

Three Year Chronological Deep Dive Reading Program - Week 2 - October 30th through November 5th

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To: Troy Phelps <troy_phelps@ucg.org>

All,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 0.6%

Well, we are on our way! We are currently 0.6% through our three years of in-depth reading. I hope each of you found the first week of reading to be beneficial to you. I also hope you each found the reading/material pacing to be about right and are enjoying slowing a down a bit and having time to dive a level deeper into God's Word.

The group has grown each day this week as many of you have shared the reading with others (which is great). We currently now have 435 email addresses participating in the program. The size of the group isn't important except for the fact that I find it encouraging to be studying God's Word alongside each of you each week and with brothers/sisters around the world!

You'll find this week, that some days are lighter (for example Sunday), and other days are heavier (for example Tuesday). That's probably what each week will be like moving forward. I've tried to not make comments where one is not needed.

I've decided that after quoting a section from either the UCG Bible Reading Program or some other commentary, that I would try to insert "[END]" to clearly mark the end of a quotation for the sake of clarity.

I also was asked if I would mind listing the scriptural readings for each week at the top of the email in a more simplified manner. This is a bit difficult as we will often be jumping into multiple books in a week and I will do my best to summarize each week.

Weekly Readings will cover: Gen 8-15 & 1 Chr 1:1-27

Sunday: Genesis 8

Monday: Genesis 9

Tuesday: Genesis 10 & 11, 1 Chronicles 1:1-27

Wednesday: Genesis 12

Thursday: Genesis 13

Friday: Genesis 14

Saturday: Genesis 15

I hope each of you enjoy this next week's study! May God bless each of us in understanding His Word!

3 YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 2

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 8 - SUNDAY: October 30th

Genesis 8

Daily Deep Dive:

In chapter 7 of Genesis the flood began in the 2nd month, on the 17th day (Gen 7:11) when Noah was 600 years old.

Verse 4 - In the 7th month, on the 17th day, the ark rested somewhere in the mountain chain of Ararat (A Hebrew word meaning "The curse reversed"). This word for "Ararat" is also found in 2 Kings 19:37 & Isa 37:38 as Armenia and is widely accepted as the geographical meaning of this word. This is a very large mountain chain (covering eastern Turkey & western Iran) that many have attempted to find the remains of the Ark, never the less, no clear discovery has been made, and it's not important to find such a discovery.

Verse 14 - It's not until the 2nd month & 27th day that the earth was dry and Noah, his family and the animals leave the ark. This is 1 year and 10 days after the flood began.

Notice in verse 20 – What is the first recorded action of Noah after leaving the ark? He builds an altar and makes sacrifices of the clean animals and birds to God. Again, we see that Noah understands, just as Cain and Abel would have, which animals were clean and unclean, which were to be sacrificed, etc... This understanding and practice of obedience came long before Moses, the people of Israel and Mount Sinai. This is also the first time we find the word "altar" used. It's used 401x in the Old Testament, but this is the first one mentioned and is built by Noah. I think it's very likely that Cain and Abel sacrifices were also offered on altar's, but this is the official first mention of such a practice.

Verse 21 – We see that this offering was well received by God ("smelled a soothing aroma"). This Hebrew word "soothing" means "Restful, soothing, quieting). In the KJV of the bible it's always translated "sweet" but I believe the intended meaning is that when God responds to these acceptable and pleasing offerings that it brings about a "peaceful, soothing" effect. Notice what God says immediately following: He would never again destroy every living thing again, even though he knows that even from a young age, our hearts, minds and actions, think and do evil things. We have a promise from God that we will have food grow, winter and summer, seasons, etc...while the earth remains. This promise, and the knowledge that God is in absolute and complete control at all times, should bring us

a level of peace, even while we live in a rapidly declining and unstable world. The Great God is on His throne and in control!

Day 9 - MONDAY: October 31st

Genesis 9

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – This is the third time now in the bible we see “God blessed” and all 3 times is in conjunction with being able to reproduce and increase in numbers (first to birds & sea life, second to man & wife and now to Noah and his sons.

