



God's Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12–22)

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“I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.” (Genesis 17:1b)

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Introduction

We will begin to look at **God's Covenant with Abraham** on page 18 after considering the following preliminary ideas.

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Covenant

What is a covenant?¹ A covenant is not just a binding contract. A covenant, בְּרִית, "*bereeth*," first heard of in Akkadian culture, can be defined as an agreement between two parties, usually one greater, one lesser.² The greater protects, the lesser obeys. One assumes the role of father role, the other child (or older and younger brother). It is a family bond, a blood relationship, meaning that they never hurt or take advantage of each other.³

The greater party offers himself as a guardian and protector. In a covenant between two kings, the greater might say:

¹See "[2019-01-03 Covenant.txt](#)" and look under "ingredients that make a covenant" for one of our earlier discussions of what makes a covenant.

²This definition is due to Old Testament scholar Bernhard W. Anderson.

³We are not talking about a soap-opera-type of family here.

1. If an enemy comes up against you, I will defend you with my greater army.
2. If you need food, I will provide it.

The greater has requirements.

1. You belong to me.
2. Whenever I need you, be available.
3. If I need an army, provide your soldiers.
4. If I ask for taxes, you pay your taxes.

Covenant Formation

Some of the steps that we observe in the formation of a covenant are:

- Invitation
- Response, faith → righteousness
- Cleansing, baptism, marriage shower, bridal shower
- Sacrifice, offering, intimacy, meal
- Oath, swearing
- Commandments and promises

God's Covenant

In God's covenant with people, He says something like, "I am going to be your father, and you are going to be my people. I will fulfill my promises. You keep my commandments. The covenant is a family bond between two people who otherwise would not be related.

Marriage is a covenant. The husband says, "I am going to provide; you obey. I will be your head; you be my body. You are flesh of my

flesh, bone of my bone.” No more are the two two but one. God says this repeatedly to us. “I am your husband. You are my wife.”

God’s Covenant with Abraham

God forms his covenant with Abraham in Genesis chapters 12, 15, 17, and 22.⁴ After those of Adam and Noah, God’s covenant with Abraham is the third covenant, in which are three promises, which give rise to three more covenants, Moses, David, and Jesus. In this sense, Abraham’s covenant is the covenant of all covenants.⁵

Let us briefly examine how God’s promises to Abraham blossomed into covenants.⁶

1. You will be a great nation; your descendants will be as numerous as the stars.
 - Fulfilled in God’s covenant with Moses.
 - They came out of Egypt as a nation of more than two million men.
2. Your name will be great (nation of Kings).
 - Fulfilled in God’s covenant with David.
 - The Royal line of David is known all over the earth.
 - Solomon and his wisdom are known all over the earth.
3. All on earth will be blessed through you (through Christ).
 - Covenant of Christ
 - Jesus Christ glorifies Abraham, describing paradise as the “Bosom of Abraham.”

⁴These chapters will be suffixed by † in the chapter headings below.

⁵We will hit this idea again in [The Promises to Abraham on page 19](#).

⁶The formation of this covenant is written in Genesis 12, 15, 17, and 22.

Righteousness by Faith

Righteousness is by faith, according to the Bible.⁷ Faith is the rock of foundation to which Jesus was referring in his parable of man who built his house on the rock as opposed to the sand. Abraham's faith in God is the foundation of his trust and love for God. The Bible describes Abraham's faith by saying that it made him *righteous* before God.⁸

And [Abram] believed in the LORD, and [the LORD] accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:1-6)

Abraham calmed himself. The chapter started out by saying Abraham was anxious. His anxiety was gone. His heart was

⁷See "2019-01-16 Gen 9.txt" for one of our previous discussions on righteousness by faith.

⁸The word *righteous* in Genesis 15:6 is צדק, *tsedawkaw*, meaning righteous, right, just, virtuous, clean.

calmed. St. John in his letter will say, we calm our hearts before him.

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. (1 John 3:18-23)

Abraham had faith.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26)

As orthodox, we believe people are not saved by works but by faith, that is to say, by trusting in God.

Suppose I live in Charlotte, Jersey City, wherever, and I set out to do missionary work, to go into downtown and invite people to heaven, thinking that, so that you can go to heaven, God is asking you to feed the poor, support the needy, visit the sick.

Is this how to be righteous in the sight of God? No. Faith comes first. If you love your brother, then I know you take the commandment seriously. First you have to accept salvation through Christ.

That is why baptism comes first before any requirement. In Baptism, which comes first, I confess my faith, which comes first even before Baptism. After I witness my faith (that I may be found righteous in the sight of God), then I go for works.

There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Pe 3:21)

Works come after we have been saved by grace, after we have accepted God's promises. This is why Baptism comes first. It is not "works." It is a work of faith.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made

alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. (1 Pe 3:18-20)

Who were the eight souls?

- Noah + wife
- Ham + wife
- Shem + wife
- Japheth + wife

Two things save:

1. God: Flood: Water saved spiritual salvation
2. Man: Ark: saved physically

There is also an antitype⁹ which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Pe 3:21)¹⁰

First water, then intimacy. Water is a question posed from God. What is the question? The answer of a good conscience toward God. This question should cause agony in any mind that looks at

⁹Type + Antitype / Flood + Baptism:

- Flood = type
- Baptism = antitype

¹⁰Memorize 1 Peter 3:18–22.

it. How are we going to be intimate with God? By Baptism. Noah got into covenant by three stages:

1. Believing
2. Going down and coming up
3. Coming out

Salvation is by faith, through grace, not by works. What are Peter and Paul are saying? Am I born again? Yes, in my baptism. It is a question of conscience toward God about the resurrection of Christ.

