

Basic Training Bible Ministries

presents

The Gospel According to Abraham



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The Gospel According to Abraham

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” Gal 3:8–9

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.” Gal 3:16

Introduction:

Many years ago, as a Bible college student, I had the privilege of serving as assistant pastor to Pastor John Miller, at Westside Bible Church, in Glendale, Arizona. Many who are in attendance at this conference were there—some still are. Pastor Miller had the greatest influence on my life and ministry of the many who have benefitted me through the years. I remember the first time I was to fill in for him for a two-week period, so that he could get away for a time. I was terrified! I struggled, and I prayed, and I studied. In the end, I taught a two-week series which I called, “The Promised Seed.” Although it was 45 years ago, the benefit of that study—faltering as it was—has remained with me. In some ways, this current study has come full circle.

We have recently completed studies in “The Gospel According to Isaiah” and “The Gospel According to David.” The purpose of these studies is to show that the Gospel message—pointing men to Jesus Christ in faith—is declared throughout the Bible. In fact, this is the central message of the Bible. Certainly, in the Old Testament, the nature of the Gospel message is necessarily prophetic as His coming and redemption are spoken of as future events. Job’s statement regarding his “Redeemer” reveals that, in ancient times, the message of the coming Savior was clearly stated and understood:

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God.” Job 19:25–26

In the future, we will also study “The Gospel According to Noah,” and then “The Gospel According to Moses.” The combined weight of these studies should greatly strengthen our faith in the unity and harmony of the Scriptures and, at the same time, motivate us to “*imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises,*” Heb 6:12.

By gaining an understanding of the unity and harmony of the biblical message, we come to see that, indeed, Jesus Christ is the focus from Genesis to Revelation; and faith in Him as Savior is the only way to enter into eternal life. This is just as true for Old Testament people as for those living after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

The Content of the Gospel

In the beginning quotes from Galatians 3, Paul states that the Gospel was “*preached ... beforehand [in advance] ... to Abraham.*” The content of that message was that “*In you all the nations shall be blessed.*” Let’s look at the repetition of the message first, then we will consider its implications. There are five passages in which this promise is made to Abraham. Each is significant in the life and history of Abraham:

1. **Gen 12:1–3**, Abram’s initial call to leave Ur. It is important to note that this is the first occurrence of the word “*blessed*” in the Bible.
2. **Gen 18:18**. This was spoken by the Lord when He appeared to Abraham at his tent, and Abram interceded for Lot and his family.
3. **Gen 22:18**. After the offering of Isaac, God spoke these words to Abraham, adding the crucial words, “*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*” Paul expounds on this in Gal 3:16, declaring Jesus Christ to be the “*Seed.*”
4. In **Gen 26:4**, this promise is confirmed to Isaac, “*because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.*”
5. Finally, the promise was confirmed to Jacob by the Lord, in **Gen 28:14**, in the dream of Jacob’s ladder.

When we consider the content of the Gospel message, we often think of passages like Act 16:31, Rom 3:23–24 or 1Co 15:3–4. But whatever passage we choose, there are **three critical essentials** to the Gospel message:

1. **The Universal Problem**—this is the curse of sin on all mankind. “*The wages of sin is death,*” Rom 6:23a. This is the bad news.
2. **The Unique Person**—for redemption to occur there must be a Redeemer. “*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law,*” Gal 3:13. The Gospel is all about the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, seen from the Old Testament perspective as the coming Redeemer, Job 19:25–26.
3. **The Unconditional Promise**—God offers the gift of eternal life to all who receive the Savior by faith, “*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,*” Act 16:31.

These three facets of the Gospel are found throughout the Bible, beginning in Genesis 3. Though not always stated, they are always implied in some way, as we will see. Since the theme of the Gospel runs all through the Bible, it is called “*the everlasting gospel,*” Rev 14:6.

Now let’s look at the implications of the message in Gal 3:9. How could Paul derive the Gospel from this message? Certainly, the addition of the words, “*in your Seed*” (Gen 22:18) clarifies the focus of the message. But let’s just look at the words of Gal 3:8–9 and see what they suggest:

- “*In you*” suggests a familial relationship. Since Abraham is the “*father of all those who believe,*” it is a spiritual family that is in view (Rom 4:11).
- “*All the nations*” is inclusive of all mankind. Abraham is of the line of Shem (Gen 10:1; Gen 11:10). It was to Shem, through a special relationship to the Creator God (Gen 9:26) that the spiritual welfare of mankind was committed. It would be through him that the

children of Ham (the servant) and Japheth (the seeker) would find God's blessing. The invitation of God has always been to all men.

- *"Shall be blessed"*—God's blessing implies His pleasure. To a fallen and sinful race, there is only one blessing worth having, and that is redemption through the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness. God is pleased to give these invaluable gifts to all who believe and receive them—through Christ.

We must keep in mind that Abraham would have known Shem who, in turn, knew Methuselah, who knew Adam. He would have surely known the first promise of redemption, declaring that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15). Even Job, who lived about the time of Abraham, had a clear expectation of the coming of the Redeemer and of his own future resurrection (Job 19:25–26). As we will see in our future studies on Noah and Moses, the ancients actually knew much more than this!

"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. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, when she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have an opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called' concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." Heb 11:8–19

In this amazing passage of Scripture, we have a record of selected scenes from the life of Abraham, based on his faith in the Gospel message, which had been given to him. For the sake of our study, we will divide these events into five distinct aspects of Abraham's faith.

I. Study One—Justification

The Call and Content of His faith. Heb 11:8; Gen 12:1–3

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called ... and he went out ...”

