



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 32



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

ABRAHAM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BEERSHEBA

Gen 21:22 "And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: ²³ Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. ²⁴ And Abraham said, I will swear. ²⁵ And Abraham reproveth Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. ²⁶ And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing; neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. ²⁷ And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. ²⁸ And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. ²⁹ And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? ³⁰ And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. ³¹ Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them. ³² Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. ³³ And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. ³⁴ And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days." (Genesis 21:22-34)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Abimelech and the chief captain of his hosts acknowledge they perceive the blessing of God upon Abraham. They ask the patriarch to show kindness to Abimelech, his son, and his son's son, and Abraham swears that he will do so. Notwithstanding, he reproves Abimelech because of a well of water his servants had taken away. Abimelech affirms that he had no knowledge of this misdeed.

Abraham then makes a covenant

with Abimelech in which it is confirmed that he had dug the well now before them. Abimelech and his captain then return to the land of the Philistines.

Abraham plants a grove in Beersheba, and calls upon the name of the Lord, "the everlasting God." He then sojourned in the Philistine's land many days, doing so with an acute awareness that this was part of the land that God had promised to him and his seed.

Thus Abraham continues walking through the land, as the Lord commanded him, surveying the inheritance that had been promised to him and his seed.

At the point of our text, approximately two thousand years have passed since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden. A staggering number of people have been born. I have already shown that billions of people were probably living at the time of the flood. If the population doubled

Abimelech and the captain of his host ask Abraham to show them kindness. Abraham rebukes the king for taking away a well - Given O. Blakely

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every year until the flood, that would account for over one trillion people. Considering that the life-span was significantly longer for a good number of those years, this estimate is a distinct possibility.

Yet, in the revelation of that period of time, God gave extensive explanation about only a few people – some with many words, and some with only a few. Following is a list of **twenty-eight people** that fall into the category of those given special note. I have also included the introduction to Satan who appeared in the Garden in for form of a serpent.

PEOPLE INTRODUCED IN GENESIS (EXCLUDING THOSE MENTIONED ONLY IN GENEALOGIES)

1. **ADAM AND EVE** (2:19-23; 3:1-24; 4:25; 5:1-5)–
THE PROGENITOR OF THE HUMAN RACE.
2. **SATAN** (3:1-6)– *THE ARCH-FOE*
3. **CAIN** (GEN 4:1-17) – *A CHILD OF THE WICKED ONE.*
4. **ABEL** (4:2-4,25) – *A MAN ACCEPTED BY GOD.*
5. **LAMECH** (4:18-24) – *AN IMMORAL MAN.*

6. **SETH** (4:25-26) – *THE SUBSTITUTE FOR ABEL.*
7. **ENOCH** (5:18-24) – *FIRST MAN TO WALK WITH GOD.*
8. **NOAH** (5:29-32; 6:8-9:29) – *FIRST MAN SAID TO HAVE FOUND GRACE IN GOD’S EYES.*
9. **HAM** (9:22-24; 10:6,20) – *KNOWN FOR A THOUGHTLESS AND DISRESPECTFUL DEED.*
10. **CANAAN** (9:25; 10:15-19)– *FIRST MAN JUDGED BECAUSE OF THE SIN OF ANOTHER.*
11. **SHEM** (7:13; 9:23-27; 10:21-22, 31; 11:10-11) – *CHOSEN AS A PROGENITOR OF THE MESSIANIC SEED.*
12. **JAPHETH** (9:13,17; 10:1-2)– *GOD WOULD ENLARGE HIS PROGENY, AND THEY WOULD DWELL WITH THE DESCENDANTS OF SHEM.*
13. **NIMROD** (10:8-9)– *FIRST FAMOUS MAN AND KINGDOM BUILDER.*
14. **TERAH** (11:24-32)–*THE FATHER OF ABRAHAM.*
15. **NAHOR** (11:22-29)–*A BROTHER OF ABRAHAM.*
16. **ABRAHAM** (11:26-31; 12:1-18; 13:1-18; 14:13-23; 15:1–18; 16:1-16; 17:1-26; 18:1-33; 19:27-29; 20:1-18; 21:1-34)– *THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL.*
17. **SARAH** – *THE WIFE OF ABRAHAM.* (11:29-31; 12:5,11-17; 16:1-8; 17:15–21; 18:6-15; 20:2,14-18; 21:1-12)
18. **LOT** (11:27-31; 12:4-5; 13:1-12; 14:12-16; 19:1-36)– *THE NEPHEW OF ABRAHAM, WHO*

20. **KING OF SODOM** (14:2,8, 17-21).– *KNOWN FOR HIS ASSOCIATION WITH A DECADENT CITY.*
21. **CHEDORLAOMER** (14:1-9; 17).– *A MIGHTY KING DEFEATED BY ABRAHAM.*
22. **MELCHIZEDEK** (14:18-20). *THE KING OF SALEM, AND HIGH PRIEST OF GOD, BEING A TYPE OF JESUS CHRIST.*
23. **ELIEZER** (15:2)– *STEWARD OF ABRAHAM’S HOUSE.*
24. **LOT’S WIFE** (19:15-16; 26) – *HELD OUT AS AN EXAMPLE OF LOOKING BACK, AND BEING DESTROYED.*
25. **LOT’S DAUGHTERS**(19:8, 12-116, 30-36)– *SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPED SODOM WITH THEIR FATHER, LOT.*
26. **HAGAR** (16:1-16; 21:9-17)– *MOTHER OF ISHMAEL, AND DECLARED TYPE OF THE LAW.*
27. **ISHMAEL** (16:11-16; 17:18-26; 21:12-20).– *ABRAHAM’S SON THROUGH HAGAR, AND A TYPE OF THOSE WHO ARE BORN OF THE FLESH.*
28. **ABIMELECH** (20:2-18; 21:22-32)–*A PHILISTINE KING WHO HAD ASSOCIATIONS WITH ABRAHAM.*

SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

In reviewing this rather cursory observation concerning the record of individuals during the first two thousand years of human history, some preliminary observations are in order.

Yet, in the revelation of that period of time, God gave extensive explanation about only a few people – some with many words, and some with only a few.

19. **PHARAOH OF EGYPT** (12:15-20)– *KNOWN FOR HIS TREATMENT OF ABRAHAM.*

➡ It should be obvious that there is some agenda, or purpose, that is driving this history. This is particularly made known in the promises made to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 13:1-17; 15:5,7,13-16; 17:2-8,16,19; 18:14; 21:12). Later,

Abimelech and the captain of his host ask Abraham to show them kindness. Abraham rebukes the king for taking away a well – Given O. Blakely

it will be defined as an *“eternal purpose”* (Eph 3:11). That purpose is then expounded by the apostles, who put the Foundation in place (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:9-11; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 John 3:8).

- ➔ **This being true, the thing to be known is the agenda itself.** God is *“working salvation in the midst of the earth”* (Psa 74:12). The apostles frequently opened up what God is doing in Christ Jesus, even praying that the people of God might know these things (Eph 1:15-20; 3:15-20;
- ➔ **The fact that key people were chosen (Seth, Noah, Abraham), indicates that this is a controlled agenda.** God is managing it, choosing whom He wills, directing them, and using them in the fulfillment of His purpose.

➔ **The fact that hindering influences are removed indicates the superiority of both the agenda and the One who formed and controls it.** Men may appear to be free, but when it comes to the purpose of God, they are not. No created being can thwart or distort what God is doing.

➔ **Something more is involved than providing the needs of humanity.** It is true, God does provide for humanity (Gen 1:29; Psa 104:14; 136:25; 146:7), as well as the beasts of the earth (Gen 1:30; Psa 147:9) and fowls of the air (Matt 6:26; Lk 12:24). But more is involved in the working of God than those things.

The Word of God is written in such a manner as to draw attention to God, what He is doing, and to His people. **It is quite possible to miss these emphases**

altogether. This happens when men place a theological template over the Bible, so it is read with human perceptions in mind. It may be what is called a hermeneutic – a science of interpretation that professes to bring true understand to the reader. It may be through a movement and its principles – like the Reformation Movement, or the Restoration Movement, or the Azusa Revival. **God has so ordained the writing of Scripture so that it appears to the unbelieving person just as though his perception is right.**

Scripture refers to this as *“strong delusion”* (2 Thess 2:11). It prohibits a person from seeing the truth, and thus one *“cannot believe”* – just as it was said of those among whom Jesus *“had done so many miracles”* – *“Therefore, they could not believe”* (John 12:39). Much of this circumstance exists today. If fact it is very prominent.

THE RECOGNITION OF GOD’S BLESSING

Gen 21:22 ***“And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest . . . ”***

As we proceed through this text, there is a certain perspective that is

him. Let me remind you of the consistency of this emphasis.