Other images:

Ark = Christ (going through not being killed)

Ark = Church is where we have that happen

Because of the ark, eight people did not die; they got covered. In the same way, Christ got killed; we did not. We are united through baptism, the image of His death and resurrection.

The reality of the type being presented in 1 Peter 3:18–22 is baptism, which is not the ark but it is the water. The reality of the flood is our baptism. The flood is just an image to produce righteousness of faith, because it is a question of conscience. This is what the mastery of baptism does for us. Because there is a question asked of us. A person has to raise his hand and declare, “I believe.”

Why would he ask about faith at the beginning of our relationship with him? Because the beginning of our trouble with God was the

lack of trust. The beginning of repentance is that I know I will not do well outside of his relationship.¹¹

Baptism of Children

Question: If each person is responsible for his own faith. How would you justify the baptism of Children?

Here are some Biblical examples of intercession and of faith of parent or responsible person that saves a child or relative.

1. The Canaanite woman asks heal my daughter. Jesus ignores. I'm not sent to her. I'm sent to the lost sheep of Israel. She comes and keeps begging. Woman it is not good to take the bread and throw to the dogs. Even the dogs eat the crumbs. Woman your faith is great. Whatever you desired will be yours according to your faith. The girl was healed by the faith of the Mother.
2. Centurion. My servant is sick. Please heal him. Jesus said, I will come. The man said, no no no, I know. You will be excommunicated by your community. Just say it where you are, because I am also a man of authority. Jesus said, there is not even faith like that in Israel. Man, go, your son is healed.
3. Jesus entered the town of Lazarus where Martha and Mary are. He's been dead 4 days. She meets him, if you had been here, he would not have died. No I know he ... He offers that question: "Do you believe in this?" He did not just say, I am the resurrection. He says, "Do you believe?" He always asks faith before doing a miracle. In order to raise Lazarus, he had to ask Martha, the responsible party. She is the godmother of

¹¹In Romans 5 we are buried with him.

the house. St. Cyril of Alexandria. This is all about intercession and healing. Tell me something more.

4. In the three synoptic gospels, one story keeps repeating the same way: The paralytic is brought by his (four) friends. They lowered him down because of the crowds. They destroy the roof. Luke 5:20 When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” (Luke 5:20) He forgave the sins of the man without the man asking for forgiveness or asking anything—because of the faith of his friends. This is huge. The man did not ask for anything. The scribes got it. 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21), etc. Jesus is not only healing the man—he is also forgiving. This is no mistake. All synoptic gospels. Clear case of Jesus accepting the faith of those who are responsible for the man. Can someone ask for the forgiveness of another? Jesus took advantage of the faith of his friends. Jesus did not deny Judas. Who am I to deny anybody? Humanly speaking, no. Divinely speaking, yes.

Homework. Read Genesis 12-22 and Romans (all), and focus on righteousness by faith. What is it? As Christians we are expected to show faith. Most bothersome for the Lord Christ were two things: (1) lack of faith (what does that mean) and (2) hypocrisy (pretend I have what I have not). Hammer these. Write two points of what you got from these readings and this two things. These concepts are directly related to Abraham. If we do not study faith in Abraham, we will never study it anywhere else.

Typology

Typology is the study of Old Testament symbols as they relate to the church, the sacraments, and to Christ.

Types are first.

Antitypes (“against types”) are later.

Antitype: Reality

Type: Symbol

Antitype: Baptism

Type: Circumcision, Flood, Red Sea, Water of Jordan for Naaman the Syriac

Type: passover, Joseph

Antitype: Christ (reality)

1 For 10: all baptized in the cloud of the sea

Revelation of God through His Covenant

God reveals Himself in the milieu of His covenant. He reveals His sovereignty saying to Abraham, “You will be a great nation.” He reveals that he is a knower of secrets when he visits Abraham and reveals the thoughts of Sarah. He reveals that He is the creator of water and gravity when He splits the Red Sea. He reveals that He is the author of life itself when He gives Abraham and Sarah a child, despite their old age.

God's Requirements and Promises

You should be able to see and identify all the promises of God. Train your eyes to wait patiently for them. Know that our patience will be tested. Our ability to detach from our own desires and interpretations will be tested. Our ability to sacrifice will be tested (consider Isaac). Know that God will save and reward. Abraham had faith in the resurrection (of Isaac) because he trusted in God's promises.

Father of Nations

Requirement. Walk before me and be perfect תָּמִים (taw-MEEM) (complete, entire, whole, integrated, true).

Promise. I will multiply you exceedingly; you shall be the father of many nations.

Renaming. Your name Abram (high father) shall now be Abraham (father of multitude).

Everlasting Possession

Requirement. This covenant will be everlasting, between Me and you and all your descendants.

Promise. I will give you the land of Canaan, in which you are now a stranger, as an everlasting possession.

Sign of Circumcision

Requirement. You and all your descendants shall keep this covenant: every male shall be circumcised, including slaves.

Promise. I will give you a son, Isaac, by Sarah, who will be the mother of nations and kings.

Renaming. Sarai (head) renamed to Sarah (mistress, princess, queen).

The people are being renamed and are becoming God's people, prior to which they were nameless. God names Isaac, just like He names John the Baptist (Lk 1:13,63) and Jesus (Lk 1:31,2:21). The circumcision becomes a type of baptism where the Christian is cleansed and reborn with a new name.