A. The Root of Faith, Heb 11:1, Heb 11:3, Heb 11:6

Every “*by faith*” statement in Hebrews 11 (there are at least 20) refers back to the author’s defining statements on faith in verses 1, 3, and 6. Bear in mind that faith has at least five qualities essential to victorious living:

1. Faith is the **substance**, or conviction, of things hoped for, Heb 11:1a.
2. Faith is the **evidence** of unseen spiritual realities, Heb 11:1b.
3. Faith brings a “good testimony,” or **divine approval**, Heb 11:2.
4. Faith is a **world-view** that recognizes the Creator and creation relationship in all things, Heb 11:33. Faith is instrumental in gaining an understanding that can never be achieved by either rationalism (philosophy) or empiricism (science). The intellectual person sneers at the man or woman of simple faith, yet it is he who is ignorant!
5. Faith contains within itself the impetus and **motivation** to please God, knowing that He rewards those who seek Him, Heb 11:6.

The gift of eternal salvation is the fruit of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. The Spirit-led and filled life is the fruit of faith in the doctrines relating to spiritual life. Thus, we are said to be “*justified by faith*,” and we are called to “*live by faith*.”

B. The Fruit of Obedience

“Abraham obeyed”—this was his response to the call of God. Isn’t it amazing that after our initial awakening to faith that we desire to do anything God asks out of sheer joy and gratitude? Yet, as the years go by, we seem willing to do less and less.

In the book of Romans—Paul’s *magnum opus* of theology—the great apostle actually “bookends” the entire epistle with the phrase the “*obedience to the faith*.”

*“Through Him [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship for **obedience to the faith** among all nations for His name.”* Rom 1:5

*“But now [the Gospel is] made manifest and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for **obedience to the faith**.”* Rom 16:26
(emphasis added)

When Paul speaks of “*the faith*,” he is talking about the **content** of his message. The book of Romans is all about “*the faith*,” and the only way to respond in an acceptable way is to believe it. **The only obedience to the faith is faith!** Today it escapes far too many people that the obedience God seeks in the souls of men is faith. Where there is

genuine, unfeigned faith, obedience flows outward as the fruit, but faith always remains the root.

There is a lot of emphasis today on seeing the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of Christians. Certainly, this should be our goal, but the issue is being approached in the wrong way. Just as the branch produces by abiding in the vine (Joh 15:1–7), so the fruit of the Spirit is always evident where the Spirit has dominion. The one and only condition for this to happen is faith. Faith alone, in Christ and His Word alone!

Far too often, pastors harangue members of the congregation to “do good works” without the proper emphasis on believing the foundational truths and doctrines, and then submitting—in faith—to the indwelling Spirit, who alone is able to bring those truths to fruition. We would do well to remember the all-important truth that ...

“... whatever is not from faith is sin.” Rom 14:23b

When we read through Hebrews 11, we tend to focus on what the “heroes of the faith” did. But the emphasis of the author is clear: they did what they did, “*by faith*.” The first priority God is looking for is faith. This is the work which pleases Him most (Joh 6:29). We must not lose sight of the author’s train of thought. Abraham’s deeds were significant in the eyes of God purely because ...

“The just shall live by faith.” Heb 10:38

There is only one way to be justified in the sight of God, and that is by faith (Rom 3:24–25; Gal 2:16). In the same way, there is no way to please God, but to live by faith, for ...

“without faith it is impossible to please Him [God] ...” Heb 11:6

The life of Abraham is filled with many amazing and mighty works. But we also see in the record many dismal failures. Just as spiritual defeats reveal a problem deep in the soul, a lack of faith, so the mighty deeds are but an outward evidence of inward trust in the faithful, covenant-keeping God—Jehovah-Elohim. Our study will look at this amazing man, and his mighty spiritual impact throughout history. But the goal will be to always keep the focus on his faith. The reason for this is that works can be faked, and often bring praise and attention to the man. Faith always points away from the believer, and gives the praise and glory to God alone.

C. Of a Chosen Lineage

“This is the genealogy of Shem ...” Gen 10:10

In Genesis 10, we have what is commonly called the “Table of Nations.” From Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen 10:1), the three sons of Noah, the nations of the world were divided. To each of these sons was given a task, a “gift and calling” from God (Rom 11:29), for the betterment and blessing of the human race. These three lines would

provide, throughout history, for the spiritual, intellectual, and physical wellbeing of mankind. From them, God “*made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,*” Act 17:26. We will delve into this more deeply in the future study, “The Gospel According to Noah.” For study in this area, I highly recommend the book, *Noah’s Three Sons* by Arthur C. Custance.

Shem had a special faith-relationship with God, “*Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem,*” Gen 9:26. To his lineage was given the exalted task of making God known to men. From his line—through Abraham—would come the nation of Israel, through whom would come both the written and the Living Word. It is with Shem—the firstborn of Noah—that we clearly see the process of “election” beginning, by which God would set apart a special people for a spiritual task.

D. The Gifts and Calling of God, Gen 12:1–3

When God called Abraham, he obeyed, “*by faith.*” This call, recorded in the first three verses of Genesis 12 occurred in Ur of Chaldea. The great statement, “*And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness,*” from Gen 15:6, is retroactive to this call. Included in the call were three promises—the “reward” Abraham would receive for “seeking Him,” Heb 11:6:

1. **Land.** He and his descendants would be given Canaan, “*a land that I will show you,*” Gen 12:1.
2. **Blessing.** “*I will bless you ... and you shall be a blessing,*” Gen 1:2.
3. **Seed.** “*In you,*” Gen 12:3, later becomes, “*In your seed,*” Gen 22:18.

In these three promises, things that were “*hoped for*” by Abraham remained “*things not seen,*” Heb 11:1, but Abraham believed, trusting Him who promised, and left Ur and made his way into the land of Canaan.

All the other promises and provisions would be dependent on the coming of the Messiah, and faith in Him. Paul makes this clear in Romans 9:1–5. He lists eight blessings God laid aside for the Israelites:

“to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God [the temple], and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

Note: In Gen 12:6, there is an overlooked statement of great importance:

“And the Canaanites were then in the land.”