➔ When Terah and his household was mentioned, the attention was quickly shifted to Abram (Gen 11:25-12:1).

(Gen 11:29-31; 12:5-17; 16:1-8; 117:15-21; 18:6-15; 20:2,14-18; 21:1-12).

➔ When the land of *“Canaan”* was mentioned, it was because of God’s promise to Abram (Gen 12:5; 13:12; 16:3; 17:8).

➔ When *“Sichem”* and *“the plain of Moreh”* were mentioned, it is because Abram was there (Gen 12:6).

➔ When *“Bethel”* was mentioned, it was because Abram was there (Gen 12:8; 13:3).

➔ When *“Egypt”* was mentioned, it was because Abram journeyed there (Gen 12:10,11,14; 13:1,10; 15:18; 21:21).

➔ When the *“Egyptians”* and *“Pharaoh”* were mentioned, it is because of their contact with Abram (Gen 12:12,14,15,17, 18,20).

➔ When *“the princes of Pharaoh”* were

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➔ When the cities of Ur and Haran were mentioned, it was because Abram was there (Gen 11:28,31; 12:4-5; 15:7).

➔ Sarah (formerly Sarai) is mentioned because she was the wife of Abram

mentioned, it was because of their knowledge of Abram (Gen 12:15).

➔ When the “house” of Pharaoh was mentioned, it was because of his dealings with Abram (Gen 12:17).

➔ When “Hai” was mentioned, it was because Abram was camped near to it (Gen 13:3).

➔ When “Lot” was mentioned, it was because of his relationship with Abram (Gen 11:27,31; 12:4,5; 13:1,5,8,10-12,14; 14:12,16; 19:1-36).

➔ When “Sodom and Gomorrah” were mentioned, it was because of Abram (Gen 13:10-13; 18:16-26; 19:1-4, 24,28).

➔ When “the men of Sodom” were mentioned, it was in the context of God’s dealings with Abram (Gen 13:13).

➔ When “Hebron” and “the plain of Mamre” were mentioned, it is because of Abram’s presence (Gen 13:18; 14:13,24; 18:1).

➔ When “the king of Sodom” was mentioned, it was because of his contact with Abraham (Gen 14:2,8,17,21-22).

➔ When the kings “Amraphel,” “Arioch,” “Chedorlaomer,” “Tidal,” and the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar were mentioned, it was because of their association with Abram (14:1-13).

➔ When “the country of the Amalekites,” and “the Amorites,” together with the place of “Hazezontamer” were mentioned, it was because of their association with Abram (Gen 14:7; 15:16).

➔ When “the vale of Siddim” was mentioned, it was because of its association with Abram (Gen 14:3, 8,10).

➔ When mention is made of “Mamre the Amorite,” “Eshcol,” and “Aner,”

it is because they were “confederate with Abram” (Gen 14:13,24).

➔ “Damascus” is mentioned because of its association with Abram (Gen 14:15).

➔ “Melchizedek” is mentioned because of his blessing of Abram *(Gen 14:18-20).

➔ Mention is made of “Eliezer,” because he was the steward of Abram’s house (Gen 15:2).

➔ The “river of Egypt” and the “river Euphrates” are mentioned because of God’s promise to Abram (Gen 15:18).

➔ The nations occupying Canaan are mentioned because of God’s promise to Abram (Gen 15:19-21).

➔ “Hagar” and “Ishmael” are mentioned because of their association with Abram (Gen 16:1-16; 17:18-26; 21:9-17).

➔ “The way to Shur” is mentioned because of matters relating to Abram (Gen 16:7).

➔ The well of “Beerlahairoi,” “Kadesh,”

recorded because those cities related to matters concerning Abraham (Gen 19).

➔ The experience of Lot in Sodom is reported because of his relationship to Abraham (Gen 19).

➔ Lot’s wife and daughters are mentioned because of their relationship to Abraham (Gen 19:14; 16-32).

➔ The record of Lot’s wife turning to a pillar of salt is reported because of her relationship to Abraham (Gen 19:26).

➔ The origin of the Moabites and Ammonites is recorded because of matters relating to Abraham (Gen 19:37-38).

➔ “Kadesh,” “Shur,” and “Gerar” are mentioned because of Abraham’s presence (Gen 20:1).

➔ Abimelech, King of Gerar, his household, servants, and his military are mentioned because of the associations with Abraham (Gen 20:1-18; 21:22-33).

➔ “The wilderness of Beersheba” is

I have listed forty names of people, nations, kings, cities, countries, plains, and nations – and specific events associated with them, that have been mentioned ONLY because of their association with Abraham.

and “Bered” are mentioned because of matters relating to Abram (Gen 15:14).

➔ Three heavenly messengers are mentioned because of their visitation of Abraham (Gen 18:1-33).

➔ The destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim is

mention because of matters relating to Abraham (Gen 21:14).

➔ The message of an angel to Hagar is reported because it was related to matters concerning Abraham (Gen 21:17-18).

➔ The “wilderness of Paran” is first mentioned because of matters

relating to Abraham (Gen 21:21).

➔ “Beersheba” is mentioned because of matters relating to Abraham (Gen 21:14,31-33).

All Because of Abraham!

I have listed forty names of people, nations, kings, cities, countries, plains, and nations – and specific events associated with them, that have been mentioned ONLY because of their association with Abraham.

If it were not for God’s dealings with Abraham, the Scriptures would not have mentioned these things – and that is only from Genesis 11:27 through 21:34!

A Divine Manner

This again accents that what God reveals is related to His purpose. He is not merely passing along some interesting information. His revelations have exclusively to do with the working

This is a day when the Christian religion has become popular – as in the days of Constantine, when Christianity became the religion of the empire of Rome. It was not that Constantine particularly sought for Jesus Christ to be honored and glorified. He rather thought the religion of reference to be a good way to promote the Empire, which was in a state of decline. **The popularization of Christianity became the means of its demise, which continues to this very day.**

What happens during a time like that is that the EMPHASIS of religion shifts, so that it becomes more palatable to the masses. In order for this to happen the exalted Christ must take a back seat to other prevailing interests. Sometimes the prominent concern is country and national pride, or perhaps the family structure, or the success of the individual. It can even be the church itself. **When such a shift of emphasis takes place, it emits a**

People, places, things, and events are always presented within the context of the Person of God and what He is doing. Sometimes there are centuries of time during which no particular person or circumstance is addressed by God. Great men like Noah, Abraham, Melchisedec, the prophets, John the Baptist, Paul, etc. are presented within the context of Divine purpose – and there are no exceptions.

It is time for men to reflect this kind of priority. During the time in which Scripture was being written many famous people were born, performed great exploits, and made astounding impressions upon society. Yet, there is no reference to them in the Bible, even though considerable space is given to records of them in history books, encyclopedias, and other writings. The reason for this circumstance is that those persons, and what they did, had no immediate connection with the purpose of God, or what He was doing in the earth.

It will be interesting, to say the least, to hear the Divine assessment of prominent Christians who, in this world, sought to emphasize something other than things having Divine focus. **Preachers, teachers, church leaders, authors, etc., who have drawn the attention of the people to things which only have relevance in “this present evil world” will surely be called into account.** In the meantime, while we await the return of the Bridegroom, and the day of judgment, let those who speak and write in the name of the Lord make sure they have a proper emphasis – that they have an accentuation that is in keeping with what God has underscored.

ABIMELECH AND PHICHOL

“And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham...”

It had apparently been some time since Abraham was in contact with Abimelech. Since Sarah had been restored to Abraham, and Abimelech and his household were healed through the prayer of Abraham, Isaac had been

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out of His eternal purpose. Matters that are not directly related to that purpose are simply not revealed from heaven. There is such a remarkable consistency in this manner that it simply cannot be questioned.

This being true, modern day purported prophecies that have to do with weather, the jostling of nations, etc., are to be questioned. If there is not an obvious association with the purpose of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, they are nothing more than fleshly observations, or are the purposeful delusions of the devil.

spiritual fog that obscures the purpose of God. Religious men no longer hold the Scriptures in honor, and tend to create a vocabulary and emphasis that furthers their own interests. It also becomes quite common for newer and purportedly better versions of the Scripture to be released during such times – even Bibles that also contain the commentaries of men. **All of this is designed to leave certain impressions on the mind that do not necessarily reflect the mind and purpose of the Lord.**

The Scriptures themselves expose the fallaciousness of such an approach.

born, been weaned at the age of three, and Hagar and Ishmael had been cast out of the house of Abraham.

Now, after at least three years, and most likely more, Abimelech and his captain come to speak with Abraham. **The text suggests that they had in some way been observing Abraham, although there is no record of any involvement with him since the incident involving Sarah.**

Our text says that Abimelech and his captain spoke to Abraham *“at that time.”* I gather that this was the *“time”* when Hagar and Ishmael were cast out of the house – at least in that general time-frame. Remember, Moses is writing this about five hundred years after the events had occurred, and is doing so by the inspiration of God. It seems to me that it is best to consider the time, then, in view of the events reported in the record.