Verse 3 – Regarding whether this is the first time man is allowed to eat meat and were previously only vegetarians, I will include the ucg.org BRP response:

“Some seize on this as proof that men were supposed to be vegetarians before the Flood. However, Abel sacrificed an animal and, as Leviticus shows, parts of sacrifices were eaten. Moreover, the apostle Paul later explained that some animals—those the Bible designates as “clean” (see Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14)—were created to be eaten (1 Timothy 4:3-4). Indeed, we already saw the distinction drawn between clean and unclean—i.e., edible and inedible—animals before the Flood in Genesis 7. Why would there have been a distinction at that time if animals were not then eaten? Thus it appears that God was simply telling Noah and his family that it was okay to eat animals *again*—which likely means they had *not* been permitted to kill any of the live animals *on the ark* in order to have eaten them while still aboard. Perhaps that would have depleted some species before they had a chance to amply multiply after the Flood.”

Verse 4 – we have the prohibition to eating blood. In Leviticus 17:11 we are told “For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.”

It’s very clear from this scripture, that God had a special purpose for blood in connection with sin and atonement. Here early in the Bible, again, long before Mt. Sinai we see this command, and we see these commands such as the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the clean/unclean food laws, etc... already existed and formed the basis of God’s Royal law (James 2:8) that continues unchanging from the beginning to the end of mankind. We see this command reinforced to gentile Christians (Act 15:20, 15:29, 21:25) and remains clearly in effect for us too.

Which gives rise often to the question about, “can you eat a rare steak”? The answer is “yes” and not just because I love a good medium rare steak. Even though we use the term “bloody”, the red liquid on your plate and the red/pink color of the meat is not due to blood. It’s natural to think it is, but it’s actually a combination of water and a protein called myoglobin. Myoglobin has the job to transport oxygen through your muscles. Myoglobin looks red on your plate, because like hemoglobin, the iron in myoglobin turns red when exposed to oxygen. The longer it’s left out, the meat turns from red to brown. Supermarkets will actually treat meats at times in order to keep them “red” longer. So the long and short of it, even a completely rare steak (tartare) does not contain blood.

Animals and fish should be bleed after killing them in order for their blood to drain from their systems.

V6 – Is a reminder to us of the value God places on every human being, because each and everyone was made in God’s image and has the potential to be Family members. This knowledge must have an impact on how we deal with all people, even when they may be difficult or choosing a way of life that goes contrary to God’s instructions. The UCG bible reading program states the following about the rainbow:

“God also established a special covenant with man, promising never to send a universal deluge again. As a token (or sign) of the promise, God “set” the rainbow in the sky (verse 13). The Hebrew word translated “set” is *nathan*, meaning *give*. This has led some to suggest that the rainbow had never been seen before. If this suggestion is true, it would mean that God either modified the laws of physics governing optics, for a rainbow is just the product of the refraction of light through the medium of airborne water droplets, or that He altered the atmosphere of the earth, perhaps by removing some kind of upper vapor canopy that formerly altered the character of the light reaching the earth’s surface. Such a vapor canopy may help to explain the rain of 40 days and 40 nights when the “windows of heaven were opened” (Genesis 7:11-12). And this may have constituted the “waters which were above the firmament” in Genesis 1:7.” [END]

At the end of this chapter we see, even here early in the Noah family tree, one particular son and family line already go off the path and begin a series of choices that will eventually develop into a number of empires that go against God. We’ll discuss this more tomorrow on day 10. I’ll again paste from the UCG reading program:

“Some decades after the Flood (time enough for Noah’s sons to father their own sons and for these grandchildren to grow up), Noah became a husbandman, growing grapes and making wine. Then, when he drank the wine, he became intoxicated and fell asleep in his tent, whereupon, the Bible records, his nakedness was uncovered. This expression is used throughout Leviticus 18 to denote sexual relations. When Noah’s son Ham discovered him, he told his brothers, who then covered their father. When Noah awoke, he learned of what happened and called forth a curse upon Ham’s youngest son, Canaan. Why? Why should *Canaan* be cursed?