When the spies went in to “recon” the land, the thing that terrified them was, “*we saw the descendants of Anak there ... there we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak ...); and*

we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight,” Num 13:28, Num 13:33.

E. From Faith to Faith

Paul makes the point, in Rom 1:17, that the Gospel message generates a progressive faith in those who believe it. From the initial faith for the gift of eternal life, as one continues to receive the Word of God, there is a progression to a lifestyle of faith. The one who trusts in the Living God also believes that He will reward those who continue to seek Him (Heb 11:6).

It was in this faith that Abraham, “the believer” (Gal 3:8–9), went out “*not knowing where he was going,*” Heb 11:8. His trust in God compelled him to act on the revelation given to him, even though he did not comprehend the full meaning of it. The pattern for us is that we act on what we understand of the Scriptures, knowing that more will be made clear as we pursue the knowledge of God. In this process of spiritual growth, faith is tested repeatedly, for only in this way does it prove its genuineness (1Pe 1:5–9). Abraham was not exempt from such trials, as we will see in the next section.

Thoughts on Justification

1. To be “justified” by God means to be “declared righteous” by the Judge of the universe.
2. However, justification is much more than forgiveness alone. It also involves the imputation of the righteousness of God to the believer (Rom 4:3). The word translated “*accounted* [imputed]” in this passage means “to place to one’s account, to enter into the account book.” It is an ancient legal bookkeeping term.
3. It is because of justification that God sees every believer as He views His own Son—Jesus Christ (Eph 1:6).
4. The only thing that could make justification possible was the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross. This was the once-for-all work of redemption (Rom 3:21–26).
5. In the voluntary death of Christ for mankind, God the Father was satisfied (propitiated) in full regarding the payment due, and God is able to call those who believe in Christ as Savior “*just,*” or righteous, in His sight (1Jo 2:2).
6. God’s good pleasure does not end with our eternal salvation. He wills that we now live out the righteousness which He has placed within us (see Phi 2:12). God’s perfect will for every believer is “*the just shall live by faith*” (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 11:38).

II. Study Two—Sanctification

The Cost and Commitment of Believing, Heb 11:9; Gen 12:4–Gen 13:18

“By faith he dwelt in the land of promise ... dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise ...” Heb 11:9

Principle: Salvation should result in sanctification. Saving faith ought to grow into living faith!

A. Abraham the Sojourner

Abraham made an immediate transition from his initial believing to a life of faith. If we are to reap the full benefits and blessings of our relationship to God, we must move from saving faith to living faith, and from living faith to dying faith. Each of these phases is seen in the life of Abraham.

The definition of “sojourner” is one who lives as though “only passing through.” It speaks of one who is a “wayfarer” on a pilgrimage to another land. Abraham lived in such a way that it was evident that he “*waited for the city ... whose builder and maker is God,*” Heb 11:10. While we do not know how Abram lived in Ur of Chaldea, we do know that he was the ninth firstborn son in a row (see Genesis 11). Since the custom was for the firstborn to receive the “double-portion” of the inheritance, it is safe to assume Abram was a wealthy prince. With the call of God, his way of life radically changed to that of a wayfarer.

Jesus made it clear that there is a cost that comes with a life of faith (Luk 14:26–35). What appears to us to be an exceedingly harsh demand, in reality, shows the vast chasm between a holy God and a spiritually incorrigible world. This world is resolutely hostile to those who believe, but this cosmic malice is reserved in its fiercest form for those who not only believe, but who press on in a “by-faith” lifestyle. They are an affront to the atheistic and evolutionary mind-set that says, “This world is all there is, so eat, drink, and be merry” (see Ecc 8:15 and 1Co 15:32).

What Abraham believed affected how he thought and the decisions and actions that followed. He chose to live the life of a sojourner—a drifter—rather than settle down as one at-home in this world. He lived in the land that was promised to him by God, yet he never owned anything more than a burial site (Gen 23:1–20).

I am sure today that we cling far too much to this world, and all that is in it. And, as John reminds us, it is all passing away (1Jo 2:17). How we need to get our focus on the things that are above, the things that are eternal (Col 3:1–4). The experience of Abraham deserves serious, careful consideration by those of us who live in these last days. How we need to go “*from faith to faith*” (Rom 1:17), and to “*seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God,*” Col 3:1.

B. The Altars of Abraham

Every one of us leaves behind monuments in our life. They are the great turning points, the decisions at life's crossroads, the few but great things—whether good or evil—by which we will be remembered. For example, Absalom built a pillar as a monument to himself. With the pillar was also a tomb, which can be seen today in Jerusalem, but he was never buried in it (2Sa 18:18)—an empty memorial to a wasted life! What memorials are you leaving behind?

A quick survey of the altars of Abraham reveals much about his faith. In the land promised to him, the only structures he built were the five altars which testified to the faithfulness of God:

1. The Altar at Moreh, Gen 12:6–7

This was an altar of **commitment**. Abram made a commitment to follow the will of the Lord. The word “*Moreh*” means “an archer, or a teacher.” In fact, in every way, a teacher of spiritual truth is an archer, shooting arrows of truth into the unknown future. It has been suggested that “*the terebinth tree of Moreh*” could literally be “the Oak of the Teacher.” Could it be that, here, Abraham was taken under the wing of the wisest living man who instructed him in the truths of God? That man would later meet Abraham and pronounce blessing on him for his faith. That man was Melchizedek.

2. The Altar at Bethel, Gen 12:8

“*Bethel*” means “house of God,” and speaks of fellowship. Because this altar was between Bethel and Ai (the dung-heap), it is a picture of the struggle between the regenerate spirit and the unregenerate flesh. Here, then, was an altar of **spiritual conflict**.