GOD IS WITH THEE

“...saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest...” Other versions read, *“with you in everything you do,”* ^{NIV} *“It is evident that God helps you in everything you do,”* ^{LIVING} *“No matter what you do, God is on your side.”* ^{MESSAGE}

Abimelech had witnessed this in Abraham’s life, and especially in his prayer for him. **He did not trace the success of Abraham to his intelligence or giftedness, but to God Almighty – even though he had a very limited knowledge of God.** He knew, however, that in the matter of Sarah, God sided with Abraham.

The blessing of God upon those He has chosen has often been noted.

- ➔ For example, Abimelech made the same observation later of Isaac: *“We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee”* (Gen 26:28).
- ➔ God Himself said to Jacob, *“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken*

to thee of” (Gen 28:15).

- ➔ Laban said to Jacob, *“I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake”* (Gen 30:27).
- ➔ It was said of Joseph, **“And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand”** (Gen 39:3).
- ➔ Again it is said of Joseph, *“The keeper of the prison looked not to*

spoken by Isaiah, “Thus saith the LORD, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God” (Isa 45:14).

- ➔ Zechariah prophesied of Israel, *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him*

The ultimate example of Divine blessing and prosperity is found in the Lord Jesus Himself. It is said of Him, “pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.”

any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper” (Gen 39:23).

- ➔ God said to Joshua, *“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.”* (Josh 1:7). And again, ***“And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.”*** (Josh 3:7)
- ➔ It was said of Solomon, *“And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly”* (2 Chron 1:1).
- ➔ One of God’s promises to Israel was

that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech 8:23).

The ultimate example of Divine blessing and prosperity is found in the Lord Jesus Himself. It is said of Him, ***“pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.”*** (Isa 53:10)

In the case of Abraham, it was glaringly evident, for those who could see it, that Abraham’s life was a testimony that God was with him. This was an example of a person’s light shining (Matt 5:16). It is also an example of being *“approved of men”* (Rom 14:18).

What This Does NOT Mean

This does NOT mean that the person who is blessed of God never experiences adversity or trouble. Abraham had his wife taken from him two times (Gen 12:15; 20:2), and experienced famine (Gen 12:10). Jacob had to flee for his life (Gen 27:41-46), and had his wages unjustly changed ten

times (Gen 31:41). Joseph was sent to prison on the basis of a lie for about thirteen years (Gen 39:20), and was hurt by shackles (Psa 105:17-19).

The presence and blessing of the Lord was confirmed by the recovery of these men of faith from their trials. God did not allow them to be overcome by circumstance, but rather enabled them to overcome circumstance. It is possible

to be blessed by God in a prison (Gen 40:3), a furnace of fire (Gen 3:25), and a lion's den (Dan 6:22).

It is my persuasion that our light shines the brightest when we are not overcome by trial, and are evidently nourished through them. This is an aspect of God working all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His

purpose (Rom 8:28).

It ought to be noted that professed believers who are overcome by trial, and faint when they are going through difficult circumstances are also noted by the ungodly. They are a reproach to God, and their lives contradict their profession. We may sympathize with them, but their unbelief is too obvious to ignore.

A PLEA FOR KINDNESS

"²³ Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. ²⁴ And Abraham said, I will swear."

SWEAR BY GOD

"Now therefore swear unto me here by God . . ." Other versions read, "swear to me here before God," ^{NIV} "give me your oath, in the name of God," ^{BBE} "swear an oath to me here in front of God," ^{GWN} "swear to me right here in God's name," ^{NET} "I want you to promise in the name of God," ^{CEV} and "make a vow here in the presence of God." ^{GNB}

Herein is a most interesting thing,

47:9). Later in history, they are said to have worshiped Dagon (Judges 16:23), Ashtoreth (1 Sam 31:9-10), and Baalzebub (Associated with the city of Ekron, which was a Philistine domain (Joshua 13:3–2 Kgs 1:2-6).

It appears as though Abimelech's confrontation by God Almighty had an impact upon him, so that he spoke only of the true God.

Swearing

As used in this text, swearing is making an oath to do this or that. There has been a lot of confusion generated about the matter of taking oaths. Much of it is based upon the words of Jesus: *"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto*

great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt 5:33-37).

James restates the words of Jesus: *"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation"* (James 5:12).

Notice that the Lord's prohibition, and James' repetition, of swearing does not mention swearing before God. He mentioned swearing by heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, or by one's head – but **not** swearing before God.

There are some other factors to be considered in this matter. God Himself swore saying, *"I swear by Myself"* (Jer 22:5). He also is said to have sworn to Abraham (Gen 50:24), and unto *"the fathers"* (Ex 13:5,11). When the Israelites did not believe the faithful report of Joshua and Caleb, the wrath of God was kindled, and He swore none of them that came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, would enter into the promised land (Num 32:10). God swore not to forget the covenant He made with the *"fathers"* of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob–Duet 4:31). When God made promise to Abraham, *"He SWEAR by Himself"* (Heb 6:13). Peter declared that God *"swore with an oath"* to David (Acts

Notice that the Lord's prohibition, and James' repetition, of swearing does not mention swearing before God. He mentioned swearing by heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, or by one's head – but not swearing before God.

Abimelech did not refer to "God" as Abraham's God:–i.e. "Your God." The Philistines certainly did not worship the "God of Abraham" (Gen 26:24; Psa

you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the

2:30). God made Jesus High Priest “with an oath” (Heb 7:20-21,28).

When the high priest solemnly commanded Jesus to “by the living God” to tell whether He was the Christy, the Son of God, Jesus submitted to the demand saying, “*Thou hast said*” (Matt 26:63-64).

David “*SWARE unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob*” (Psa 132:2). Nehemiah took an oath from the priests (Neh 5:12). The people of Nehemiah’s day swore to “*walk in God’s Law*” (Neh 10:29). The letter to the Hebrews says, “*For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath*” (Heb 6:16-17).

Paul frequently spoke in the language of an oath.

➔ “*For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers*” (Rom 1:9).

➔ “*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost*” (Rom 9:1).

➔ “*Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth*” (2 Cor 1:23).

➔ “*The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.*” (2 Cor 11:31).

➔ “*Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*” (2 Cor 12:19).

➔ “*Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.*” (Gal 1:20).

➔ “*For God is my record, how greatly*

I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:8).

➔ “*For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness*” (1 Thess 2:5).

➔ “*Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity*” (1 Tim 2:7).

➔ “*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality*” (1 Tim 5:21).

What Is The Answer?
The answer is that Jesus was not

wrong me,”^{ABP} “*always be loyal to me,*”^{CEV} “*be fair with me,*”^{ERV} and “*won’t do anything underhanded.*”^{MESSAGE}

The words “*deal falsely*” are translated from a single Hebrew word that means, “*BE UNTRUE . . . 1) TO DO OR DEAL FALSELY, BE FALSE, TRICK, CHEAT . . . FAIL, LIE*”^{STRONG’S}

I gather, then, that this has to do with words, or agreements, between Abraham and Abimelech. There is no meaning inherent in the word that means “*hurt,*” “*injure,*” as some versions suggest.^{DOUAY/SEPTUAGINT}

Abimelech asked that this be passed down through the generations – himself, his son, and his son’s son – three generations.

Here was a king speaking to a sojourner with over three hundred

The Jews had apparently fallen into custom of making haphazard and casual oaths to buttress what they said. That is the thing against which Jesus was speaking.

speaking of saying something with God as a witness, or appealing to the fact that the Almighty would attest that what was being said was the truth. The Jews had apparently fallen into custom of making haphazard and casual oaths to buttress what they said. That is the thing against which Jesus was speaking. **As seen in the apostle Paul, it is not wrong to call God to witness concerning the truth that we speak. But it is to be solemnly and in truth.**

DEALING FALSELY

“ . . . that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son’s son . . . ” Other versions read, “*be false,*”^{BBE} “*break an agreement,*”^{CSB} “*deal deceitfully,*”^{DARBY} “*not hurt me,*”^{DOUAY} “*never cheat me,*”^{GWN} “*not injure me,*”^{SEPTUAGINT} “*not deceive me,*”^{NET} “*act treacherously toward me,*”^{NJB} “*not lie to me,*”^{YLT} “*won’t defraud me,*”^{LIVING} “*not*

servants – certainly nothing to compare with a king and an army, over which his cohort Phicol had been placed. **However, Abimelech had leaned by experience that God was on the side of Abraham.** Perhaps he did not know that God had promised to bless those who blessed Abraham, and to curse those who cursed Abraham, but it appears as though he sensed this was the case.