Verse 24 states that Noah “knew what his younger son had done to him.” This is often interpreted to mean that Noah “knew what his [Noah’s] younger son [Ham] had done to him.” Yet if Ham himself were guilty of whatever wrong had been committed, we might assume that Noah would have cursed him personally or, if his *offspring* were to be cursed, that it would apply to *all* his offspring or perhaps the *eldest* and *his* family rather than just Ham’s *youngest* son Canaan and those who would spring from *him*. So the most likely scenario is that Canaan himself had committed the wrong—apparently some sexual sin against Noah while Noah was intoxicated—which Ham discovered. Thus verse 24 should probably be understood to read that Noah “knew what his [Ham’s] younger son [Canaan] had done to him”—particularly if we consider verse 23 as parenthetical.” [END]

Day 10 - TUESDAY: November 1st

Genesis 10:1-5

1 Chronicles 1:5-7

Genesis 10:6-20

1 Chronicles 1:8-16

Genesis 10:21-30

1 Chronicles 1:17-23

Genesis 10:31-32

Genesis 11:1-26

1 Chronicles 1:24-27

Genesis 11:27-31

Daily Deep Dive:

Let’s start this deep dive with the UCG bible reading program comments:

“Genesis 10 contains what is commonly called the Table of Nations. This genealogical record lists 70 nations descended from the sons of Noah. The Israelites, and the descendants of Abraham generally, are not mentioned, although their common ancestor, Heber, is included in the list.

The genealogical record here is in the form of a clan list, which typically follows the father-son-grandson format—although exceptions to the rule and extended lists (such as we will later encounter with Israel’s clan lists) are not uncommon. The purpose of clan lists is to show affinities between related peoples. At the head of the list stands the common ancestor, in this case Noah. Under the common ancestor are listed the tribes, and under the tribes are listed the smaller clans. The further down the clan list one moves, the greater divide there is within the large family groups—but cultural and political affiliations between the members of the *smaller* family units are actually more pronounced. Thus, Japheth fathered Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. All of those peoples were related and shared certain *general* cultural and political affiliations. But Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah, who were fathered by Gomer, are further down the list and therefore shared greater cultural and political affiliations than they did with those peoples descended from the other sons of Japheth.

Are these ancient historical lists of any importance to us today? While many of the nations recorded in the genealogy disappear from the scriptural record, some of them will *reappear* in the prophetic books—with a surprising number mentioned in connection with end-time events. God appears to refer to the nations of the world by these family names, and it is interesting to note that the end-time configuration of nations provided by the prophetic books shows the nations allied by their clan affiliations. Surprisingly, these prophecies show that the passage of around 4,000 years of history has done little to alter the basic pattern of international relations.” [END]
I went back and forth on how much of a deep dive to do on each of these families and which nations may have come from them, and I’ve ultimately decided not to go that deep. If you are interested in that depth, I found the Adam

Clarke's commentary (free commentary on eSword) to be an interesting read about what nations each of these families may have produced. Some are more certain, others more speculation.

I would like to dive a bit into the family line of Ham. Remember what we just read yesterday about the incident and the curse that happened at the end of chapter 9. This family and family line appears to make a stark departure from following God.

Ham eventually is used in the Bible interchangeably for Egypt (see Psalm 78:51, Psa 105:27, Psa 106:22) as Cush, Mizraim and Phut all end up settling in various parts of Egypt.

We also see Canaan in this family line, who settles in the area that will become known as the "Promise Land". Whole nations formed the Canaanite people: the Jebusite, Amorite, Girgasite, Hivite, Arkite, Sinite, Arvadite, Zemarite, and Hamathite (Gen 10:16-18)

Gen 10:8 - From this family of Ham, we are introduced to Nimrod and it's important to note that the bible pauses the genealogies for a moment to tell us about this man.

Nimrod's name means "rebellion".

Verse 9 - If you look at commentaries you will see that this term: "He was a mighty hunter before the LORD" carries more depth than what we read on the surface.

The International Standard Version of the Bible captures the meaning more in line with commentaries.

Gen 10:9 He became a fearless hunter in defiance of the LORD. That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a fearless hunter in defiance of the LORD."

Verse 10 – We find a word that is used for the first time in the Bible: "Kingdom" – This word is used many more times after this in the Old Testament, but this is where we are introduced to a "rebellious" man who begins to rule over people. I would like you to focus on two of the cities he establishes and rules over: Babel and Nineveh. From these two cities we eventually get the capitals of the Babylonian and Assyrian empires. Two major world powers that would eventually take the people of Israel and Judah into captivity.