Every day of the spiritual life is a battle, “*For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things you wish,*” Gal 5:17.

Paul expresses this very struggle in his own life in Romans 7. It was the same for Abram. Just as Bethel signified life in the Spirit, so Ai represented life in the flesh. Daily the question before him was, which shall I choose? And as we read on, we see that just like us, Abram in time succumbed to the flesh.

3. The Altar at Mamre, Gen 13:18; Gen 14:13

This was an altar of **spiritual conquest**. In the test of the famine, Abram failed. He went down to Egypt, which forever-after signified slavery to sin. Abram lied to save his own skin and suffered the consequences of divine discipline (Heb 12:3–11). After he was chastened, he returned to the land and built an altar at “*the oaks of Mamre,*” which means “vigor, power,” and represents the **victory** of spiritual recovery. We will

all experience our ups and downs in the process of spiritual growth. It is important that we see in Abram an example of one who learned (like all the spiritual greats) how to rise up from failure and press on in the fight.

“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.” Heb 12:12–13

4. The Altar in the Wilderness, Gen 15:6–10

After much testing and the confirmation of blessing through Melchizedek (more on this in the next section), Abram finds himself in the wilderness. It appears that this incident occurred between his meeting with Melchizedek and his return to the oaks of Mamre. Abram was apparently both fearful of retaliation from the great armies he had defeated, and discouraged at giving up such great spoils of victory (Gen 14:18–24). In this time of spiritual frailty, the Lord came to him to confirm His covenant. He promised Abram two things:

“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” Gen 15:1b

The Lord promised to protect him and to provide for him. While the passage does not speak of an altar, it is clear that Abram prepared an offering (Gen 15:9). Here, then, is the altar of **consolation**. It is also here that God makes the issue of the spiritual life clear, when he says ...

“And he [Abram] believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” Gen15:6

Twice Imputed Righteousness

Abram had initially believed in Ur of Chaldea (Gen 12:1; Heb 11:8). The point is made here, however, to show that it is *“through faith and patience [that we] inherit the promises,”* Heb 6:12b. This became the fundamental truth of the Gospel according to the Apostle Paul (Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6). Here, we might suggest that there are two distinct “imputations” of righteousness:

- a. The imputation of Christ’s **inherent righteousness** at the moment of saving faith.
- b. The imputation of the **practical righteousness** of Christ’s life, when we live daily obediently by faith.

Consider the two following statements of Scripture:

“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Rom 4:3; Gen 15:6

This is the inherent righteousness of Christ's character. Then, Paul goes on, in Romans 4, to develop Abraham's growth as he moved onward from the promise. He is said to have been "*strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what God had promised He was also able to perform,*" Rom 4:20–21.

Then we read, "*And therefore **it** was accounted to him for righteousness,*" Rom 4:22 (emphasis added). To what does the **it** refer? It speaks not of initial saving faith but, rather, of later living faith, which leads to obedience. That is, in addition to the imputation of inherent righteousness, he was also imputed with righteousness for living by faith. Paul goes on to say that this same righteousness will be imputed to us.

I believe this is the point James is making in Jam 2:21–24. Abraham was justified by faith for initial salvation. Abraham was justified by works for pleasing God. Jesus summarized His entire earthly life with the words, "*For I always do those things that please Him [the Father],*" Joh 8:29. When we live to please the Father, we are partaking of Christ's righteousness, and that righteousness **of His life** is imputed to us for future reward. Again, this is what Paul means in Rom 5:10, when he says:

"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son [this is initial salvation], much more, having been reconciled [in the past], we shall be saved [from His wrath, Rom 5:9] by His life."

Point: The Gospel message does not end with salvation from the lake of fire!

Rather, as we will see in our next section, the Gospel covers every aspect of the Christian experience **from the cross to the crown**. Truly, "*He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him,*" Heb 11:6b.

It was here, in the wilderness, that God confirmed to Abram what we know as the Abrahamic Covenant. The custom for making a covenant was to sacrifice an animal, divide it in two, and each party pass between the pieces. This was to signify, "so be it unto me (i.e., death) if I do not uphold my part of the covenant." This is why they called it "cutting a covenant." It is significant to note that Abram did not pass between the pieces. The "*smoking oven and a burning torch*" (Gen 15:17), I believe, represented God Himself. "*For our God is a consuming fire,*" Heb 12:29. In this way, God made it plain that the burden of fulfillment was totally upon Him. It was an unconditional covenant, made sure by the character of God Himself. The author of Hebrews makes much of this truth when he quotes Gen 22:15–17, "*For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, 'Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you,'*" Heb 6:13–14.

Abram had one requirement laid on him: to trust God!

5. The Altar on Mt. Moriah, Gen 22:8–14

Abraham's final altar was dedicated to **communion** through resurrection power. Moriah means "seen by Yah." This reminds me of what Peter says, quoting David in Psa 34:15:

"For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil." 1Pe 3:12

Remember that when Hagar was met by the Angel of the Lord in the wilderness, her response was:

"Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, 'Have I also here seen Him who sees me?'" Gen 16:13

C. Just Passin' Through

Abraham's pilgrim lifestyle was adopted by Isaac and Jacob—"the heirs with him of the same promise," Heb 11:9. They recognized that the promise of the land and the city was not for this lifetime, but for the one to come.

This same pilgrim lifestyle was followed much later, in the days of Jeremiah, by the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35). They had made a commitment to " *dwell in tents* " and to live as "*sojourners,*" Jer 35:7. This was their living testimony to the world around them that they were looking for an eternal homeland.