KINDNESS THAT IS DONE

“ . . . but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.”

The “*kindness*” to which he referred was what took place after the event with Sarah. He had taken “*sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his*

wife." Then he said to the patriarch, "Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee" (Gen 20:14-15). He even gave Abraham "a thousand pieces of silver" (Gen 20:16). Abimelech considered this to be a kindness that justified amiable relations between himself and Abraham.

Abimelech's words suggest a certain fear of Abraham, who continued to increase in both power and

possessions. God was blessing him, and Abimelech had learned it was not to his advantage to be an enemy to him. There is also a possibility that he had heard God had promised the whole land of Canaan to Abraham.

I WILL SWEAR

"And Abraham said, I will swear."

Abraham does not hesitate to swear as Abimelech has suggested.

Abraham is not an envious and murderous man like Cain (Gen 4:8). He is not a man ambitious for rule and fame, like Nimrod (Gen 10:8-9). He is not a "wild man" like Ishmael, who was would not be able to get along with anyone (Gen 16:12). Abraham was a stranger and pilgrim in the earth (Heb 13:14), and therefore did not seek to exploit men for his own advantage. Yet, Abimelech detected he was dealing with a man who was superior to him.

ABRAHAM REPROVES ABIMELECH

"²⁵ And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away."

A person whose life is devoted to the Lord can speak more freely, because his fundamental interests are not for himself, but for the Lord. Therefore, Abraham will speak candidly with Abimelech, addressing a wrong that had been committed by his servants. He is not afraid to do this, for his fear was of God, not Abimelech.

The word translated "reproved" is taken from a Hebrew word with the following meaning: יָכַח YAKACH {YAW-KAHH'}
MEANING: 1) TO PROVE, DECIDE, JUDGE, REBUKE, REPROVE, CORRECT . . . TO DECIDE, JUDGE . . . TO CONVINCe, CONVICT . . . CHIDE . . . TO CORRECT, REBUKE . . . TO BE . . . TO REASON, REASON TOGETHER . . . TO ARGUE.
STRONG'S

While some ancient and non-Biblical writers have used the word in the sense of reasoning, this does not seem to be a proper use of the word in our text. Reasoning with Abimelech seems to suggest too much respect for

for the registration of a legitimate complaint.

A WELL VIOLENTLY TAKEN AWAY

" . . . which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away." Other versions read, "seized," ^{NKJV} "taken by force," ^{BBE} "taken violently away from Abraham's servants," ^{AMPLIFIED} "Taken over," ^{CEV} and "had captured as a well of water." ^{ERV}

The point here is that the servants of Abimelech had taken charge of the well, forbidding the servants of Abraham to draw water from it.

Because of the area, wells of water were essential to the survival of the inhabitants, and they were zealously guarded. Now the servants of Abimelech had forced their way into the territory occupied by Abraham, and had taken one of his wells for themselves.

If Abraham and Abimelech were to have a mutual agreement among themselves, this matter must be resolved, for it involved a certain injustice. From a practical point of view, Abraham, who apparently dug the well, needed the water for his household (over three hundred), and for the multitude of his flocks.

Something to be Seen

Something else to be seen in the text is **the trying of Abraham's faith**. No sooner had he settled down, than a needed well is seized by force, putting

Reasoning with Abimelech seems to suggest too much respect for him, and perhaps even treating him as an equal. Abraham is speaking as one to whom God has promised this land. He is speaking from the vantage point of faith, not human reasoning.

ABRAHAM REPROVED ABIMELECH

"And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water . . ." Other versions read, "rebuked," ^{NKJV} "complained to," ^{NASB} "made a protest," ^{BBE} "reproached," ^{NAB} "lodged a complaint," ^{NET} "reasoned with," ^{YLT} "told," ^{CEV} "confronted," ^{MESSAGE} and "complained to and reasoned with." ^{AMPLIFIED}

him, and perhaps even treating him as an equal. **Abraham is speaking as one to whom God has promised this land. He is speaking from the vantage point of faith, not human reasoning.**

It also ought to be noted that Abraham was not a chronic complainer. This is the first mention of this matter, and it is within a context that allowed

him at apparent risk. However, in the boldness of his faith, he takes measures to correct the situation – like working out his own salvation with fear and

trembling.

We should learn from this that there are matters that need to be

addressed – particularly when they pose an unnecessary limitation upon us. This will of course, requires the wisdom that comes from above (James 3:17).

AN UNINFORMED KING

“²⁶ And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.”

We have no reason to question the honesty and integrity with which Abimelech responds. He has already demonstrated his integrity in the matter of Sarah, and God Himself had approved of his answer. *“And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart”* (Gen 20:6).

meaning of the Hebrew word so translated is ~~YADA~~ ^{YADA} {YAW-DAH} **MEANING:** TO KNOW; LEARN TO KNOW; TO PERCEIVE AND SEE, FIND OUT AND DISCERN; TO DISCRIMINATE, DISTINGUISH; TO KNOW BY EXPERIENCE; TO RECOGNIZE, ADMIT, ACKNOWLEDGE, CONFESS; TO CONSIDER; TO KNOW, BE ACQUAINTED WITH.” STRONG’S

This is not knowing in a philosophical sense. **It is knowledge gained by experience.** We would probably say it this way, “I was not aware that this had happened.” So far as the record is concerned, this was the first time Abimelech had heard of the

Again, we learn from this that Abraham was not a chronic complainer. He had more of a contented spirit than many are prone to possess.

Something Else to See

But there is something else to be seen here. **Abimelech, although he was king of that territory, did not know things that were taking place in his kingdom.** While that may not be necessarily cited as a serious failing of the king of Gerar, it is worthy of comparison with *“the King of heaven of heaven”* (Dan 4:37).

God, who presides over all things through the exalted Christ, who is presently administering the Kingdom, is not deficient in any aspect of knowledge concerning that kingdom. Everything is known to Him,. All men are know by Him, as well as the thoughts of their hearts. No one ever has, or ever will, report something to God that was not already known by Him. Nothing can be hidden from God. Nothing can take place without His knowledge. How poignantly it is stated by the beloved John, *“God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.”* (1 John 3:20).

Living with an acute awareness of this fact will greatly assist us in living godly in this present world.

Nothing can be hidden from God. Nothing can take place without His knowledge. How poignantly it is stated by the beloved John, “God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.”

I WOT NOT WHO HATH DONE THIS THING

“And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing . . .” Other versions read, *“I do not know who has done this thing,”* NKJV and *“I have no idea who has done this thing.”* BBE

The British meaning of the word *“wot”* is *“know”* MERRIAM-WEBSTER The

incident Abraham reported.

NEITHER DIDST THOU TELL ME

“ . . . neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.” Other versions read, *“you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today,”* NKJV and *“you never gave me word of it, and I had no knowledge of it till this day.”* BBE

BOTH OF THEM MADE A COVENANT

“²⁷ And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.”

A GIFT TO ABIMELECH

“And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech . . .”

To assure Abimelech that he had no intentions of being his adversary,

Abraham took some sheep and oxen and gave them to the king. Remember, Abimelech had given Abraham some sheep and oxen when he returned Sarah to him (Gen 20:14). As much as was in

his power, Abraham would be peaceable, leaving us an excellent example.

This Is Still the Manner

This is still the manner of those who live by faith. They have no appetite for striving, contention, and animosity. They take God’s word on this matter seriously: *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”* (Rom 12:18). And again, *“God has called us to peace”* (1 Cor 7:15). And again, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”* (Heb 12:14).

EXTENDING OURSELVES

Sometimes, as with Abraham, the saints must extend themselves to ensure that peace is maintained. They should ever remember the words of our Lord, *“Blessed are the peacemakers: for*

they shall be called the children of God” (Matt 5:9).

Peace must never be at the expense of holiness, nor can it interfere with our fellowship with Christ and divine approval. We must do what Abraham did – only that which is in our power to do. Even then, it is not done to appease men, but to glorify God.

The Ultimate Peacemaker

The ultimate Peacemaker is the Lord Jesus Himself. It is written of Him, *“Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace”* (Eph 2:15). And again, *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or*

things in heaven” (Col 1:20).

Jesus did this without sacrificing any aspect of His character. He made no compromise of His Person, nor did He contradict any aspect of His character.

Unlike Jesus, we do not “make” peace, but are only charged with keeping, or maintaining it.

BOTH OF THEM MADE A COVENANT

“ . . . and both of them made a covenant.”

This covenant was not one sided – it was a bi-lateral covenant. That is, Abimelech was to abide by the same intention he had requested of Abraham. The pledge to not deceive, take advantage of, or deal falsely was a mutual pledge – and it was a good one.

A WITNESS THAT I HAVE DIGGED THIS WELL

“²⁸ And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.²⁹ And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?³⁰ And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.”