“Brothers” of Jesus

In Genesis 13:8 Abraham calls Lot אֵן (“okh”), *brother*. In Matthew 13:55, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas are called Jesus's ἀδελφός (brothers). The Bible uses words for “brother” or “brethren” without meaning having the same mother. We will explore this idea in [Brethren on page 22](#).¹²

Melchizedek

1. Abraham sets free the captives.
2. Abraham is blessed by Melchizedek.¹³
3. Moses decrees the Year of Jubilee (Ex 21, Lev 25, Dt 15).
4. The Acceptable Year of the Lord.
5. Christ fulfills what was dictated by Moses
 - (a) Sets free the captives.
 - (b) Pays all debts.
6. Qumran says that, when Melchizedek comes back, He will be divine, to accomplish the paying of the debt owed to God.

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath

¹²Protestants get over yourselves.

¹³Information about Melchizedek is found in Qumran 12 from the Essene Dead Sea Scrolls.

day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

**“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me [Ps 45:7],
Because He has anointed Me [Ps 45:7]
To preach the gospel to the poor [Job 5:16];
He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted [Is 57:15],
To proclaim liberty [Lev 25:10] to the captives [Is 42:7, 49:9]
And recovery of sight to the blind [Heb. prisoners],
To set at liberty [Jer 34:8,15,17] those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year [Is 49:8] of the LORD.”** (Is 61:1,2)
Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, **“Today, in your hearing, is this Scripture fulfilled!”** (Luke 4:16-21)

Exile of Ishmael

Sarai, Hagar, and their Children

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. [By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. (Hebrews 11:11)]

These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of

Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written:

“Be glad, O barren woman,
who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have no labor pains;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband.” [Isaiah 54:1]

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

(Galatians 4:21-31)

Provoking to Jealousy

They **provoked Him to jealousy** with foreign gods;
With abominations they **provoked Him to anger**.
(Deuteronomy 32:16)

They have **provoked Me to jealousy** by what is not God; They have **moved Me to anger** by their foolish idols. But I will **provoke them to jealousy** by those who are not a nation; I will **move them to anger** by a foolish nation. (Deuteronomy 32:21)

For they **provoked Him to anger** with their high places, And **moved Him to jealousy** with their carved images. (Psalms 78:58)

But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will **provoke you to jealousy** by those who are not a nation, I will **move you to anger** by a foolish nation." [Deuteronomy 32:21] (Romans 10:19)

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to **provoke them to jealousy**, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may **provoke to jealousy** those who are my flesh and save some of them. (Romans 11:11-14)

Jesus Uses Abraham's Sons as a Metaphor

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:31-36)

1. Freedom, living in Christ

(a) "If you abide in my word, you shall know the truth."

(b) "The truth will make you free."

2. Slavery, living in the Mosaic Covenant

(a) "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin."

(b) "A slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever."

Jesus the Messiah is the Stem of Jesse, the Root of the Vine

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. (Isaiah 11:1)

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."
(John 15:1-2)

Does political Israel play a role in God's salvation plan?

No. We will come back to this idea.

So much for preliminaries. Now on to Genesis 12 and God's covenant with Abraham.

God's Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12†: Call of Abram, Revelation on page 19

Genesis 13: Abram and Lot on page 22

Genesis 14: Abram, Lot, Melchizedek on page 24

Genesis 15†: Abram Goes to Promised Land on page 30

Genesis 16: Hagar & Ishmael on page 31

Genesis 17†: Cleansing, Baptism on page 31

Genesis 18: Covenant Meal, Washing on page 37

Genesis 19: End Times Image of Rapture on page 38

Genesis 20: Abimelech on page 44

Genesis 21: Birth of Isaac, Exile of Ishmael on page 50

Genesis 22†: Oath and Swearing on page 55

Genesis 12 †: Call of Abram, Revelation

God forms his covenant with Abraham in Genesis chapters 12, 15, 17, and 22. These chapters are suffixed by † in the chapter headings.

The Call of Abram

This is like the courtship or engagement part. God goes after Abraham with gifts. “I can provide for you. You will never be wanting any day in your life.” It starts with what the man can do for the wife that he has chosen. This requires faith.

The first sin was with the serpent, doubting God’s intention. That led to us failing God. This covenant will allow us to get ourselves restored to God.

Friend had relationship with girl in school. She did a terrible thing to him. He loved her and was willing to forgive her. He was waiting for her to say sorry, which she never did. Three months later, he said, “I’m going to give up. She did not trust me to love her enough to forgive her. That’s why she could not forgive herself nor accept my forgiveness.” She could not trust his love.

How can we continue? First, get out of the land of your fathers. Second, get into the land I will show you. This is a test of love.

The Promises to Abraham

There are three promises to Abraham, each of which is later upgraded to a covenant. I get excited about this covenant because

it is the arch-covenant of all covenants. What are these three promises?

You will be a great nation. This promise was fulfilled in the Covenant of Blood with Moses at Sinai. In the Rabbinic tradition, they do not skip one dot or iota of God's word. We skip, but they do not.

Your name will be great. This promise was fulfilled in the covenant of David. They say *Hosanna* to the King of Israel.

Through you all nations will be blessed. Jesus Christ becomes the Son of David, Son of Abraham. In Jesus, every tribe on earth will be blessed.

God Reveals Himself to Man

Why would God reveal himself to Abraham? Because his heart was pure, it was not clinging to anything. God is not found by man. God reveals himself to Man.¹⁴

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. (Genesis 12:7).