Babylon becomes a type of all later kingdoms of men that are set on doing things their own ways, apart from God.

In chapter 11:4 we find that these people decide to build a tower. I would like to paste excerpts from the Jewish historian Josephus to better understand Nimrod, Babel and this tower.

"God commanded them to send colonies abroad, for the thorough peopling of the earth, - that they might not raise seditions among themselves, but might cultivate a great part of the earth, and enjoy its fruits after a plentiful manner: but they were ill instructed, that they did not obey God;"

"for when they flourished with a numerous youth, God admonished them again to send out colonies; but they, imagining the prosperity they enjoyed was not derived from the favour of God, but supposing that their own power was the proper cause of the plentiful condition they were in, did not obey him."

"Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God."

"a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, - seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence upon his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!"

"Now the multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod, and to esteem it a piece of cowardice to submit to God: and they built a tower, neither sparing any pains nor being in any degree negligent about the work: and, by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it it grew very high sooner than anyone could expect; but the thickness of it was so great, and it was so strongly built, that thereby its great height seemed, upon the view, to be less than it really was."

"When God saw that they acted so madly he did not resolve to destroy them utterly, since they were not growing wiser by the destruction of the former sinners; but he caused a tumult among them, by producing in them diverse languages, that they should not be able to understand one another. The place wherein they built the tower is now called Babylon; because of the confusion of that language which they readily understood before; for the Hebrews mean by the word Babel, Confusion." [END]

While reading Josephus isn't the same as reading the true inspired Word of the Bible, it gives us an idea of what was understood about this section of scripture (Nimrod/Tower of Babel).

The Babylonian empire would rise and fall over time in strength as a world power, but we find that this "Babylonian idea" continues in the many kingdoms/empires of men all the way until the return of Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 16, 17, & 18 we see the final destruction of "Babylon". I'll paste some excerpts to help us see the end of what Ham/Cush/Nimrod began in their rebellion against God and what the Kingdom of God will replace forever.
 Rev 16:19 Now the great city was divided into three parts and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Rev 16:20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Rev 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

Rev 17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,

Rev 17:2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

Rev 17:4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication

Rev 17:5 And on her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Rev 17:6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

Rev 18:1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

Rev 18:2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

Rev 18:3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

V5 - Rev 18:5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Rev 18:8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong *is* the Lord God who judges her.

Rev 18:9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,

Rev 18:10 standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

Rev 18:11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

Rev 18:20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

Genesis 11 – At the end of this chapter, we find that from Noah's son Shem, comes the finally line of Nahor – Terah – Abram. Unlike Ham, Shem seems to follow God (Gen 9:26 – "Blessed by the LORD, the God of Shem...").

Verse 28 – Their native land was Ur. Ur was in southern part of Babylonia. Already by this time, counterfeit religion filled the land. In a previous study I learned that in Babylonia, they had national gods, local city gods, even family/clan gods. Pagan worship filled their culture.

John Gill's commentary brings out following from Josephus on this verse:

"Josephus (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5.) says, that Haran died among the Chaldeans, in a city called Ur of the Chaldees, where, he adds, his grave is shown to this day: the Jews (Shalshalet, fol. 2. 1, 2. Jarchi in loc.) have a fable concerning the death of Haran; they say that Terah was not only an idolater, but a maker and seller of images; and that one day going abroad, he left his son Abraham in the shop to sell them, who, during his father's absence, broke them all to pieces, except one; upon which, when Terah returned and found what was done, he had him before Nimrod, who ordered him to be cast into a burning furnace, and he should see whether the God he worshipped would come and

save him; and while he was in it, they asked his brother Haran in whom he believed? he answered, if Abraham overcomes, he would believe in his God, but if not, in Nimrod; wherefore they cast him into the furnace, and he was burnt; and with respect to this it is said, "and Haran died before the face of Terah his father"; but Abraham came out safe before the eyes of them all." [END]

Again, this is non-Biblical material, but I found it interesting non the less.

Verse 29 – Abram means “exalted father” & Sarai means “princess”.