HE SET SEVEN EWE LAMBS BY THEMSELVES

“And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves . . .” Other versions read, *“young lambs,”*^{BBE} *“female lambs,”*^{CJB} and *“seven lambs.”*^{NJB} As used here, a *“ewe lamb”* is a lamb *“FROM ONE TO THREE YEARS OLD.”*^{McCLINTOK & STRONG’S}

What follows is the establishment of the right of Abraham to dig a well in the territory ruled by Abimelech.

The patriarch seeks to establish this honorably and in a legal and orderly manner. He does not assume that agreements would be carried out without a living reminded.

WHAT MEAN THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS?

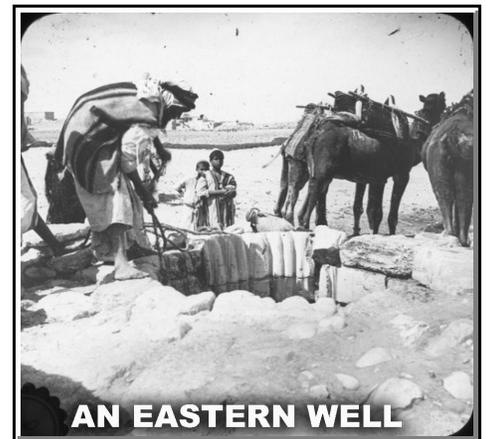
“ . . . And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? . . .”

Abimelech recognized that Abraham has done something out of the ordinary, and does not know why. He is not used to the confirmation or formalization of oaths. But he will learn something about such matters from Abraham.

A WITNESS UNTO ME

“ . . . And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.” Other versions read, *“that they may be my witness that I have dug this well,”*^{NKJV} *“as a witness that I dug this well,”*^{NIV} *“that you may be a witness for me that I dug this well,”*^{RSV} *“that they may be a testimony for me, that I dug this well,”*^{DOUAY} *“so that they may be proof that I dug this well,”*^{GWN} *“as legal proof that I dug this well,”*^{NET} *a public*

confirmation that this well is mine,”^{LIVING}



AN EASTERN WELL

This was done within the framework of the covenant Abraham made with Abimelech. **The patriarch used that covenant as an occasion to establish the recognition of the fact that he himself had dug this well.**

A TYPE OF THINGS TO COME

In this we have a type of something that takes place in Christ

Jesus. A Lamb is also given to us to establish the source of our salvation – referred to as “*the wells of salvation*” (Isa 12:3).

Every time we eat at the Lord’s Table, we are able to especially see the

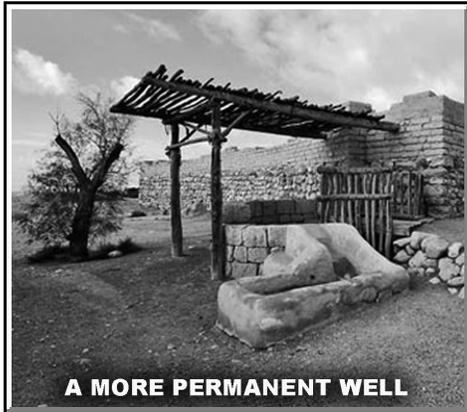
Lord Jesus as a Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). The fact that we have access to that Lamb, and that He dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:17), confirms to us that **God Himself has dug these wells**, and that we have the right to draw water from

them. It is no wonder that insightful people make much of the Lamb of God, who has taken away the sin of the world. **He is a living testimony to the fact that salvation is “of the Lord,” and that its wells have been dug by God!** The **Source** of our salvation is stressed.

12:3).

HE CALLED THAT PLACE BEERSHEBA

“³¹ Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they SWEAR both of them.”



A MORE PERMANENT WELL

This is the second time the word “*Beersheba*” is mentioned in Scripture. The first time, the reference was to “*the wilderness of Beersheba*” (Gen 21:14). **This is the first time it is mentioned as a particular place.**

The word “*Beersheba*” means, “WELL OF SWEARING,” McCLINTOK & STRONG’S “WELL OF THE OATH,” EASTON and “WELL OF SEVEN.” ISBE The latter meaning refers to the seven ewe lambs that were set aside to attest to the fact that Abraham dug the well in that area.

Beersheba is a key place in the promised land, being mentioned thirty-four times in Scripture – eleven times in Genesis (21:14,31-33; 22:19; 26:23, 33; 28:10; 46:1,4), and twenty-three times in the remainder of Scripture (Josh 15:28; 19:2; Judges 20:1; 1 Sam 3:20; 8:2; 2 Sam 3:10; 17:11; 24:2,7,15; 1 Kgs 4:25; 19:3; 1 Kgs 12:1; 23:8; 1 Chron 4:28; 21:2; 2 Chron 19:4; 24:1; 30:5; Neh 11:27,30; Amos 5:5; 8:14).

The city of Beersheba was on the border of the land given to the tribe of Judah (Josh 14:21-28). Within the inheritance given to Judah, Beersheba was given to “*the children of Simeon*” (Josh 19:1-2).

The promised land itself was identified as the area “*from Dan to Beersheba*” (Judges 20:1; 1 Sam 3:20; 2 Sam 3:10; 2 Sam 17:11; 24:2). During the time of Samuel, some judges were placed in Beersheba (1 Sam 8:2). Because David had numbered Israel, the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel in which 70,000 people died “*from Dan to Beersheba*” (2 Sam 24:14-15). During the time of Solomon, “*Israel dwelt safely . . . from Dan even to Beersheba*” (1 Kgs 4:25). When Jezebel threatened the life of Elijah, and he fled, he left his servant in Beersheba (1 Kgs 19:3). The mother of Jehoash, who reigned forty years in Jerusalem, is identified as “*Zibia of Beersheba*” (2 Kgs 12:1). During the restoration headed up by Nehemiah, “*some of the children of Judah*” dwelt in Beersheba (Neh 11:25-27,30). The prophet Amos called upon the people to seek the Lord in order that they might live – but they were not allowed to go to Beersheba to do so (Amos 5:4-5). Israel corrupted Beersheba by placing false gods there, and were soundly denounced by Amos for doing so (Amos 8:14).

The Point and Application

The point is that **the place where solemn covenants were made, and rights established, because central areas**. There was a sense in which the life of Israel was built around these occurrences. There also came a time when they apparently forgot the epochs

that occurred at these places.

With things like this in mind, David challenged our thinking by asking, “*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*” (Psa 11:3). Solomon also wrote, “*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.*” (Prov 22:28). And again, “*Remove not the old landmark*” (Prov 23:10). In these sayings more is involved than physical landmarks. **A principle is enunciated in which we are warned not to remove sound and stabilizing teachings.**

We are living in a time when many spiritual “*landmarks*” have, at the very best, been neglected; and at the worse have been removed. Some of these landmarks are as follows:

- The righteousness of God
- The nature and necessity of Divine choice.
- The grace of God.
- The Sovereignty of God.
- The necessity of Christ’s death.
- The power of Christ’s resurrection.
- The exaltation of Jesus.
- The truth of Christ’s Second coming.
- The necessity of the new birth.
- The imputation of righteousness.
- The criticality of faith.

- ➔ The role of hope.
- ➔ The malignancy of sin.
- ➔ The nature of newness of life.

The absence of these in the conscience of multitudes of professing Christians equate to taking away access to *“the wells of salvation.”* The lack of moral rectitude within the professing church is largely the result of removing these foundational landmarks.

There has been a dramatic shift of emphasis from God to man, from eternity to time, from Christ to contemporary life, from the inward to the outward man, and from obtaining to achieving. That shift of emphasis required the removal of certain theological landmarks.

THE COVENANT WAS MADE IN THE PROMISED LAND

Take note that, from Abraham’s point of view, **the covenant was made in the promised land**, not in the land of the Philistines. Following this incident, it is said that Abimelech and his captain *“returned into the land of the*

Any return to the Lord must be marked by an acute consciousness of the need for mercy. It must also be within the context of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. More is involved than simply righting a wrong.

Philistines” (Gen 21:32). **In a very real sense, the covenant was made in Abraham’s land, not the land over which Abimelech ruled!**

A Parallel

So it is with those who are aligned with the enthroned Lamb (Rev 7:17; 22:1,3). **Their determinations must be made *“in the Spirit,”* and while they are in fellowship with Jesus.** Decisions must be made while enjoying the communion of the Holy Spirit, walking in the light, and living by faith.

Sometimes those who have drifted from the Lord make vows and commitments in hope that God will hear them, and again place His favor upon

them. This, however, is an unwise strategy. When coming back to God, an appeal must be made to the mercy of God, and accompanied with repentance and the fruits of repentance. **Men must get to the heart of salvation.** Although I realize this can be pressed too far, **it is best to make vows and determinations when the smile of God is upon you, and you are basking in His Presence.**

Any return to the Lord must be marked by an acute consciousness of the need for mercy. It must also be within the context of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. More is involved than simply righting a wrong. There is a matter of God’s glory, and Him being justified in all of His sayings (Rom 3:4).