"[They] confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Heb 11:13

We who have trusted Christ have been "grafted in" to the spiritual tree, whose roots are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and have also become "*a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,*" Rom 11:17. Paul includes us in the Abrahamic inheritance when he says, "*And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise,*" Gal 3:29. You might then ask, "What are we to do, then? Go back to living in tents?" Of course not! But our lives, if we live "*by faith,*" should communicate the same message: that we are looking for an eternal homeland. In fact, it is impossible, if we live Christ-centered, grace-oriented, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled lives, that we should not convey an other-worldly interest, and a certain disinterest in this present world.

"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." 1Pe 2:11

Thoughts on Sanctification

1. To “*sanctify*” means “to set apart for special use” or “to make holy.” Our sanctification by God is, like justification, accomplished only by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as our substitute (Heb 13:12).
2. At the moment of faith in Christ, the believer is “set apart to God” as a special possession through five salvation works of the Holy Spirit:
 - a. Baptism into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (1Co 12:13; Rom 6:3–6)
 - b. Regeneration, being “born again” into the new life of Christ (Tit 3:4–6)
 - c. Indwelling by the Holy Spirit for fellowship and power (Joh 14:16–18; Rom 8:9–11)
 - d. Each believer is uniquely gifted for spiritual service. This “gift” constitutes a call to serve God (1Co 12:4–7; Rom 11:29).
 - e. Sealing into Christ for eternity (2Co 1:21–22; Eph 1:13–14; Eph 4:30). This “seal” is the basis of our eternal security. In God’s eyes, we are already glorified with Christ (Rom 8:30).
3. Practical sanctification means the gradual purification of the total person (1Th 5:8), and is accomplished as we submit to God’s Spirit using God’s Word to make us like Christ (Joh 17:17; Eph 5:26). This requires that we choose daily to “*sanctify the Lord God [Christ] in [our] hearts*” (1Pe 3:15), giving Him His rightful dominion over our lives.
4. Personal sanctification also requires that we judge ourselves and deal with the sins in our lives by confession and correction, thus actively participating in our purification (1Co 11:31; 1Jo 1:9; 2Ti 2:21–22).
5. Sanctification is a three-stage process: beginning at salvation, then developing through spiritual growth, and being fully realized when we are glorified in Heaven (1Jo 2:28–1Jo 3:3).

III. Study Three—Spiritual Growth
The Crucible and Character of “by faith” Living, Heb 11:10–12; Genesis 17–18

“For [by faith] he waited for the city ... By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive ...” Heb 11:10–11

There is a widespread misconception that the Gospel message has to do only with trusting Jesus Christ as Savior. Many will point to 1Co 15:3–4 as the final statement of “Gospel truth.” While the offer of eternal life to the unsaved through the death of Christ is certainly the Gospel to the lost, it is not the end of the story.

Note that in the great book of Romans, Paul writes to the Christians in Rome, expressing his desire to come to them, saying:

“I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.” Rom 1:14–15

Paul wants to preach the Gospel to those who are already Christians. He has already referred to their salvation, and the fact that their conversion to Christ was world-wide knowledge (Rom 1:8). Why, then, would he want to preach the Gospel to believers? The answer is found in Rom 1:17:

*“For in it [the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith to faith**; as it is written, **the just shall live by faith.**” (emphasis added)*

The Gospel covers the spiritual life “*from faith to faith.*” That is, from initial saving faith to living faith, and from living faith to dying faith. The book of Romans lays out the “Gospel truth” about the whole of the Christian life.

Consider, also, that when Paul rebuked Peter before the church at Antioch, it was because Peter and others influenced by him, “*were not walking straightforward with respect to the truth of the gospel,*” Gal 2:14.

Therefore, as we look at the tests, trials, and purifications of the life of Abraham, we are seeing the Gospel in action. Certainly, there are many great differences between the New Testament Church Age believer, and the Old Testament believers. But, “*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come,*” 1Co 10:11. We do well to take them to heart!

“By faith ... he [Abraham] waited for the city ... by faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed because she judged Him faithful who had promised.” Heb 11:9–11

These actions show the transforming effect of faith in the lives of this elderly couple long after they had received eternal life. The decision of Sarah cited above probably did not occur until the incident in Genesis 18, where the “*three men*” came to their tent. All the while, God was at work changing, strengthening, and transforming their lives. And it is an inevitable truth that changed lives come through trials.

A. The Eight Great Tests of Abraham

*“Then they came to the place of which God had told him.
And Abraham built an altar there ...” Gen 22:9*

“That the genuineness [trial] of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1Pe 1:7

Earlier, we noted the five altars of Abraham, and briefly touched on the altar at Moriah. I said that it was an altar of communion. It was, in fact, the place where the heart of Abraham touched the heart of God—as close as is humanly possible. However, Abraham did not get there by accident, nor by good fortune. He had been aiming at that hour for all of his long life! And that life had been a life of great testing. As surely as we trust in Jesus Christ as Savior, we will also be tested. Let us learn from Abraham, our “father in the faith.” And take note that, following victory in each test, there was commendation and blessing from God.

1. The test of separation, Gen 12:1

Justification will always demand separation. When we choose to put Jesus Christ first, we also must choose not to put anyone else in that position (Luk 14:26–27). Abraham won the victory when he entered the land and set up his first altar.

2. The test of self-help, Gen 12:10

Sooner or later, we all have to learn that God does not need our help. Certainly, we cooperate with Him in His plan, but we cannot help His plan along with works of the flesh. Abraham’s human solution to the famine was to go to Egypt. The unintended consequences of this decision continue to have adverse effects for the whole world to this day (*i.e.*, Hagar and Ishmael). A lesson that Christianity today needs desperately to learn: any time we add works of flesh to God’s plan of grace, we “*set aside* [nullify] *the grace of God*,” Gal 2:21. Abraham’s victory was that, having failed, he returned to the point of his departure.