Verse 30 – First usage of the word “barren”. It’s interesting to me how often God allowed major women of the Bible to be barren (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah (Samuel’s mother), & wife of Manoah (Samson’s mother). What did each of them learn from this time period of barrenness? God in the right timing for each of them, allowed them to have children that were integral to his plan. This is something I’m meditating on (maybe someday a sermon will come from this).

Verse 31 – We don’t know much about Terah. We know from Joshua 24:2 that he worshiped other gods and that God took Abraham out of that culture to work with him.

It’s pure speculation, but where did Abraham learn about the true God and what was right? Did Abraham have a relationship with Noah and Shem? Shem would have been about 390 years old and Noah about 892 years old when Abraham was born. Noah would have died when Abraham was about 58 years old. According to Jewish literature (Midrash) they had a relationship, but we have no way of proving this one way or another. These writings contain stories of how Terah was the Chief officer to Nimrod and was the high priest of the idol worshipers. Again, there is no way to know for sure, but we clearly know Terah served other gods and the True God called Abraham out of this.

Day 11 - WEDNESDAY: November 2nd

Genesis 12

Daily Deep Dive:

V1 – God tells Abraham to come out of that place, out of that Babylonian system, all of it’s false worship, and to go to a place that He would show Him.

This parallels God also telling us to come out of this world (Rev 18:4) and it’s Babylonian system.

In Hebrews 11:8 we are told “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

His faith was outstanding. He obeyed without knowing the details. God often asks us to obey, without knowing how He will work out all the details. If we knew all the details, it wouldn’t require faith.

Verse 3 – Contains the tremendous promise “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

How was the whole earth blessed through Abraham? It was through the Seed (Jesus Christ) of Abraham (Gen 22:18). The writers of the New Testament confirm this as well in multiple places (See Acts 3:25-26, Gal 3:16, 29). This promise to Abraham is a foundation through which everything else is built on in the Bible. There were certainly many physical ways that the world would be blessed through this promise, but this promise was first and foremost spiritual. Through Jesus Christ, all who have ever lived, will eventually be given the opportunity to join God’s awesome Family! What a blessing indeed!

Verse 4 – Notice Abraham is 75 at this point. It will be until he is 100 year’s old before God blesses him with Isaac. Imagine having to wait 25 years for God to fulfill His promise to you.

I gave a sermon on this aspect of “Waiting on the Lord” below if anyone is interested in considering this further:

<https://www.ucg.org/sermons/wait-on-the-lord-or-take-matters-into-your-own-hands>

Verse 13 – “Please say you are my sister”. We learn from Genesis 20:12 that Sarai is Abraham’s half sister. “But indeed *she is* truly my sister. She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.”

Verse 15 – It’s interesting to me that Sarai is still a “looker” at this point in her life as she is at least 65 years old at this point because we learn she is ten years younger than Abraham (Gen 17:17) and Abraham was already 75 in verse 4 above.

God protects Sarai from a bad situation.

The UCG Bible Reading program states this about this section:

“Surprisingly, this chapter that records Abram faithfully responding to God’s call also shows him later employing a faith/less strategy of deception that backfires. Here we see a pattern repeated throughout the Bible—that it is sometimes hard on its heroes. The Bible shows their weaknesses, mistakes and problems. God knows that we slip up, sin, stumble and make mistakes. Yet “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” when we repent and admit our sins (1 John 1:9). God tells us that the examples recorded in the

Scriptures “were written for our learning” and are examples for us (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11). While the Bible records the sins and problems of many men and women of faith, it also often shows the consequences of those sins—the problems they and others suffered as a result. It also shows that they were forgiven upon repentance and overcame, and that God considers them righteous—as He will consider us if we likewise repent and overcome.”
[END]

Day 12 - THURSDAY: November 3rd

Genesis 13

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 4 – Abraham returns to the alter he had built previously, where God had appeared to him (Gen 12:7), and it says he “Called on the name of the Lord”. This is the same three Hebrew words that we saw used in Gen 4:26 regarding Seth and other faithful individuals who would worship the one true God and be identified as His followers. Verse 7 – Due to the size of Abraham’s and Lot’s flocks/herds, strife unfolds. Strife happens. How do we handle it when it does?