THEY RETURNED TO THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES

“³² Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Pichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.”

THUS THEY MADE A COVENANT

It was to Abraham’s advantage, as much as possible, to live in peace at that time. **In the future, it had already been revealed to him that the inhabitants of the land would be displaced by his progeny, who would inherit the whole of the land** (Gen 15:18-21). Years later, the Lord would confirm to Moses that the people he led out of Egypt would occupy this land (Ex 3:8; 13:5). When the Israelites arrived at the border of the promised land, the Lord promised them the land, and warned them not to make any covenant

with the people there at that time: *“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; **thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled***

against you, and destroy thee suddenly” (Deut 7:1-4).

However, during the time of Abraham, when he was walking through the land, perusing what had been promised to him, the time of occupation had not yet come. Until the day he died, Abraham remained a *“stranger”* in the land that was promised to him, dwelling in tabernacles and moving about from place to place. As it is written, *“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Heb 11:9-10).

Abraham was gaining familiarity

with the land, and during that time, he avoided unnecessary conflicts. He did not make a covenant with Abimelech to be his companion, and go on various campaigns and ventures with him. He did not agree to join him in some joint-endeavors. He rather agreed not to be aggressive against him, or do evil unto him.

When it came time for Israel to take the land, it would be quite another story. At that time they would conquer the foes, and drive them from the land.

A Type of Life in Christ

While they are in this world, the saints of God are in a similar situation. They are, so to speak, walking through the land, becoming accustomed to the things of God, and learning to handle them. They are learning to make consistent choices, and to live solely for the Lord. They are being changed from glory to glory, being prepared and shaped to fit into that eternal temple, to

(Rom 12:18).

➔ " . . . but God hath called us to peace" (1 Cor 7:15).

➔ "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." (1 Thess 5:15)

➔ "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14).

➔ "Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Pet 3:11).

The environment of real peace brings certain advantages to the soul. As it is written, ". . . the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without

This provides of with some insight into the necessity of the wisdom that comes down from above, that is "first pure, then peaceable." In our involvements with those of this world, we must maintain these traits.

THEY RETURNED INTO THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES

As much as Abimelech had come to respect Abraham, he had no desire to remain with him. **His own country beckoned him, and that is where is heart was.**

Another Distinction

Herein we see another distinction between the people of God and those who are of this world. **The people of God return to their native clime – a place that is blessed by the continued presence of the Lord. Those who are of this world return to the environment which best suits their preferences.**

Abraham went into Egypt, but returned to Canaan, while Pharaoh remained in Egypt. Abraham journeyed through the land of Gerar, walking through the land promised to him, but returned to the place where God had made a covenant with him.

Those who are in Christ are occasionally required to occupy domains they do not prefer – Like Jesus visiting the land of Gadarea, or Peter and John going down into Samaria, or Paul going into the region of the Gentiles. They did their work in those areas, but returned to home base, so to speak, as soon as they could.

The people of the world do not hesitate to make some limited room for the Lord, visiting a local "church," attending some religious gatherings sporadically, etc. **However, as quickly as they can, they return to their favored favorite climes, where they are not annoyed with the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, or the focused discussions and communications about the things of God.**

Something to Consider

You might say that every person, according to their ability, eventually

Of course, salvation presumes that these fundamental cravings are within the saved. In fact, the entirety of the provisions of salvation assume a driving desire for them. Only those who want them can have them.

be occupied by God Himself (Rev 21:3).

While they are in the world, they are learning not to love it, or become acclimated to its ways. **Yet, they do not engage in conquering the world at this time.** They rather resist its influence, refusing to blend with it. Yet, they themselves are peaceable – in fact, like Abraham, they are "peacemakers" (Matt 5:9). Solemnly they are admonished:

➔ "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." (Rom 12:17)

➔ "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"

hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17-18). The NIV reads, "Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."

In Abraham's Case

In Abraham's case, he made no agreement to join Abimelech in any heathen feasts, nor consented in any way to condone his gods. He only agreed to do good to Abimelech, not stirring up strife, agitating his employees, or intruding violently in his affairs. **He would not allow his covenant with the king of Gerar to interfere with his identity with God, or his exploration of the land promised to him.** This was a secondary agreement.

gets back to the environment they prefer. That is the way the Lord has made men. Any return to the Lord must be marked by an acute consciousness of the need for mercy. It must also be within the context of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. More is involved than simply righting a wrong.

In salvation, this could, if God was not in it from start to finish, be a very challenging circumstance. By nature, man does not prefer the things of God, does not hunger and thirst for

righteousness, and does engage in a fervent quest for God. Of course, salvation presumes that these fundamental cravings are within the saved. In fact, the entirety of the provisions of salvation assumes a driving desire for them. Only those who want them can have them. To say it another way, only those who seek will surely find (Matt 7:7-8).

Thus, in the salvation of God, the fundamental nature of man is changed. He is given a new heart and a new

spirit that fervently desires the things of God, and the dwelling place of God. Like birds at the time of migration, they will always make their way back to the place where the Good Shepherd feeds them, and the homeland is in view.

It is unfortunate that some saints have to leave “church services” with their primary appetites unsatisfied. **They must seek out a place where they are more aware of heaven than earth** – a place where they are fed, satisfied, and built up in their most holy faith.

ABRAHAM PLANTED A GROVE

³³ *And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.”*

ABRAHAM PLANTED A GROVE
“And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba . . .” Other versions read, *“planted a tamarisk tree,”* ^{NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV}

ABOUT THE USE OF THIS GROVE,” and states, “WHAT SORT OF TREES THIS GROVE CONSISTED OF CANNOT WITH CERTAINTY BE SAID, VERY PROBABLY THE OAK. R. JONAH THINKS IT MAY BE THE TREE WHICH IN ARABIC THEY CALL “ETHEL”, AND IS A TREE LIKE THAT WHICH IS CALLED TAMARISK IN GENERAL IT SIGNIFIES ANY TREE, AND ESPECIALLY LARGE TREES.”

From the very first mention of Abraham’s involvement with the Lord, his entire life has centered in what was revealed to him. So far as the record is concerned, he has never veered from the awareness of God’s promise.

From the very first mention of Abraham’s involvement with the Lord, his entire life has centered in what was revealed to him. So far as the record is concerned, he has never veered from the awareness of God’s promise. He has not been a world traveler, but only sojourned outside of Canaan as was necessary–i.e. as when there was a famine in Canaan (Gen 12:10).

Of course, this is the stance of faith – it always considers what the Lord has promised, and moves its possessor to shape the totality of life around that promise. All other kinds of living proceed from unbelief.

Our text affords us yet another example of a life lived unto the Lord – a life that is motivated by faith.

“a holy tree,” ^{BBE} *“a field,”* ^{SEPTUAGINT/RENTON} *“a tamarisk,”* ^{NAB/NJB/YLT} *“plowed fields,”* ^{ABP} *“a special tree,”* ^{ERV} and *“a wood.”* ^{WYCLIFFE}

Did Abraham plant a tree, a grove, or plow a field? As in far too many cases, the various versions push us beneath the surface of worldly wisdom and leave us gasping for spiritual air. Purported scholars are by no means in agreement on this matter, confirming once again that the meaning of Scriptural words cannot be confirmed etymologically.

Strong’s says of the word used here, ^{“ESHTEL, AY’-SHEL; FROM A ROOT OF UNCERTAIN SIGNIFICATION; A TAMARISK TREE; BY EXTENSION, A GROVE OF ANY KIND: — GROVE, TREE.”} John Gill tells us that Jewish writers “ARE DIVIDED

I must say that it is wearisome wading through the varied opinions of both professed etymological experts and translators concerning matters like this. **It only confirms that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and is not the realm where the meaning of Scripture can be established.**

In my own thinking, I defer to language of experts that did their work prior to the Enlightenment, or Age of Reason. Prior to that devilish outbreak of rebellion against the Presence and Word of the Lord, there was, generally speaking, more of a respect for the Scriptures themselves, and less of a tendency to shape Scripture with the tool of worldly wisdom. Since that time, however, men have been bold to take, what I consider to be, unwarranted liberties in handling the Word of God. **That “Age of Reason” injected a virus into human thinking that continues to have adverse effects until this very day.**

That, of course, is my own view of the matter. It does explain briefly why I simply defer to the expression of the King James Version. “Grove” is also

the rendering in the following versions: Douay, Geneva, Websters, Websters Revised. Wycliffe, who provided the first English translation, used the word “wood,” an old expression for “woods.”