God searches for us, even when we run away from Him. When Adam disobeyed God, he hid from God. Humans run away from God. We are ashamed of our mortality, weakness, sinfulness. But God knows where we are hiding, and he still finds us and appears

¹⁴Christianity is not a religion. Religions are groups of people who create their god. Christians are people who are people to whom God has revealed Himself as their Father.

to us. Do we have an ear to hear his voice? Where could we hear God's voice?¹⁵

Abram's Response to God's Revelation

What was Abram's response to the revelation of God? "He built an altar to God who revealed Himself to him." He built the church. This is how we also must build the church.

Interpretation of Revelation

How can we understand the revelation of God to us? We need the interpretation of an active witness. Abraham was interested in the truth. Jesus came to tell the truth. The revelation happened in history. Where is it kept? In the Bible, a monument of what happened in history, people of pure hearts and true intentions that kept this said, People must know this. We have tradition which is the right interpretation of this document. That interpretation is required because the darkness will say, Bah, Apostolic tradition. This is how *I* see things. Not everybody is interested in God showing himself or hearing what God has to say. When the Pharisees hear the testimony of the soldiers, they say, Do not worry, we will give you money and we will go to Pilate and take care of this man and everything will be OK for us. They do not look for the truth. They prefer darkness.

Abram & Sarai in Egypt

The half-truth (she is my "sister") saves his life.

¹⁵The Nicene Creed is a boiled down summary of God's revelation to Man.

Genesis 13: Abram and Lot

Abram and Lot Separate

Brethren

Notice the use of the word “brother” (when the genealogy in chapter 11 shows that they are uncle and nephew).

“Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?”
So they were offended at Him. (Mark 6:3)

There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. (Mark 15:40-41)

“Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? “And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” (Matthew 13:55-56)

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas (this is the “sister” of his Mother; was this a sister or cousin or aunt?), and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25)

When Abraham uses that language, he is reflecting the Aramaic way of thinking, especially in that area. These uses of the word “brother” in the New Testament confuse western people unfamiliar with this way of thinking, unfamiliar with close-knit family relationships. These boys could be the children of a sister or cousin of his mother.

The community is a very close community. They live, eat, and go to the feast together. The big, extended family, and even unrelated neighbors are all very closely knit together, *like one family*.¹⁶ Cousins are thought of no differently than brother and sister. There is no doubt that the disciples or cousins or close relatives of Jesus would be called nothing other than “brothers.”

Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, annihilated monasticism (and celibacy). He left his vows and married a nun. He saw abuse and wanted to do away with it. He spoke out against celibacy. We do not solve one problem by creating another one. So the world of non-traditional Christianity is to do away with everything. The Jewish idea is that celibacy is not a blessed thing, breaking a commandment of be fruitful and multiply. However, in the Christian mind, Jesus was celibate, John the Baptist was celibate, like vessels to give themselves to God in which to abide, and this is a blessed thing.

The Mitosis

As the family was growing and filling their land, at the first sign of clashing between the herdsmen, before letting it creep up to create any tension between them, Abraham recognized the need to address the issue with Lot.

1. He offers Lot the choice. You choose; I will go the other way.
2. Abraham trusts that God will give him the land.¹⁷
3. This story gives insight into how God's people resolve conflicts. It demonstrates how to work with others under the same

¹⁶Check out *Like One Family: The Armenians of Syracuse*, by Arpena Sachaklian Mesrobian.

¹⁷What part Lot chose ended up being the land of Sodom, the luxurious living of irrigation and sewer systems. No more tents and going to the well. The Rabbis would say, God is in favor of the mountains and hills, not the cities.

covenant with God, others with whom you share the Body of Christ.¹⁸

Abram Inherits Canaan

This possession is to be an eternal possession.

Genesis 14: Abram, Lot, Melchizedek

1. Abram Rescues Lot
2. Abram Blessed by Melchizedek

Chederlaomer was a bully. They rebelled against him. He captured all of them. Abraham armed his slaves and went after Chederlaomer. He found them at night and defeated them all the way to Damascus.

We do not know if that is actually Syria which is very far away. He freed the five kings and captives with his 318 men. He went and defeated. Most probably the opponents were not big giant armies. These were small tribes. Each one is a kingdom. How big was Jerusalem at the time of David, land-wise, city surface area, in acres? It was eleven acres in the time of David, 35 in Solomon. These towns and cities were small compared to today. When you hear kings and kingdoms do not think big scale like

¹⁸Out in the world, you learn to protect yourself, to act a different way than Abraham and Lot acted. Therefore, you have discern when it is appropriate to follow in Abraham's footsteps. Even in the church you can be taken advantage of. This lesson from Abraham does not extend to all relationships. When we fight, I think we might forget this lesson. Let us remember never to say anything so hot that we would not be able to forget. Train yourself to pause, and remember Abraham's solution.

British, French, etc. These are prehistoric, small tiny places, with and hundreds, not thousands and millions of people.

David installed Solomon a king while David was alive. He was the only king that gives up his throne while alive. Solomon takes throne from David. In the day of his coronation, David makes this psalm (110) which he is saying to Solomon his son. He gives him the priesthood of Melchizedek.

Notice in Gen 14:18-19, Melchizedek is priest and king and offers bread and wine, even though priests in OT offer animal sacrifices.

The Priesthood Order of Aaron = Levites. A priest is directed by people to offer prayers and sacrifices of men to God.