In Psalm 34:14 (quoted in 1 Peter 3:11) it says “Seek peace and pursue it”

Romans 12:18 says “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Philippians 2:3 says “*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

Matthew 5:9 says “**Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.**”

In these scriptures, we are told to “make”, to “seek”, to “esteem”, to “live” in a way that peace is the outcome. We can’t control all things, but as much as is within our control, this is what God expects from us.

Out of blessings to Abraham and Lot (huge flocks/herds) came strife. That part wasn’t their fault, but Abraham understood, what he did about it was within his control. Notice his example and what the UCG Bible Reading program states about this section:

“The story of the separation of Lot from Abram gives us a concise and interesting picture of Abram and how he dealt with others, as well as how he trusted God. When he and Lot returned to Canaan from Egypt, both were rich and had large flocks and herds. But as pasturage and water were in short supply, with all their possessions it was inevitable that strife would result. When the trouble came, Abram took the lead in resolving the dispute. Though he could have made the decision unilaterally, being the elder, the patriarch of the clan and possibly Lot’s foster father (since his real father had died years earlier, Genesis 11:28), he instead behaved himself with deference, care and entreaty. Not only was this an act of good will and humility, but it was also an act of faith—for Abram trusted that God would make good whatever would fall to him as a result of Lot’s choice. Abram’s motivation, faith and conduct are an example for all of us.” [END]

Regarding Lot and the conclusion of the chapter, I again paste the UCG Bible Reading program:

“Lot’s motivation, faith and conduct here are also an example for all of us—and, as the results would show, not the best example for us. Lot saw the richness of the well-watered Jordan River valley and chose to dwell among the cities of the plain—“toward” Sodom (verse 12, KJV). At the time he simply made the best choice human reason would indicate. However, when we next meet Lot he is no longer dwelling “toward” Sodom but actually living *in* it (Genesis 14:12). Later we find him even sitting in the gate participating in that evil city’s government (Genesis 19:1). Though a “righteous man” who was severely troubled by the depravity of the people of Sodom (2 Peter 2:7-8), he was nevertheless corrupted by it, to the point of offering his daughters to be sexually assaulted (Genesis 19:8) rather than trusting in God’s protection (although it is possible that this was a lying ploy, which still shows lack of trust in God). When we last see Lot, though delivered with his life and posterity, his life is in shambles. He has lost his possessions in Sodom’s destruction, he has lost at least two married daughters who remain behind (compare verses 12-15), he has lost his wife to the desire for Sodom instilled in her by living there (verse 26), and he has incestuously fathered children by both his remaining daughters (verse 30 ff.). The lesson is clear: Seeking our own paths without God’s guidance and immersing ourselves in a corrupt environment can gradually seduce us into the ways of the world and lead eventually to ruin.

After Abram and Lot separated, God appeared to Abram. He told Abram to look toward the four cardinal directions, surveying the land of Canaan. All that he could see, God assured him, would be given to him and his seed forever. In addition, God expanded His promises by telling Abram he would have vast numbers of descendants. It is probably significant that this incident occurs after Abram had expressed faith in God's providence by giving Lot first choice as to where he would dwell and pasture his flocks." [END]

Day 13 - FRIDAY: November 4th

Genesis 14

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – There is a lot of ideas about who all these kings were, and the fact is, we really don't know. For example, the first King Amraphel, some say he is the King of Babylon, others the King of Assyria, others say this is Nimrod himself, and again others say it's one of his descendants. I leave it as simply, we don't know.

What we do know is the "Babel" idea of creating "kingdoms" and ruling over others is in full swing and in it all Lot, his household and his goods are taken.

The UCG Bible Reading program states: " Abram was rich in flocks, herds and gold. He possessed a large household consisting of those persons whom he acquired, either by purchase or through voluntary association. But this chapter also shows Abram as allied with three Canaanite chieftains—Mamre, Eshcol and Aner—and Abram himself is able to field a fighting troop of 318 men. Abram also appears to be rather skilled in the art of warfare. While it may seem odd for this man of God to be so engaged, one should bear in mind that Canaan was not a place of pleasant pastures and relative safety. Bandits often roamed the hill country, the Negev was often raided from the south and east, and relations between the various city-states were sometimes uneasy. And Abram was right in the middle of this.

