father, help us to respond wholeheartedly to the truth of your word.

To follow in the footsteps of Abraham, the man of faith who made mistakes, but to learn to trust you. Help us also in Jesus name.

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