

CHRIST: God's Blessing to the Nations [Acts 3.25-26; Galatians 3.7-9]

Read Genesis 11.26 - 14.24 & Acts 3.25-26; Galatians 3.7-9

‘CHRIST IN GENESIS’: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS & SETTING THE CONTEXT

1/ This is obviously a significantly large section of Scripture to be covering in one lesson, but some of the following lesson sections will be even larger. So, we'll reiterate again what our purpose is in this course CHRIST IN GENESIS – to point out and highlight how these Scriptures will be fulfilled IN CHRIST according to the eternal covenant purposes of God.

2/ As we break down this larger lesson passage into smaller sub-sections, we'll point out the most significant CHRIST-markers in each section...and elaborate a little more on the details during our class time that we won't have space enough for here in these lesson notes.

3/ But let's begin here with a summary connection with our last lesson – and even a catch-up summary from the beginning of Genesis. With that end in view, I can do no better than quote Sidney Greidanus in Preaching Christ from Genesis: *“One can preach Christ from this narrative by using the way of redemptive-historical progression. In the beginning God created the earth as His Kingdom where He would be worshiped and served as the great King. God placed the first human pair in a beautiful garden, Paradise, ‘the garden of God,’ where they could live in the presence of God. But the human Fall into sin led to disastrous consequences: God drove them out of the garden; the close communion with God was broken. Human sin resulted in such violence that proper development of human life and culture became impossible. God sent a great flood to cleanse the earth and to make a new start with Noah, who built ‘an altar to the LORD’ (8.20) to rededicate the cleansed earth to God. But humankind again defied God at Babel, resulting in God confusing their language and scattering them across the earth. Then God called Abram to leave his father's house and its gods. God would make a new start with him in the land of Canaan, which was watered ‘like the garden of the LORD’ (13.10). Canaan was to become another Paradise – a beachhead on earth for the Kingdom of God. As with Adam and Noah, the LORD promises to bless Abram. In fact, the LORD promises, ‘In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed’ (Gen. 12.3). In calling Abram/Israel to reclaim Canaan for His Kingdom, God has the whole earth in view ... In the fullness of time God made a new start by sending His Son, Jesus. Jesus came preaching, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near’ (Mark 1.15) ... After His death and resurrection, Jesus mandated His disciples, ‘Go...and make disciples of all nations...’ (Matt 28.19), and the Kingdom of God started to spread throughout the world. When Jesus comes again, He will establish His Kingdom on earth in perfection. The ascended Lord promises: ‘To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God’ (Rev 2.7). God ‘will dwell [tabernacle] with them; they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them’ (Rev 21.3). Paradise will be restored on earth (Rev 22.1-5).”* This will be The New Creation! God has been going there from the very beginning of the First Creation! And it will ALL be accomplished IN CHRIST and BY CHRIST! [See my chart / graphic I have prepared for you – [CHRIST: in Creation to New Creation.](#)]

4/ Greidanus again: *“With God's judgment of the rebellion at Babel, the question is if God is giving up on His plan of establishing His Kingdom on earth. The answer is a firm, No. After reporting on Babel, the narrator gives the family history of Shem, the son Noah blessed (9.26), the seed of the woman. And in ten generations he arrives at Abram (11.26). Abram is another Noah (who was the tenth generation from Adam) with whom God will make a new beginning.”*

5/ So, just like Adam and Noah, Abram is presented here as the ‘new beginning’ of the Kingdom of God. His election by God to be ‘the father of the people of faith’ will continue the human lineage of the promised Savior and Redeemer, the ‘seed of the woman’ (**ch 3.15**) who will be CHRIST HIMSELF!

I / Genesis 11.26-32 | From Noah to Shem to Terah, Father of Abram

1/ **Now these are the generations [toledot/tohl-dah] of Terah.** This is now the 6th *toledot/tohl-dah* of the ten 'short stories / biographies' that are connected one after the other to make up the story of Genesis. The meaning of *toledot* is 'who came from...what became of.' We have listed them in [Lesson 2](#) and discussed each one in the *historical-redemptive progression* of CHRIST through this narrative.

2/ The purpose of this *toledot* is to connect Abram [Yahweh will rename him 'Abraham' in **ch 17.5**] with Adam. So if you connect Shem's *toledot* in **ch 11.10-26** with Adam's in **ch 5**, you'll see the direct line from Adam to Noah to Terah, who was the father of Abram. Adam's son was Seth [to take the place of murdered Abel]; Seth's line will bring us to Noah and his son, Shem; Shem's line will bring us to Terah, who was the father of Abram. And, of course, Abraham will take us to CHRIST!

3/ The narrator of this story which was inspired by the Spirit of CHRIST Himself [**1 Peter 1.11**] is showing us how God is continuing His covenant purpose to bring CHRIST, His Son, into the world to be our promised Savior/Redeemer [**ch 3.15**]. ***God knows what He is doing and where He is going!***

4/ When the nations were dispersed in **ch 11**, the family of Terah had migrated to the east, even as far as Ur of the Chaldeans. They would have been included among the families of Asshur [**ch 10.21**], which would later come to be called Assyria. It is now in what we know as Iraq.