Indeed, the common picture many have today of Abram as a simple nomadic shepherd is incorrect. For in Genesis 23:6, he is identified as a "mighty prince" among the people of the land. Though he was certainly rich in flocks, we should see him more as a "merchant prince" leading a wealthy caravan."

Verse 18 – We are introduced to the Melchizedek.

Strong's commentary brings out that the name "Melchizedek" is formed from two Hebrew words:

The first is the word for "King" used 2,521 times in the Old Testament.

The second is the word is used 116 times and most often (77x) is translated "righteousness". Putting this together means Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness".

He is then listed as "King of Salem" The Hebrew word for Salem means "Peace".

So He is the King of Righteousness & Peace.

Not only can we break this down in the Hebrew, it is spelled out for us plainly in Hebrews 7.

Heb 7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

Heb 7:2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"

He's also listed as "Priest of God Most High".

He is listed as both a King and Priest.

In Hebrews 7:3 we are told "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life,"

We understand that these titles, positions and descriptions fit one and only one Being, that of a preincarnate Jesus Christ.

We see this connection from David understood in Psalm 110.

Psalm 110:1 states "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.""

Then in verse 4 (same chapter) it's stated about David's Lord "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.""

Hebrews 7 confirms this connection again in verse 3 & 17 where it states "remains a priest continually." and ""For He testifies: "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.""

Notice also in Hebrews 7:3 we are told that this Being was "but made like the Son of God".

When Melchizedek was on the earth in Abraham's time, there was not yet a "Son of God". Later Jesus Christ would be begotten by the Father through the Holy Spirit and become the "Son of God".

Back in Gen 14:20 – We see Abraham tithe. This is the first time we see the word “Tithe” but it would be a mistake to think this is the first time this was practiced.

The UCG Bible Reading program points out the following:

“. To Melchizedek Abram gave a tithe, or tenth, of all he had taken in battle. To the king of Sodom Abram returned the remaining goods, refusing to take any payment lest Abram’s wealth be attributed to his battle victory instead of the graciousness of God.

Concerning tithing, the Bible doesn’t say whether any of Abram’s ancestors or contemporaries also practiced it. Yet secular history reveals it as quite prevalent in the ancient world. *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* states: “Just when and where the idea arose of making the *tenth* the rate for paying tribute to rulers and of offering gifts as a religious duty cannot be determined. History reveals that it existed in Babylon in ancient times, also in Persia and Egypt, even in China. It is quite certain that Abraham knew of it when he migrated from Ur (Genesis 14:17-20)... By Abraham’s day the giving of tithes had been recognized as a holy deed (cf. Hebrews 7:4).” Indeed, *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that “the custom was almost universal in antiquity” (11th ed., vol. 26, “Tithes,” p. 1019). For this godly custom to have been so widespread, it is reasonable to believe that God had earlier given instructions to mankind regarding it—perhaps as far back as Adam and Eve.

Consider then: Did Abram tithe to simply honor God with a popular religious custom of the day? Or did he understand tithing to be a divine *law* instituted by the Creator? God later said of him, “Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:5). This disproves the widespread belief that the law of God didn’t come into effect until 400 years later in Moses’ day. For what *statutes* did Abraham keep? Interestingly, the practice of tithing is later listed as a statute of God (compare Leviticus 26:46; Leviticus 27:30); therefore we would conclude that this was one of the statutes Abraham kept. Rather than tithing being something Abram came up with on his own or simply copied from pagan societies of his day, it is far more logical and scripturally consistent to conclude that God had revealed tithing as a sacred duty—a law to obey.” [END]

As we wrap up this day, let’s recall how many of God’s Royal Law’s we’ve already seen in place, long before Mount Sinai: Sabbath, signs for Appointed Meetings/Times, clean/unclean foods, & tithing). These things were in place and remain in place.

Day 14 - SATURDAY: November 5th

Genesis 15

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 6 – Abraham trusted and had faith in God. This is no small statement and is later quoted in Romans 4:3 as proof that we are brought into a right relationship (justification) with God through faith, not through something we can physically do. While obedience to God is required, no amount of obedience can ever bring us into a right relationship (justification) with God. Justification is possible only through Faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Lord & Savior.