3. The test of spiritual hitch-hikers, Gen 13:7–8

Though told by God to leave his country and family, Abraham brought along his father, Terah (Gen 11:31–32) and his nephew, Lot (Gen 11:27). God solved the problem of Terah by ending his life. Later, the problem of Lot was solved by Lot’s

decision to go to Sodom (Gen 13:8–11). There will always be those who seek to gain by associating with believers living powerful and effective lives. As Abraham learned with Lot, they must be separated from but—as believers—always treated with grace and mercy. It is in this unwavering attitude of grace that Abraham won this victory.

4. The test of forgiveness and grace orientation, Gen 14:13

Abraham never ceased to be gracious to Lot, who by association with him became a believer. As such, Abraham knew that Lot was possessed of imputed righteousness (compare “*righteous*” in Gen 18:24 with 2Pe 2:7). Abraham rescued Lot from slavery (Genesis 14) and interceded for his deliverance from God’s wrath (Genesis 18). He maintained a grace-oriented attitude toward Lot in spite of his nephew’s carnality. His victory in this area brought him the blessing of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18–20), whom Abraham may have already known as Shem. This is only conjecture.

5. The test of second-guessing past decisions, Gen 15:1

The Lord’s words to Abraham in Gen 15:1 indicate that he was both fearful and regretful of giving up so great a spoil (Gen 14:22–24). Often, after a great victory, we are spent, exhausted, and weary. It is easy, at these times, to second guess our previous acts and decisions. This is when we need the support and strength of the Word of God to restore us and stabilize us. Abraham’s victory was that, as he had believed in Ur of Chaldea so he continued to trust in the Lord (Gen 15:6).

6. The test of human solutions and their consequences, Genesis 16–17

The whole incident with Hagar began with Abraham’s failure in going down to Egypt (Gen 16:1). Often, a seemingly small “mistake” in the past will set the stage for an even greater “fall” in the future. Even though the idea originated with Sarah to “help God out” in gaining a son, Abraham certainly offered no resistance. Out of his union with Hagar came an even greater problem, which plagues the world today—the perpetuation of the Ishmael/Isaac rivalry (Gen 21:8–12) into the current Arab/Israeli conflict. Abraham’s victory in this was long in coming. Even 13 years after the birth of Ishmael, he saw him as his first-born and heir (Gen 17:18–19).

7. The test of Christ-like intercession, Genesis 18–19

How easy it would have been for Abraham to ignore the plight of Lot. After all, he had chosen to go to Sodom of his own free will. Furthermore, in doing so, he chose all the best of the land (Gen 13:10), leaving Abraham, whose right it really was, the rugged mountain country. Yet, Abraham never faltered in his understanding of grace. His increasing maturity and Christ-likeness are seen in his steadfast pleading before the Lord for the sake of Lot and his family. Like Abraham, we always win the victory when we pray for those who have taken advantage of us.

8. The test of ultimate sacrifice, Genesis 22

Somewhere along the line in the lives of all who continue to grow and mature in the faith, there will come the issue of the ultimate sacrifice. It amounts to the laying down of your heart at the altar of God's own choosing, and is a culmination of a lifetime of surrender (Rom 12:1–2). Again—and this is a crucial point—our success or failure at this point will depend on our ability to read and stand on the **implications** of God's Word, seeing not only what He has said, but understanding what He means (Heb 11:19).

Thoughts on Spiritual Growth

1. In the statement "*the just shall live by faith,*" God's plan for our ongoing spiritual growth is summarized (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38).
2. As we are saved by faith, so we grow by the exercise of faith. This requires consistent study and application of the Word of God to life (2Ti 2:15; Phi 2:12–13).
3. Spiritual growth is not an option, it is a command (1Pe 2:2; 2Pe 3:18).
4. The object of spiritual growth is to be conformed to the character of Jesus Christ (Rom 12:1–2; Eph 4:13–36).
5. Peter gives a good overview of the struggle and stages of spiritual growth—a road-map from the cross to the crown (2Pe 1:5–11).

IV. **Study Four—Spiritual Fruitfulness**
Living in the Light of Resurrection, Heb 11:17–19; Genesis 22

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac ... concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead ...”

Note: Again, see Job 19:25–26 to get an idea how clear the ancients understood the issue of resurrection.

- Note that faith must be tested, so as to be “proved,” *cf.*, 1Pe 1:6–7. It is only proven faith that results in eternal reward!
- The only fitting response to a test of faith is sacrificial offering. If faith is not asking, and doing the impossible, it isn’t faith!
- **“Concluding”**—Abraham illustrates the absolute necessity of reading and grasping the **implications** of Scripture. It isn’t just what it says, it is often, what does it imply? See Jesus’ rebuke to the Sadducees (Mat 22:29; Mar 12:24). When you learn to discern the implications of Scripture, you will be accused of “adding to the Word,” or of “being too mystic.”

Some of you may remember when I was asked to be the opening speaker years ago at the Missions Conference at Westside Bible Church. I drew on some of the implications of Romans 16, where Paul credits many people with the success of his ministry. I think that message was a slap in the face to some who had come to boast.

After my message, the next one to speak said something to the effect, “I don’t like to add to Scripture, or read into it, I think we should just take God at His Word.” While I fully agree, I see in Abraham, and in Jesus’ rebuke to the Sadducees, great cause for not only seeing what the Bible says, but what it means.

A. **The Application of Implications, Genesis 22**

How could Abraham conclude that God would raise Isaac from the dead, when in fact God had not said He would do so? Abraham understood the implications of the statement, *“In Isaac your seed shall be called,”* Gen 21:12. How could Jesus rebuke the religious leaders for *“not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God,”* Mat 22:29–32, if He did not expect them to comprehend the implications of God’s statement, *“I am the God of Abraham ... the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?”* He did not say, “They are all now living,” nor, “They will all be raised in the resurrection,” but that is the implication of what He did say!