Melchizedek offers bread and wine. He is king of Salem (Jerusalem). He is THE priest of God. He says the blessing. Abram gives the tithe. Melchizedek disappears.

Then we have David mentioning Melchizedek in the coronation of his son Is this an apparition?

Aaron's priesthood offers blood and animal sacrifices on behalf of Israelites.

Gen 11:10

Shem 100

Arphaxad born

lived 500 more years

Arphaxad lived 35 more years

Arphaxad 135 when Selah was born

30 more

Shem 165 when Eber born
Shem 199 when Peleg
Shem 229 Reu
Shem 261 Serug
Shem 291 Nahor
Shem 320 Terah
Shem 390 Abram

The rabbis think that Shem is Melchizedek. That opens a big can of blessing. Will tell you how big. Human being lives on earth. Priest of Most High. King of Jerusalem. He is the first born of Noah.

Priesthood of the firstborn. Shem, righteous, king, priest. No separation at the time. Look at his offering. The bread and wine. It is the order of things before the permission to eat meat was given. He is offering from the innocence of Eden where there was no need to kill animals. The food of humans was fruit and seeds. These are eucharistic images.

Heb 5

What is the order of Aaron?

What is the order of Melchizedek? This is the order of the firstborn. The first born of the family is a Godly portion. God always said give me your firstborn.

Numbers. Who would inherit the promised land. They needed to make a count of all the fighting men heads, 20 years and above, to be heirs of Abraham.

Numbers 3. The firstborn are mine. The passover lamb protected them.

God changed his idea from the firstborn to the Levites. Numbers 3:44

God asks them to exchange the firstborn with the Levites. If there is a number lacking, they will have to pay money. Ex 32:25ff

unrestrained = euphemism for naked

Who were God's here? (Egypt system) First born. How did God consecrate them? Numbers comes after this. God will strike the Gods of Egypt. River, calf, frogs, all the nature that he struck. With nature he ends up striking up the priests of Egypt, the first born. Among those are the priests of Israel, first born. How did god purchase them? With the blood of the lamb Firstborn kept alive to do what? To serve Yaweh.

When Moses called on them, what happened? Only the Levites came. In v. 27 what you need to do today is not. So the sons of Levi did according to what the firstborn are supposed to do.

In the visit of Abraham to Melchizedek, he offers sacrifice, blesses, Abraham gives tithing. Priest and firstborn of family, no work, consecrate to God. Main work is bless and offer sacrifices.

David takes this one in Psalm 110. Sit at my right hand. You are a priest forever according to order of Melchizedek. This is the order of firstborn.

Hebrews. Supremacy of the order of Melchizedek. Order of firstborn.

Numbers. Census of exchange between Levites. Numbers 3.

Hebrews 5, 7. Comparison of order of Melchizedek, superior. Numbers 3, exchange of counting of orders of firstborn, Levites.

God said I am taking the Levites. Exodus 32. When they did the golden calf, naked, sinning, whoever on God's side come to me. Group supposed to come is first born, who was consecrated in Egypt. When god slaughtered all the gods of Egypt, He ended up with the priests of Egypt. He called them the might of Egypt. When Moses found no response from the first born, response from great zeal of Levites Moses: you have consecrated yourselves to God as priests.

The priesthood was intended all along to have the firstborn from every family. This was not supposed to be a tribal business. Was supposed to be every family. One or two or three priests (father, son, grandchild). Golden calf transferred to Levites.

How should I feel about the Levitical priesthood? It's a shame! It brings to memory a shameful incident.

In Christ (Hebrews) is the priesthood restored. The priesthood is restored! Because Jesus is the firstborn (tribe of Judah, opens the womb of his mother).

What about the Christian priesthood? Same thing There should be a priest from every family. Not that I am any of it. This is the requirement. Priests will be judged for their consecration and purity. Today we are restored back to their order. Spiritually the firstborn of God.

Q: Moses: Thus says God of Israel: Let every man kill his brother.

A: If this was an outbreak of salmonella, would that make it easier?

A: For God, fleshly death is not something atrocious, as it is to us.

Q: Spiritual sense: Jesus: anyone who does not hate ...

YES we have to be ready to detach.

He speaks to St. Mary. He speaks of that detachment.

About these amputations. God said I will not flood again. Jesus said, I came that man may live life more abundantly. We can sin, but Christ can raise us back. Otherwise OT is about highlighting sin - what happened. Judges - whole tribe is wiped out - nightmare book!

Look at the human family as a body with sickness. The killing that happens was to prevent death. I know some people do not believe in capital punishment. If you go somewhere with no capacity for prisons, what are you going to do. We are living in a manicured culture. But you go to tribal culture, strong kills weak, judicial system, they have no prisons, either exile or kill.

I am looking at this from God's perspective. Where are these people going to go? Some of them will go with Him and be given a chance to live with Him. Jesus himself said that. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah would have a better case in the trial of judgment than the people of Capernaum.

There is temporal punishment and eternal punishment.

1 Corinthians 11:27-31. Dying is not the end of it. Facing eternal condemnation is worse. Sometimes death is a mercy. Allows us to escape judgment.

Death is not the end of it. What is this life? It is nothing. If for some reason we get to that point and God says time out. Time out! That means we are being disciplined. First judge ourselves. Second be judged by God. Third judged with the world.