If the supposition is true that the particular tree was a Tamarisk tree, then I prefer to think of Abraham planting a grove of them, as compared to a single tree.

THERE HE CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD, THE EVERLASTING GOD
“ . . . and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.”

This action, of course, is even more significant than the planting of a grove. It is what gave significance to the “grove,” associating it with the promise of God, and thereby being an exhibit of faith.

This is the first mentioning of the expression “*everlasting God*.” The NIV reads, “*the Eternal God*.” Prior to this, there was only reference to God’s “*everlasting covenant*” with Noah (Gen 9:16), and a different “*everlasting covenant*” with Abraham (Gen 17:7,8,13,19). Until those points, the words “*everlasting*” and “*eternal*” do not occur in Scripture. They are only found in the above texts. Further, this is the first time either of these words are applied to God Himself.

The Concept of “Eternal”

All of this accents the strangeness of the very concept of “*eternal*” or “*everlasting*” to the human mind. The terms are developed exclusively in Scripture. As I understand it, there is no human language that contains a word that precisely conveys the Scriptural

The entirety of Scripture is written with the ultimate demise of this world and the eventually confrontation of God and the day of judgment in mind. Scripture boldly confronts humanity with the fact of mortality, and the endless age that will follow the passing of the world.

concept of “*eternal*.” Even the word used here has a meaning that is rather nebulous: “‘OWLAM, O-LAWM’; OR לָמַד עֹלָם, OLAM, O-LAWM’; PROPERLY, CONCEALED, I.E. THE VANISHING POINT; GENERALLY, TIME OUT OF MIND (PAST OR FUTURE), I.E. (PRACTICALLY) ETERNITY; FREQUENTATIVELY, ADVERBIAL (ESPECIALLY WITH PREPOSITIONAL PREFIX) ALWAYS: — ALWAYS), ANCIENT (TIME), ANY MORE, CONTINUANCE, ETERNAL, (FOR, (–)) EVER (LASTING, –MORE, OF OLD), LASTING, LONG (TIME), (OF) OLD (TIME), PERPETUAL, AT ANY TIME, (BEGINNING OF THE) WORLD (WITHOUT END).” STRONG’S

You see the vagueness of the idea of something that is concealed, or vanishes out of sight, or goes further than the mind can go. Even the etymological definition has been developed with Scripture in mind. **There is nothing in all of nature that provides an accurate portrayal of “eternal.”** The entire cosmos, as well as man himself, is characterized by decay and mortality – **and human wisdom cannot extend further than human experience, or the universe in which he lives.**

All of this confirms what was involved in instructing fallen men about the “*eternal God*” (Deut 33:27). It was not something that was instantly understood. **The marvel is that Abraham is beginning to make an association of God with eternity.** It is axiomatic that this precious bit of knowledge will

greatly enhance his faith.

THE BANE OF BEING EARTH CENTERED

The “bane,” or curse, of being earth-centered is that it pushes men further from God. To put it another way, it makes God more obscure, and His Word, which is also eternal (Psa 119:89), less understandable. **A society, such as ours, that accents the here and the now, and promotes living with only this world in mind, is one in which the things of God will not be received.** If you take the facts of the passing of the worldly order, and eternity out of the thinking of the masses, what God has both said and done becomes at once irrelevant. **The entirety of Scripture is written with the ultimate demise of this world and the eventually confrontation of God and the day of judgment in mind.** Scripture boldly confronts humanity with the fact of mortality, and the endless age that will follow the passing of the world.

It is not possible to accurately state the disservice to man, and the blasphemy against God that is brought with and sustained by an emphasis on this present evil world. Such an emphasis is thoroughly wrong, always being accompanied by spiritual debility and an ignorance of God.

ABRAHAM THE SOJOURNER

1

³⁴ **And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines’ land many days.”**

SOJOURNING

“And Abraham sojourned . . .”

Other versions read, “*stayed in the land of the Philistines,*” NKJV “*resided as an alien,*” NRSV “*went on living in . . . as in a strange country,*” BBE “*lived as a foreigner,*” CSB “*was a stranger,*” GENEVA

“lived in.” LIVING

In a quest to oversimplify the Word of God, some versions completely misrepresent this text. They depict

Abimelech and the captain of his host ask Abraham to show them kindness. Abraham rebukes the king for taking away a well – Given O. Blakely

This time of Abraham's life introduces us to the concept of pilgrimage, or sojourning in a land that is not presently possessed. For those in Christ, we are sojourning through the earth like Abraham journeyed in the land of the Philistines. The land was promised to him, but at that time it was occupied by someone else until the appointed time.

Abraham as simply living in the land for a lengthy period of time. While the patriarch did, in fact, remain there for some time, the word "sojourn" carries a deeper meaning – not only etymologically, but by express Scriptural teaching. The word "sojourn" has the following lexical meaning: גָּוַר {GOOR} MEANING: 1) TO SOJOURN, ABIDE, DWELL IN, DWELL WITH, REMAIN, INHABIT, BE A STRANGER, BE CONTINUING, SURELY 1A) (QAL) 1A1) TO SOJOURN, DWELL FOR A TIME 1A2) TO ABIDE, STAY, TEMPORARILY DWELL.

This particular Hebrew word, in its various forms, is mentioned one hundred and seven times in Scripture. In the King Versions Version it is translated "sojourn" most of the time. It is also translated as follows: "strangers" (Ex 6:4), "stranger that dwelleth" (Lev 19:34). Most of the time, where the word "sojourn" occurs, the word "stranger" is associated with it (31 times of the 107 times).

I would not make much of this matter if it were not for the stress that the Holy Spirit places in it. **Sojourning is a fundamental aspect of living by faith.** A particular point of this is made in the apostolic references to Abraham. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise" (Heb 11:8-9).

Further, Israel's tenure of four hundred years of suffering affliction in

Egypt was described as a time of sojourning. "And God spake on this wise, That his seed should **sojourn** in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years" (Acts 7:6).

Confirming very precise parallel of the lives of those in Christ living in this world, it is written, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your **sojourning** here in fear" (1 Pet 1:17). It is a time during which we are referred to as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet 2:11). That parallels the lives of believers prior to the coming of Christ who "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth" (Heb 11:13).

This time of Abraham's life introduces us to the concept of pilgrimage, or sojourning in a land that is not presently possessed. For those in Christ, we are sojourning through the earth like Abraham journeyed in the land of the Philistines. The land was promised to him, but at that time it was occupied by someone else until the appointed time.

For those in Christ, we are in the world, but we are not of it (John 15:9; 17:14,16). However, it will not always be this way, for "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5; Psa 37:9,22). Our inheritance will include the "new earth," wherein dwells righteousness (2 Pet 3:13). This will be part of "the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" that "shall be given to the people of the saints of the most

High" (Dan 7:27).

Until that time, we cannot [possibly rise any higher than being "sojourners" – "strangers and pilgrims" – in "this present evil world" 1 Pet 2:11; Gal 1:4). It is most unfortunate that contemporary "Christianity" has managed to all but totally obscure this fact.

MANY DAYS

"... in the Philistines' land many days." Other versions read, "a long time," NIV "a long season," GENEVA "quite some time," NET and "a long period of time." ISV

There is a technical point to be seen here. Although the land of Canaan, including "the land of the Philistines," had been promised to Abraham, it was not yet experientially his. For the next five hundred years, it would remain "the land of the Philistines" (Gen 21:32; Ex 13:17), "the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites" (Ex 3:17; 13:5), and "the land of the Canaanites" (Ex 13:11; Deut 1:7; 11:30; Josh 13:4).

The land remained theirs until the appointed time – "for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen 15:16). When the time would be fulfilled, Israel would dispossess these people of the land that had belonged to them for hundreds of years.

THE SAINTS OF GOD

In spite of the spiritual garbage that is being dumped upon the church of God, it is important for the saints to know that **this world, does not yet belong to them.** It is carefully omitted in the listing of things that belong to us: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor 3:21-23).

Let it be clear in your thinking that in Christ Jesus we do not receive anything that will have to be given up when the present heavens and earth pass away.

When it comes to this world, nothing within it, including the earth itself, wills into the world to come. None of it will survive the fiery holocaust to which it has been appointed (2 Pet 3:10).

Until that time – *“the day of the*

Lord” – we are, like Abraham, sojourners in the land of promise. We build around the incontestable facts of temporality and mortality, knowing that in Christ we have been made for *“some better thing.”* We are not citizens here, but strangers and foreigners! We are

sojourning until our Lord comes to gather us to Himself. If we leave the world by death, we will go higher, where there are not limitations we experience in the earth. But when Jesus comes again, we will go higher still, and come into our full inheritance.