Principle: Here is a key that distinguishes great believers. They diligently study and know the Word of God. They understand not only the doctrines, but the **intent** of God behind the words. Jesus’ rebuke to the Sadducees actually has a double connotation: they knew the Scriptures, but, they did not know what they meant. They did not know the power of God to raise the dead, because they did not know the power of God at work in

their own lives. Ultimately, we can never know the meaning of Scripture until we personally know the God who gave us His Word.

What is the real fruit of faith which cannot be falsely mimicked? It is in the deep knowledge of God's Word that comes, not only from study, but from an intimate knowledge of Christ Himself—experientially (Joh 14:21, Joh 14:23). It is the willingness, not only to declare one's trust in the Savior, but to understand and to live out that trust in a life of faith (Phi 1:27–30; Phi 2:12–15).

B. Newness of Life, Rom 6:1–14

Romans Six begins the third section of this great epistle. The full sweep of Romans takes us from our life before salvation, then through the cross, and all the way to the crown of glory. A simple outline is:

1. The condemnation of all mankind, Romans 1–3
2. Justification through faith alone, Romans 4–5
3. Sanctification through growth, Romans 6–8
4. The dispensation of Israel and its lessons, Romans 9–11
5. Our transformation into Christ's image, Romans 12–16

In the beginning of Romans 6, Paul sets forth the provisions and the means of living in the newness of Christ's resurrection life. With utmost simplicity, we see the only formula for spiritual growth and conformity to Jesus.

1. Knowing, Rom 6:6, Rom 6:9

First, Paul tells us we must "*know*" what happened when we believed. We were eternally united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6:1–4). The implication of this is that we are enabled to walk in "*newness of life.*" Secondly, we must also "*know*" that we have been freed from the power of indwelling sin (Rom 6:6–7). These are truths that must be taken "*by faith.*"

2. Believing, Rom 6:8

Based on what we "*know*" through the instruction of God's Word, we then "*believe that we shall also live with Him.*" This is not, as many assume, believing that we will live with Him in Heaven. It is the "*conviction*" (NASB) and "*evidence*" (NKJV) (Heb 11:1) that we can live with Him in fellowship and obedience now. Later, Paul will tell us that the indwelling Spirit of God can "*give [His] life to our mortal bodies*" here and now (Rom 8:11). This we must receive by faith.

3. Yielding (reckoning), Rom 6:11–14

The word "*reckon*" is the same word translated "impute" or "account" in Rom 4:3 and Gal 3:6. It means "put it down in the books as fact." We are to "*reckon*" ourselves "*to be dead ... to sin [and] alive to God.*" The active side of this is that we

“present” or *“yield”* ourselves to God as resurrected people, designed to be instruments of righteousness in doing His will.

The effect this transformational thinking has is to free us from the dominion of sin (Rom 6:12, Rom 6:14). Even when we fail—and we often do—the very act of identifying that sin in our lives and confessing it as contrary to God’s will for us (1Jo 1:9), is a declaration of liberty. In effect, we are making a proclamation, not only of freedom from sin, but also of our power—through faith—to *“reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ,”* Rom 5:17.

Thoughts on Resurrection Life

1. It is crucial that we understand that resurrection living now will affect our life in resurrection in the Kingdom of Christ (Mat 6:20, Mat 6:33; 2Pe 1:10–11).
2. The great heart-throb of the Apostle Paul was to achieve, in this life, such a oneness with Christ that his resurrection might reflect the glory of Christ (Phi 3:8–11).
3. To the degree that we are *“conformed to Christ”* in this life, we will also reflect Christ in eternity (1Jo 2:28–3:3).
4. For us to *“walk in newness of life”* (Rom 6:4) is not automatic. It takes a lifetime of growth, diligence, and trial.
5. It is critical that we keep in mind that all good things come to the believer who *“through faith and patience [will] inherit the promises”* Heb 6:12, Heb 6:15.

V. **Study Five—Historical Impact**
The Testimony of Living and Dying by Faith, Heb 11:13–16, Genesis 23

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises ... but having seen ... [they] were assured ... and confessed ... [they] declare plainly ... ”

Principle: Like a pebble tossed in a pool, the lives of those who live and die by faith, will have impact to all succeeding generations. Try as it may, this world—under Satan’s dominion—cannot stop the shock-waves of a life of faith.

- You’ll never die by faith if you don’t live by faith.
- The greatest witness is in your ways, not your words.
- Note the three verbs: “*assured*” (result from growth), “*confessed*” (by lifestyle), and “*declare plainly*” (the consistency of their lives).

A. **The Death of Sarah, Genesis 23**

In Sarah’s death, we see the testimony of a life of struggle and ultimate victory. Though she came late to the conviction of God’s faithfulness (see Heb 11:11), yet she grew rapidly and gained renown for her faith.

Principle: As long as there is life, there is grace. And, because of this, it is never too late to achieve spiritual greatness in the plan of God.

“And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1Jo 2:17

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more ... ” Rev 3:12

B. **Three Great Truths Surrounding Sarah’s Death**

1. The place of her death has a powerful message for every believer:

“So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is Hebron) ... ” Gen 23:2

“Kirjath Arba” means “the city of Arba.”

- We read in Jos 14:15:

“And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim) ... ”

- A race of giants inhabited this area up to the time of the conquest (Jos 1:10).
- It was Caleb who defeated the giants and inherited the “city of Arba,” later known as Hebron (Jos 14:6–15).

- Thus, what Abraham claimed as a burial site for Sarah, was an area inhabited by giants, and later became a “city of refuge” in the land of Israel (Jos 20:7).
 - The word “*Hebron*” means “united, alliance” and speaks of the power of fellowship between God and men.
2. The spiritual pilgrim leaves footprints in time that echo eternally.