5/ But God's purpose was to give Abram and his descendants the land of Canaan which was then already inhabited [and contaminated] by the cursed descendants of Canaan and the Canaanites [see **ch 12.6-7**].

6/ We are also introduced to Sarai [Sarah, **ch 17.15**], Abram's wife ... and also to Lot, the son of Abram's brother, Haran. Of course, both of these will feature prominently in the narratives to follow. It is also interesting to note here how the inspired narrator is introducing 'tension' into the story – obstacles that will make it more humanly difficult – *even impossible* – for the promises God will make to Abram to be fulfilled: **Now Sarai was barren; she had no child [v 30]. But God will make it happen!**

7/ **vv 31-32** / These verses probably describe the travelogue of their clan **after** God had called Abram as described in **ch 12**. God called Abram to go to Canaan while he was still in Ur of the Chaldeans. They began their journey to Canaan, but stopped off in Haran in the region known then and still now as Syria. Terah died in Haran at 205 years old – and so the story and saga of Abram takes over the narrative in this *historical-redemptive progression* of the CHRIST/Gospel story.

II / Genesis 12.1-9 | 'The Promises given to the Patriarchs' (Romans 15.8-9)

1/ So now, we meet Abram in person. In the previous verses, he is named six times in relation to his father, Terah. Now his personal story begins. Yahweh has chosen Abram to be the 'father' or progenitor of the family of peoples through whom He will send His Messiah into the world. In keeping with our CHRIST IN GENESIS purpose and aim, we will note specifically how this part of the narrative points to CHRIST.

2 / **vv 1-3 / Yahweh calls Abram to believe in Him, obey Him, and makes covenant promises to him.** This call to '**Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you**' had come to Abram while he was still in his father's homeland, Ur of the Chaldeans. Yahweh's purpose in calling Abram was to make a covenant with Abram, and through him, to 'lay claim' to the land He had chosen to give His people for their homeland ... so they could establish themselves under His sovereign oversight, rule, and protection. As these chosen peoples flourished under His 'blessing' He would preserve them over the coming centuries as a distinct people of Yahweh-worshippers – and from them the promised Messiah / Savior / Redeemer would be born into the world. [see **Romans 9.5**]

3/ Yahweh makes Abram these promises: “[1] **I will make of you a great nation, and [2] I will bless you and [3] I will make your name great, [4] So that you will be a blessing. [5] I will bless those who bless you, and [6] I will curse those who dishonor you, [7] and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed!**” These seven amazing promises will form the basis of the Gospel promises that God will bring to all the nations – ***ALL fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ***. All the succeeding generations of believing God-worshippers would look back at these promises, and yearn for them to be realized as they waited for their promised Redeemer to come. Listen to Mary as she exulted in the announcement that she would be the mother of the CHRIST [*emphases mine*]: “**He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His**

mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever” [Luke 1.54-55]. And to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist who would announce CHRIST's arrival: “Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us ... as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath that He swore to our father Abraham...” [Luke 1.58-75].

4/ The Gospel promises that God makes to save His people from all the nations and peoples of the earth are ALL included and summed up in that one promise: “**and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**” The New Testament apostles knew that CHRIST had fulfilled that promise.

- The apostle Peter: “**And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’** God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness” [Acts 3.24-26]. [‘To the Jew first...’ Romans 1.16]
- And Paul declared in **Galatians 3.7-9**, that CHRIST and His Gospel – which we have believed to be saved from our sins – is God's keeping His promise He makes here to Abram: “**Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles [nations, ‘families of the earth’] by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’** So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” [The Gospel of CHRIST was promised to Abraham!]
- Paul again made this summary declaration of CHRIST's fulfillment of ALL the promises God made to the Old Testament fathers in **Romans 15.8-9**: “**For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcision [Abrahamic covenant] to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles [all the nations and ‘families of the earth’] might glorify God for His mercy. As it is written, ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing to your Name.’**” [This is CHRIST proclaiming and singing HIS Gospel to the ‘nations!]

5/ While we will develop more fully this CHRIST fulfillment of all these promises in our next lesson, let's establish this truth immediately and keep it in mind going forward: when Yahweh was making these promises to Abram in his immediate historical context, **He was prophetically making these same promises to CHRIST Himself! Yahweh was promising CHRIST “...and in YOU all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”** They [we] would be blessed by His coming into the world to redeem us from our sins, proclaiming His Gospel, and calling on us to repent of our sins and believe ON HIM! These Gospel covenant blessings IN CHRIST are *announced* here; *affirmed* in **ch 15**; and *confirmed* in **ch 17** with the birth of Isaac. And again, in **Galatians 3.15-16**, Paul specifically emphasizes “**Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring [singular]. It does not say ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is CHRIST!**” As I say, this will be explained more fully in our next lesson, but we need to see, learn, and remember this CHRIST-marker here in the beginning of Abram's story to appreciate where God is going with these promises. **He is pointing, ‘pre-enacting,’ and going to CHRIST who will fulfill ALL these promises and make them good! CHRIST is the only ‘Seed of Abraham’ of whom it shall be said: “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed!”**