Genesis 15†: Abram Goes to Promised Land

When God promised Abram (a) you will be as numerous as the stars and sands and (b) you will possess the land, [Abram] believed in the LORD, and [the LORD] accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

Abram stays years and becomes 90 years old. God says, I am your shield, you will be exceedingly great. Abram says, You gave me no offspring. God says, Your servant will not be your heir but your seed will be as numerous as the stars or sands. Abram's heart was comforted (because he believed), and this belief and peace in Abram's heart was pleasing to God who repeated his promise to Abram of a great number of descendants. God advises Abram about the future, like a friend.

“Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.” (Genesis 15:13)

The long time without children was a test, which Abram passed by believing, which was accounted to him as righteousness: this righteousness is the beginning of everything.

Genesis 16: Hagar & Ishmael

Sarai & Hagar fail the test of patience, but God is faithful.

Jews in place of Ishmael. Child slave. Did not endure. A slave does not stay in the house forever. Jews fanatic about race, about being flesh offspring of Abraham. The flesh has no endurance.

However, the Christian, gentile by birth, is a child of the Spirit, which endures.

Freedom is to be a child of Sarah, the free woman.

We are not children of the slave woman Hagar. Sinai Arabia.

When we talk about salvation, the children of the slave woman are no more children. They are kicked out.

Genesis 17†: Cleansing, Baptism

1. Abram (honored father) renamed to Abraham (father of many)
2. God establishes sign of covenant, circumcision
 - (a) Until the covenant is made in the flesh of the male, they are nobody
 - (b) New creation, new being; take off the old, put on the new; death and resurrection; old nature to die, new nature to rise

(c) Receiving the name on the eighth day, the day of circumcision

3. Sarai renamed to Sarah
4. Isaac's birth promised
5. Abraham has everyone circumcised

Circumcision

Circumcision is taught by the Jews as cleansing, without which one is unclean. Very bad when somebody is not circumcised. A Jew would look at it as unclean. Completely outside the covenant. Pigs and dogs. Will offend anybody to give their daughter to an uncircumcised or eat with them Epitome of garbage. See Acts 10–11.

28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 "Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?" (Acts 10:28-29)

2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3 saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" 4 But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6 "When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7 "And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' 8 "But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For

nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.'
9 "But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has
cleansed you must not call common.' (Acts 11:2-9)

Notice the baptism of Ezekiel and Naaman the Syrian.

At this point in the covenant formation process, we are waiting the sacrifice and oath.

Notice that the names of both Abram and Sarai were changed. Therefore why is circumcision applied only to males and not females?

- In the Mind of the Creator, the male & female are one flesh. The daughter and wife are *in* the husband. By circumcising the husband, all the family will be clean.
- There is a blood covenant between husband and wife. He sheds his blood in the marital process. That bloodshed is covers the wife and daughter. That is why it is really a big thing for a man to give his daughter to an uncircumcised.
- For us the husband is Christ and the bride is the church. This is very easy to apply. He goes to the cross, sheds his blood. He becomes the circumcision for us. We become clean in him.
- Man enters covenant with God with blood
- Christ shedding his blood on behalf of the new family (him and church). All of us are clean by the circumcision of Christ. Look this up in Paul "He becomes the circumcision for us."
- Relationship between husband and wife, there is a little blood that comes in the covenant.
- Man bound to God. Woman bound to man.

- Church unites herself to Christ through the sacraments. Christ has covenant to father.
- Sarai name change clearly shows that covenant is with her too.
- She is circumcised by virtue of her unity with her husband
- It takes a different place in the NT, where there is no male or female, all are baptized, and there is no differentiation by gender, race, language.

Circumcision on the 8th Day:

- Fulfillment of new promises. New creation.
- Luke 1:59: John named and Zechariah's voice comes back so he can prophesy.
- Luke 2:21: Name and circumcision.
- We name a child when we baptize.
- Baptism: union with Christ (boys and girls)
- Circumcision: cleansing of men (and through them women) (only boys)
- Romans 3+4: Circumcision
- Galatians 3:28: THE WHOLE CHURCH IS A FEMALE. You become a Son of God when you are baptized. THIS IS BIG. MEMORIZE.

(cf. Gen 22)

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ

Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26-29)

God did all the blessing work before circumcision, indicating that circumcision is not the end of it.

Circumcision vs Baptism

Mosaic Covenant Requirements are rearticulated in the Messianic Covenant

- Moral Law (10 Commandments) (rearticulated) → You have heard that it was said
- Ceremonial law (replaced by sacraments). How we mend our sinfulness. Fewer, simpler, cut to the core, goes to the spirit rather than to the body.
- Civil law (canceled) → You heard “eye for eye,” but I tell you, ...

Ceremonial law

- Cleansing, Washing, Purification. Washing, what is clean is what comes out of mouth not goes in Going into house of Centurion. (Peter vision.) Circumcision substituted by Baptism.
- Feasts. Types of major events that Christ Accomplished. All these ceremonial laws has been substituted by the reality. They were the monuments in the history of Israelites, dedicated to future realities. Fulfilled. When the Holy Spirit came, it was fulfilled.
- Sacrifices if temple is erected.

Feasts

- Sabbath. He does not keep the letter of the Sabbath. “You do not leave your donkey in the well, ...” “The priests work on the Sabbath.”
- 1st of month
- 3 times Jerusalem
 - Passover (Should appear in Jerusalem). THURSDAY. Day he offered his body and blood. “It is finished”
 - Yom Kippur (Should appear in Jerusalem). FRIDAY. Substituted by crucifixion of Christ. Day of our atonement. When Jesus went to cross.
 - Sukkoth. Feast of Tabernacles (Should appear in Jerusalem). Symbol of God among man. Nawruz. Hosanna Sunday
- Pentecost
 - OT: Camped around the mountain, received the Torah
 - NT: We received the Holy Spirit written on our hearts

Commandment of Baptism is sermon on mount and commandment of love.