CONCLUSION

We are being introduced to the *“the father of all them that believe”* (Rom 4:11). His record is tailored, like many others, to teach us something. The Lord is not providing a complete biography of Abraham, and is highlighting the events of his life that convey a message we must hear. With the exceptions of some cursory details of his father, brothers, and wife, God omits any details of the first seventy-four years of Abraham’s life.

- ➔ **HIS CALLING.** The first significant thing that is reported is the Lord’s calling of Abraham (Gen 12:1-4).
- ➔ **HIS TRIP TO CANAAN.** His trip to and arrival in Canaan (Gen 12:4-8).
- ➔ **A MESSAGE FROM GOD.** God appears to Abraham and said he would give him this land. Abraham builds an altar and calls upon the name of the Lord (Gen 12:7-9).
- ➔ **HE FACES A FAMINE.** His time in Egypt during a famine that was in the land of Canaan.
- ➔ **AN EXPERIENCE WITH PHARAOH.** His experience with Pharaoh, who had sought to take Sarah for himself (Gen 12:14-20).
- ➔ **HIS WEALTH IS INCREASED.** The wealth of Abraham when he left Egypt and returned to Canaan (Gen 13:1-2)
- ➔ **HIS RETURN TO CANAAN.** His return to Bethel, and the building of an altar (Gen 13:3-4).
- ➔ **FACING A CONFLICT.** When the land was

We are being introduced to the “the father of all them that believe” (Rom 4:11). His record is tailored, like many others, to teach us something.

not sufficient to sustain himself and Lot, compelling them to separate from one another (Gen 13:5-13).

- ➔ **A MESSAGE FROM GOD.** The renewal of God’s promise to Abraham, and the command for Abraham to walk through the land (Gen 13:14-18).
- ➔ **A MILITARY INITIATIVE.** Events surrounding the capture of Lot, and Abraham’s resource of him, his defeat of four kings, and confrontation of Melchizedek (Gen 14:1-20).
- ➔ **AN OFFER FROM A HEATHEN.** Abraham’s response to the appeal of the king of Sodom (Gen 14:21-24).
- ➔ **A MESSAGE FROM GOD.** God’s renewal of His covenant with Abraham, with elaboration concerning what would occur during the next five hundred years (Gen 15).
- ➔ **THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL.** Event’s leading to and surrounding the birth of Ishmael (Gen 16:1-16).
- ➔ **A MESSAGE FROM GOD.** God’s renewal of the covenant made with Abraham, with some additional information concerning the covenant of

circumcision and Abraham begetting the promised seed through Sarah (Gen 17:1-27).

- ➔ **A MESSAGE FROM GOD.** The Lord appears to Abraham again, announcing the birth of Isaac would be through Sarah the during the next year. (Gen 18:1-16).
- ➔ **GOD REVEALS THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.** The Lord divulges what He is going to do with Sodom to Abraham, and the patriarch reasons with the Lord concerning the sparing of the righteous (Gen 18:17-33).
- ➔ **THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.** The events surrounding the destruction of Sodom and the deliverance of Lot (Gen 19:1-38).
- ➔ **ABIMELECH CONFRONTED.** Events surrounding Abraham’s confrontation of Abimelech, king of Gerar, who desired to have Sarah as his wife (Gen 20:1-18).
- ➔ **THE BIRTH OF ISAAC.** The events surrounding the birth of Isaac and the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael from the house (Gen 21:1-21).
- ➔ **AN AGREEMENT WITH ABIMELECH.** Events

Abimelech and the captain of his host ask Abraham to show them kindness. Abraham rebukes the king for taking away a well – Given O. Blakely

relating to Abraham's agreement with Abimelech (Gen 21:21-34).

There are twenty snapshots of the life of Abraham. They span twenty-five years, and are an introduction to the faith of Abraham. In them we witness the following.

1. His response to a word from God.
2. His response to the promises of God.
3. His response to the blessing of God.
4. Abraham response to adverse conditions.
5. His response to challenge.
6. His response to conflict.
7. His response to the word of Divine destruction.
8. His response to the requirement to

do something difficult and grievous.
9. His approach to peaceful agreements.

You will notice that Abraham did not cease to believe God during any of these occasions. He made no attempt to return to Ur of the Chaldees. Whatever God said, he believed. And, when something further was revealed to him, he shaped his life around it. If his reasoning had not been correct during the time of his ignorance, he immediately adjusted his thinking upon the receipt of further revelation. Any of his reactions that were technically flawed, were owing to the lack of revelation—i.e. supposing that Eliezer would inherit the blessing, the events leading to the birth of Ishmael, and

having Sarah say she was his sister.

Like the Scriptural accounts of Noah, Melchizedec, Moses, and Aaron, the record of Abraham has been Divinely shaped to teach us about key aspects matters that are critical in the Kingdom – in Abraham's case, **faith**. The same is true of the apostles, Stephen, Paul, Timothy, and others. These records have **not** been given to us for critical analysis, or to point out weaknesses that may have existed in the people – although, as in the case of all humanity, weaknesses did exist. However, in the inspired record, the most prominent aspect of these people was the manifestation of the truth that was seen in them. It is simply wrong to view them in any other way.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/18/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The thirty-third lesson will cover verses 1 through 24 of chapter twenty-two: "GOD TEMPTS ABRAHAM." At the height of Abraham's life, when he had grown accustomed to the presence of Isaac, and was living in anticipation of the blessing promised through him, God tests Abraham in a manner that brought out who he really was. He commands the patriarch to take his only son, and offer him as a burnt sacrifice to Him. How will "the father of all them that believe" respond to a command like that? Whatever the answer to that question is, it is also the answer as to the nature of real faith. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS

“Openings and Introductions” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; “Lead Singing” – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; “Calling” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; “Sermon” = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; “Exhortation” = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; “Table Meditation” = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ’s role in salvation; “Lead Scripture shower” = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; “Lead prayer session” = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; “Lead Intercessory Prayer” = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; “Closing Scripture/Benediction” – Closing of the AM Gathering

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO DURING APRIL, 2012

1. *Blakely, Given O.* (PM Sermon, PM Sermon).
2. *Blakely, Jonathan* (Lead AM Singing, AM Table Meditation, PM Introduction, Lead PM Singing).
3. *Blakely, June* (Lead PM Prayer Session, Teach AM Class).
4. *Blakely, Mattie* (AM Calling, Lead PM Singing).
5. *Blakely, Michael* (Teach AM Class, AM Exhortation, AM Sermon, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).
6. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano).
7. *Blakely, Paul* (PM Introduction).
8. *Cobb, Matthew* (AM Table Meditation, AM Calling, AM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).
9. *Cobb, Nicole* (Lead Scripture Shower, Lead Scripture Shower, Lead PM Singing).
10. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Exhortation, Teach AM Class, PM Sermon).
11. *Dill, Sarah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Read AM Sermon Text)
12. *Hutchcraft, Aaron* (Teach AM Class, Sunrise Sermon, AM Exhortation, AM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation, PM Sermon, PM Exhortation).
13. *Hutchcraft, Barbara* (Lead AM Singing, Lead PM Singing, PM Introduction).
14. *Hutchcraft, Debbie* (AM Opening Word, Lead PM Singing).
15. *Hutchcraft, Gene* (Lead PM Intercessory Prayer, AM Sermon. AM Table Meditation, AM Exhortation, Teach AM Class, Introduction to PM Sermon, PM Table Meditation, PM Table Meditation).
16. *Hutchcraft, Judah* (Lead AM Singing, Lead Scripture Shower, Read AM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text, Piano Solo, Piano Solo).
17. *Hutchcraft, Silas* (Read PM Sermon Text).
18. *Murphy, Isaac* (AM Calling).
19. *Murphy, Mariah* (Lead Scripture Shower).
20. *Parker, Melissa* (AM Calling, AM Calling, PM Introduction, Lead PM Singing).
21. *Parker, Tony* (AM Opening Word, AM Sermon, PM Table Meditation, PM Introduction).
22. *Sims, Annie* (Lead Scripture Shower, Read AM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).
23. *Sims, Baylie* (Read PM Sermon Text).
24. *Sims Girls – Annie, Hannah, Rachel* (Quote AM Sermon Text).
25. *Sims, Hannah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Closing Scripture/Benediction)
26. *Sims, Ricky* (AM Sermon, AM Exhortation, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).
27. *Sims, Tasha* (AM Opening Word, Lead AM Singing).
28. *Williams, Emma* (Closing Scripture/Meditation).
29. *Williams, Jeremy* (AM Opening Word, AM Sermon, AM Opening Word).
30. *Williams, Logan* (Play AM/PM Lord’s Table Interlude, Read PM Sermon Text, Introduction to PM Sermon).
31. *Williams, Sydney* (Read AM Sermon Text, Closing Scripture/Benediction).
32. *Preparing Lord’s Supper* (Various sisters).