6/ **vv 4-9** / Abram departed from Haran, where they had stopped off after leaving Ur of the Chaldeans, **and they set out to go to the land of Canaan ... At that time the Canaanites were in the land.** He journeyed from north to south: first at Shechem and built an altar to the worship of Yahweh – in the proximity and sight of one of their ungodly, idolatrous shrines called **the oak of Moreh** [also in **ch 13.18**]. This was his way of ‘laying / staking claim’ to Yahweh's ‘land.’ “*This is Yahweh's land and country. I have arrived to claim it and declare it to be HIS! He will establish His Kingdom here in this land!*”

7/ “**From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to The LORD and called on the Name of**

The LORD. And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb [southern regions of Canaan] – still claiming all the ‘land’ for The LORD – preaching the Name of Yahweh and faith in Him as he went.

III / Genesis 12.10-20 | Yahweh overrules Abram's deceit and duplicity

1/ This historical narrative is inserted here [1] first of all, because it happened, and also [2] to show that Yahweh will keep His covenant promises and maintain the purity of His CHRIST descendant even though Abram, His human covenant-carrier shows his flaws by lying about Sarai his wife.

2/ Even though Abram was rebuked by the ruling Pharaoh of Egypt for lying to him, Yahweh still ‘blesses’ Abram with the rich dowry the Pharaoh had given him in exchange for his temporary ‘taking’ of Sarai into his harem. God afflicted the Pharaoh with ‘great plagues’ before the union could be consummated; then Abram was evicted from Egypt and escorted back to the Negeb from whence he came – his ‘land.’

IV / Genesis 13.1-18 | Yahweh delivers Abram from another potentially ‘derailing’ conflict

1/ vv 1-4 / Abram continues retracing his same steps going north that he had when he first came south – returning to his altars and **calling upon the Name of The LORD** [publicly worshipping and preaching].

2/ vv 5-13 / Abram's ‘riches,’ much of which had been given to him by the Egyptian Pharaoh, proved to be a double-edged sword. Both he and his nephew, Lot, were rich in wealth and goods. Their respective herdsmen began to fight and quarrel among themselves over the pasturelands. Though he was the ‘senior/elder’ of the family clan, Abram takes the ‘high road’ and graciously allows Lot to pick and choose which portions of the land he wanted to settle in. Lot visually surveyed all the surrounding countryside and chose the regions that most appealed to his own personal interests and advantages: he chose to settle in close proximity to Sodom. **Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against The LORD.**

Of course, they will come up again in **ch 19** when The LORD destroys them and Lot barely escapes alive. 3/ This is more than just a lesson about maintaining spiritual values and making moral choices – this is a continuing re-enactment and prophetic pre-enactment of the war of the ‘seed of the serpent’ against the ‘seed of the woman.’ Remember that these Sodomites are the direct descendants of the cursed Canaan, son of Ham, grandson of Noah [see **chs 9.24-27 & 10.15-20**]. The ‘great red dragon’ of **Revelation 12** has been from the beginning seeking to devour the seed of the woman and make war against them.

4/ vv 14-18 / The LORD uses this experience to once again assure Abram that He will keep His promises to him. Abram has lost nothing. Yahweh is still promising to give Abram ALL of it for the purpose of establishing HIS KINGDOM AND BRINGING IN HIS PROMISED REDEEMER!

V / Genesis 14.1-24 | Meet Melchizedek

1/ vv 1-16 / **Ch 14** is yet another assault on the Kingdom of God Yahweh was establishing in the land of Canaan. These four foreign kings invaded Canaan and attempted to dispossess the Canaanites and conquer it for themselves. When the five kings of Canaan [including Sodom and Gomorrah] fought back, many of their inhabitants [including Lot] were taken hostage as well as their goods were plundered. Abram had to go on a ‘rescue and retrieve’ campaign – and he did, successfully.

2/ vv 17-24 / As they were returning with the hostages and their goods, Abram is met by two kings: the king of Sodom and this Melchizedek, king of nearby Salem [*shalom / peace* **Hebrews 7.1-3**]. God thus introduces Melchizedek into the narrative - he just ‘shows up’ out of nowhere – with no introductory record of who he is, what his genealogy is, or what background he's coming from. He just shows up to ‘bless’ Abram in the Name of Yahweh. He is immediately enshrined in Scripture as the high-priestly ‘**order of Melchizedek**’ [**Psalm 110.4; Hebrews 5.6, 10; 6.20; 7.11, 17**]. In the Hebrews commentary, Melchizedek's priestly order is characterized by ‘**appointed / designated by God,**’ ‘**a high priest forever,**’ ‘**having neither beginning of days nor end of life,**’ ‘**superior to Abraham,**’ ‘**perfect,**’ and ‘**the power of an indestructible life.**’ Thus, Abram is ‘blessed’ by the CHRIST-marker Melchizedek!

3/ Yahweh brings Melchizedek into Abram's life and the forever history of Scripture as a clear testimony and CHRIST-marker that CHRIST is orchestrating the course of on-going history and the fulfillment of the covenant promises – **and that He will come in the fullness of time to complete it ... and He did!**