Why is baptism 40 days for men and 80 days for women?

The Jews would think either:

- Bleeding and discharge of Mother that renders her impure for 40 days until regular cycle comes back. Punishment for Garden of Eden.
- Little newborn girl carries the estrogen in her blood and they have a drop of blood in their diapers. This makes two women, not one. $80 = 40 \times 2$.

I do not think the NT carries any of that stuff. The church debated this and there was division over it. I think they will revisit this eventually, but this is not supported in NT.

What about menstruation?

Again no basis, traditional. If we have a nosebleed or bleeding or fluid going out, should we not take communion?

Genesis 18: Covenant Meal, Washing

1. Three Angels of God appear at Mamre
2. God promises Abraham a son by Sarah
3. Abraham intercedes for Sodom
4. Cleansing of Sodom

Here we see the covenant meal.¹⁹

Let's review the sequence:

- Invitation
- Meal
 - Noah: Sacrifice, eats of it (implicit) permission to eat meat
 - Abraham: Three men, peace offering. People eat and give portion of sacrifice.
- Promise
- Intercession

¹⁹See the movie [Ushpizin](#)

This meal hints to the Eucharist and to the meal Christ shares after resurrection in which a promise was given, specified with a time. Here the promise is Isaac, Laughter, and Sarah laughed, Abraham laughed, and everyone laughed when he was born. Shows sovereignty of God. Nothing impossible with God. God raised life out of deadness. First seed of resurrection. This is how Abraham started to believe in Resurrection. Wife had no ova left in her ovaries. Life comes out of that. Had to come from relationship. Spousal relationship with wife for that to happen. God doing a miracle.

Genesis 19: End Times Image of Rapture

1. God rescues Lot
2. God destroys Sodom
3. Lot and his daughters

And again:

- How angels came to pick a couple of people out
- Willing to take anybody ready
- There will be 2 working, one taken
- Fiancee of the daughters, but the daughters are taken from them and they are left behind
- St. Peter image of end of time
- All creation will burn with noise
- Even the idea of fleeing, that someone will be fleeing from sin
- Lot's wife turned halfway and not make it

Lot did not know the angels. Life in Sodom and status of people there and what Lot was experiencing was not ignored by NT. Jude.

Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, indulging in sexual immorality and pursuing unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 7)

This is not just an inclination of the heart. This is actual physical work. These people take advantage of anybody who goes through the city.

Why would Lot choose to live there? Lot is not a big anti-Christ. He knows God through his Uncle. Other letters called him the righteous Lot.

[He] delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) (2 Pe 2:7-8)

How do we know Lot was righteous? He welcomed foreigners for one thing.

What about offering his daughters? He wanted to prevent a worse sin by providing a lesser sin. Today we are trying to defend the different inclinations of people, thinking that it is not a big deal. But to Lot it was big deal. Homosexuality was worse than fornication! These were tough times. This is a dire choice in a dreadful circumstance.

Why did not he leave? He was too late in leaving.

From one point, he is just, believing in God and the angels. He has a great deal from his Uncle. That righteousness of faith is there. When the angel told him, he did not linger. He told his sons-in-law who thought he was a joker.

From another point, he got used to the city life. He asked to flee to Zoar. He got used to sedentary life. He does not want to live on a floor on the ground tending sheep out in the country. St. Paul is going to address this point.

The two angels are coming to rescue him. The apostles tell us, God knows how to rescue his own. He will find a way to take him out of there. That is not without the intercession of Abraham. See the end of 18, the bargaining! If I find 10 I will spare the city, but he could not find 10. Lot and maybe his two daughters.

When somebody is in the hand of the devil and completely out there in sin, out of the church, and the prayer is given fervently for them, they will be rescued, there is no doubt in my mind. It is up to the people of the church to make a persistent stand in front of God and ask for them to be snatched out of the hand of the devil. If it is in the heart of God's people to rescue them, they will be rescued. So why does not God just do it without our prayer? He knows in his foreknowledge, right? He puts Abraham there to beg for Abimelech. The widow in Luke 18, the Unjust Judge. At the end of the parable, he has to give her what she wanted, he had to plead her cause, because she was after him. "She would weary me by her begging." Would not God do even more for his faithful servants who call on Him day and night? He will, and I tell you the truth, he will do it quickly. We call that intercessions of the living for the living, the living for the departed, of the departed for the living.

There are six types of prayer:

1. thanksgiving
2. praise
3. supplication, inquiring, entreating, asking, knocking, seeking
4. intercession
5. repentance, have mercy on me
6. blessing (to become a mirror of his grace), “He gives me life. I give him myself. My soul magnifies the Lord!”

God Saves by Fire

Lot lost everything, but he was saved, even by fire. (1 Cor 3:15)

If we talk, and we are not really diligent in building anything, we are building with straw and will be burned by fire.

Lot was brought up in a very Godly atmosphere, with Abraham. As a priests and deacons we have to be careful of the culture in which we live. Be careful as workers of God, not to build with laziness, not to build with cheap stuff. Bring your kids to learn fasting. Learn self-control, the way of God, like the fathers have done. Why cannot I go to a service for half an hour. Why do I have to pray for three hours? Because we do not worship with a cheap material. We invest ourselves.