Verse 9 through 18 – God makes a covenant with Abraham.

There have already been several other covenant’s made in the Bible (Eden, pre-flood Noah, post-flood Noah).

Covenant’s are a major part of the Bible and form the lens through which we understand prophecy.

There is so much to be said on these covenant’s that I’m currently studying & hoping to give a series of sermons in the near future on covenants.

Verse 18 – NKJV of the Bible says “the Lord made a covenant with Abram...” The Hebrew for “made” means “to cut”. The phrase literally means to “to cut a covenant”. When covenant’s were made in ancient times, they were made binding by killing & cutting an animal. Even in our English language, we still use the term “to cut a deal” which seems to have stemmed from this ancient practice. Non-biblical documents from the first millennium before Christ imply that the cutting of the animals represented what would happen to a person who broke the covenant.

Backing up to verse 17 – It appears the smoking furnace and burning lamp were signs of God’s presence (similar to the pillars of cloud & fire in Exodus). What we see here is that God is shown to have passed through the cut animals essentially promising Abraham that all this will surely happen.

Hebrews 6:13 tells us “For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,”

There is no life great than that of Almighty God. This was a powerful message to Abraham. Abraham did not pass between the animals. This promise was unconditional in that God would absolutely bring about the Savior of the world through this family line.

It’s worth noting, that the five different animals (verse 9 – heifer, goat, ram, turtledove & pigeon) were the same that were allowed/commanded to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law.

We’ll finish this week by reading the UCG reading program for this chapter:

“Once again, the promises God made to Abraham are about to be expanded. This is a frequent pattern in Genesis—promise or covenant followed by expansion.

The events narrated here occurred some years after Abraham had come out of Haran and into Canaan in obedience to God’s call. He had as yet no child, neither by Sarah nor by any other woman. Here he was an old man, years after God’s promise was first given, and there was no sign of the fulfillment of that promise. But, as Paul wrote in the book of Romans, speaking of Abraham when he was even quite a bit older and at an age when he would be unexpected to be able to father children, “Not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead” (Romans 4:19). Abram had confidence that God would fulfill His word. For he walked by faith, not by sight. Nevertheless, the wait was difficult.

When God appeared to Abram in a vision and assured him of protection and reward, Abram reminded God that he had as yet no child, and that according to custom Abram’s steward, Eliezer, would become his heir. God then took Abram outside into the night and showed him the stars, saying: “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.... So shall your descendants be” (Genesis 15:5). The magnitude of this promise can often be lost on us in our modern world, for man has so fouled the air with pollution and has so obscured the starry brilliance of the heavens with our city lights that the number of stars we can behold on any given night is often a paltry few. But go out into the desert, or up on a mountain, on a clear night and, with this scripture in mind, you will be astounded by what you behold. Imagine, then, how Abram felt. Though awestruck, no doubt, “Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (verse 6, NIV).

God promised multitudinous descendants to Abram, but He also promised that they would be enslaved for a period of time before being delivered with great wealth. The period of 400 years mentioned in verse 13 is not the period of their slavery. Biblical chronology indicates that Israel was enslaved for just over 200 years. The 400 years appear to date from Abraham’s death to Israel’s possession of the Promised Land (though there are other possibilities).

But why was there to be a delay in Israel’s possessing the land and servitude to a foreign nation? One reason is expressly stated. God says that the iniquity of the Amorites, who dwelt in Canaan, was not yet full—meaning that God was extending mercy to them, allowing them time to repent. God deals justly with all people, and He often delays punishment until the situation shows no hope of betterment. But another reason for the delay and servitude was probably to condition Israel. If Israel had developed in the land, unmolested, they may have acquired a general disposition of rejecting any dealings with God whatsoever—“Who needs God if everything is fine,” human reasoning says. But by allowing Israel to be enslaved, they would be humbled and willing to listen. Though they ultimately displeased God by rebelling against Him, they undoubtedly went further in serving Him than they otherwise would have. As God told Paul, in weakness we can be made strong (2 Corinthians 12:9; compare Hebrews 11:34). Additionally, if Israel would be taken out of slavery and made great, the credit for the greatness would more obviously be God’s.”

[END]

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