*“I am a foreigner and a visitor among you ...
You are a mighty prince among us ...”* Gen 23:4–5

Though Abraham was “small in his own eyes,” yet he was already great in the eyes of men of his generation. The “sons of Heth” were the Hittites, descended from Heth, a son of Canaan (Gen 10:15).

Point: The Hittites were a mighty nation made of courageous warriors. “*Uriah the Hittite*” was one of David’s “mighty men” (2Sa 23:39), and was the husband of Bathsheba (2Sa 11:3).

3. The only land Abraham “owned” in Canaan was a burial plot. This fact makes me think of the statement of the Apostle Paul:

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Phi 1:21

Abraham’s claim on the land of Canaan was eternal, yet all he built there were the altars he left behind. Truly, “*He waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God,*” Heb 11:10.

C. **The Death of Abraham- Genesis 24–25**

Just as the death of Sarah brings before us three great truths, so the death of Abraham was preceded by three great acts of faith:

1. The finding of a bride for Isaac, Genesis 24
2. Abraham’s taking of Keturah as a bride, Gen 25:1–4
Her name means “incense,” and she was probably a concubine of Abraham before Sarah died (1Ch 1:32). Thus, Abraham had three wives: Sarah, a Shemite; Hagar, a Hamite; and Keturah; possibly a Japhethite. Again, Abraham is made a “*father of many nations,*” only in a much wider and greater sense (Gen 17:4), His “seed” permeates the world of nations, and his “Seed” is claimed by “*all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues ...*” (Rev 7:9) of those who claim Jesus Christ as Savior.
3. The clarification of inheritance rights to Isaac, Gen 25:5–6
The doctrine of election has to do with a divine selection of a man, Abraham, then down through Isaac and Jacob to His chosen people—the nation of Israel. This

election was for the bringing forth of His written Word, and ultimately the Living Word—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, from an elect nation came forth the Elect Servant—the Messiah (Isa 42:1–4). Through faith in Him, there is born an elect spiritual family, made up of both Jews and Gentiles, including Old and New Testament believers. Thus, Paul says to the Galatians, “*And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise,*” Gal 3:29.

Point: In this way, by faith, we enter into the continuing story and impact of the life of Abraham, a man who lived four thousand years ago!

Question: Who will, in eternity, be a child of God four thousand years from now because of your faith and life?

Thoughts on Historical Impact

1. Every child of God is called to nothing less than to change the course of history in his world.
2. Few such believers will be known in the history books. Most will never be heard of, but they will be known in Heaven.
3. The impact of a life of faith cannot be stopped. We do not even need to see the effects ourselves if we truly believe in the power of God.
4. Consider that diligent, consistent, powerful intercessory pray on behalf of others—though we may never see it—has great impact. Abraham prayed for Lot, and when he went out and saw the smoke of Sodom the next morning, he thought his prayers were in vain (Gen 18:23–33; Gen 19:27–29), but “*God remembered Abraham.*”
5. The only place to begin, if you want to change the world, is to begin with yourself. Let God make mighty changes in your outlook, motives, decisions, and actions. Never forget that:

Decisions lead to actions.
Actions lead to habits.
Habits become character, and
Character determines destiny.

Summary: Abraham, the Father of Many Nations—Genesis 25

“You shall be a father of many nations ... for I have made you a father of many nations.” Gen 17:4–5

“I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore ...” Gen 22:17

- Physically—Israel, Arabic nations, Gentile nations
- Spiritually—*“a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues ...” Rev 7:9*

“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” Gen 22:18; Gal 3:16

Note: Included with this promise was the phrase often overlooked:

“... and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.” Gen 22:17b

To which the “Seed,” Jesus Christ, referred when He said: *“On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades [hell] shall not prevail against it,”* Mat 16:18.

Do You Reflect the Family Likeness?

“If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal 3:29

The first three chapters of Galatians establish that salvation is “by grace alone through faith alone,” and the shining example of this is Abraham (Gal 3:6). The final three chapters deal with this question: As a child of Abraham, what are you doing with the powers and privileges of your inheritance?

1. The indwelling of His Spirit, Gal 4:6–7
2. The opportunity of conformity to Christ, Gal 4:19
3. The spiritual liberty which is your heritage, Gal 4:26–5:1
4. The power of love as produced by His Spirit, Gal 5:13–16
5. The ability to be led by His Spirit, Gal 5:18
6. The provision of the fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5:22–23
7. The power to fulfill the law of Christ, Gal 6:1–5

Note: The “rule” of the household of Christ (Gal 6:15–16) is a life dominated by His Spirit, demonstrating His love and power to restore others—whether believers or unbelievers—to a right relationship to Him. We are only active members of His household **if** ... *“Whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end,”* Heb 3:7.

Remember: As sons, we are heirs of God (Gal 4:7), but only through faithfulness will we be *“joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together,”* Rom 8:17.

The Necessity of Seeing the Gospel through the Ages

1. The central message of the entire Bible is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every passage of the Bible points in some way to His person or His work.
2. While we often think of the death, burial, and resurrection as the full expression of the Gospel (1Co 15:3–4), the fact of why these were necessary is more crucial. Throughout the Old Testament, the focus is that One was coming who would redeem sinful men (Job 19:25–26). They need not know WHO, nor HOW, nor WHEN. However, they did trust in Him to deliver them from death into eternal life (Job 19:25–26, Psa 23:6).
3. This brings us to the greatest single interpretive key in all of the science of Hermeneutics. How does this text relate to Jesus Christ? It is only when we ask, and answer this question, that we explore the ever-widening context and bring biblical history, culture, and language into a single arrow, pointing straight to the Lord Jesus Christ!

My prayer is that this brief and incomplete study will challenge many in the family of God to wake up to your spiritual heritage as a child of Abraham, and live *“by faith”* in the family likeness, so as to point men and women in our generation to the *“Seed”* of Abraham, the King of Glory—the Lord Jesus Christ!