Sermon of Mount. Go into your room and close your door. You need to pass that sea of loneliness. Prayer and fasting and almsgiving turning the other cheek. All this is not easy. Whoever is the wise man builds his house on the rock. The fool will build on the sand. Very easy to build on the sand. As a servant,

priest, bishop, we should never take the easy way out. We should always be prepared to be tested. The people we are responsible for sometimes test us. This is testing by fire.

Lot actually was taken as an example of the end of times. As they were in the time of Lot

Let's go to Christ and find out what He said. Luke 17:28ff.

Similar to angels taking lot by hand. When they did that, it started raining fire and brimstone. They were warning him not to go after his possessions. That resembles what Jesus was saying: do not take anything, leave everything, there's no time. Step away and do not look back. Running out of time.

Attachment is a sin!

The escaping part. 2 Pet 2:18 to the end. It's about escaping. There are people who escape half way. They have left their way of life in sin. But their heart is only half way. After their escape they get entangled again. Then they go back to what they left, addiction, fornication, pornography. If you want to run from sin, you have to run completely and not turn back, even one degree. He is referring to OT and to someone who really ran from sin. Joseph, when the woman caught him, left his shirt with her. St. Paul to Timothy: Flee from youthful temptations. What do we run away from? Things that we cannot fight. He is alluding to Lot's wife who did not run completely. Warning when we know that we are overcome by something, we should run away from it completely. If your eye stumbles you, pluck it out. If your hand stumbles you, cut it off. Of course He does not want you to frivolously maim your body. He wants to be very emphatic about fleeing sin. Check out the prayer

in our liturgy, absolution before communion, end of Liturgy of St. Basil, the last prayers before communion, where the priest prays inaudibly one of the repentance prayers.²⁰

Thessalonians, “We will be caught up with them.” However, not everybody will be caught up. There will be a Cloud, the burning of Earth, the destruction of the universe. There will be no more days. There will be no more coming of Christ to earth again.

The rapture and resurrection are one thing. People will be caught up with Jesus in a Cloud. The bad people will be left to be burned with Earth. It is the same image as Lot. It is the same day. Lot was called out of Sodom—a symbol of rapture—to be transferred to a safe place. It is the same day. When the Church has been taken out of the Earth the whole place will be burned on the same day.

About the belief that “there will be no coming of Christ to live for 1000 years,” it is nonsense because Jesus said the day they left, Sodom was burned.

About Lot’s daughters lying with their father. They legitimately thought the whole world was burned, almost like Adam and Noah. They did not mean to desire their father. They wanted to have a new beginning.

It brought forth two nations, the Moabites and Ammonites. The beginning was an incest relationship, and the two nations were very corrupt. The Moabites were known for worship of Baal with prostitutes in temples. Balaam used them to trip the Israelites. The Ammonites had sexual promiscuity issues. Who redeems

²⁰Coptic Reader > Basil Liturgy > Liturgy of Faithful > #67 The Prayer of Absolution Addressed to the Father > Search for “understanding to flee unto the end”

them is Ruth. She is a Moabite, a descendant of the first daughter of Lot. Mo-Ab = son of father. Ruth becomes redemption for that nation. The Israelites know that. It's a shame. They are a reason that the Israelites were almost not going into the promised land. They were hateful to the Israelites. She becomes part of the ancestry of David and therefore of Christ.

Genesis 20: Abimelech

It seems like Abraham partially lied because Sarah is more his wife than his sister. Why did Abraham do this (again)? The first time was in Egypt, the second time with the Philistines. Even though he is a close friend of God, filled with the presence of God, this man was living in distress. He journeyed, changed his home. Now Gerar is a place of the Philistines, but we do not really know what kind of nation or people that is, perhaps it represents people from Crete, Cyprus, or Asia minor who came there to find a place to live.

We tend to have the wrong idea that the people of God are totally living in peace, tranquility, and security. However, at times, the servants of God can be quite stressed by the circumstances of life. St. Paul had the same predicament. He had much trouble. He had much distress.

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you. (2 Cor 2:4)

He thought, maybe I rebuked them too harshly, as he writes in his second letter. Then one of the apostles came and said they are doing fine and actually better off because of your rebuke.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, (2 Co 1:8-10)

Jesus in Gethsemane was anxious, overwhelmed, depressed. So if the Lord had to go through it, and share with us this experience, then we need to clear our childish way of thinking that, if we choose the life in Christ, it will be easy cruising.

The people of God at times will have to go through really tough times.

At the beginning of Genesis 15, God says, "Do not be afraid," indicating that there is going to be a reason to be afraid!

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Ge 15:1)

What does this mean "I am your shield?"

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told

you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," (Jn 18:4-8)

He was their Shield, their Protector, their Shepherd.

This experience in Genesis 20 enabled Abimelech to encounter God. The man is not intending malice. God told him that I know you did not act out of malice or evil. God said, "Yes I know you did this out of the integrity of your heart." Showing that He sees the heart, that He God looks to the intentions of the heart, not the surface.

He says something more: "I also withheld you from sinning." Wow, Lord, you can keep me from sinning? Then why do you allow me to sin in other situations? This is a question for everyone.

And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. (Ge 20:6)²¹

"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one" means, guard and keep our hearts. We are asking you Lord, begging you, keep us from sinning against you. This is something to think about.

Think about Pharaoh who begs for prayers that the locusts will be lifted up. That is nice, but not nice enough. What should Pharaoh have asked for? He believed in a God of circumstances, but he should have been praying for a change of heart. "Create in me a clean heart O Lord." God, change my heart, so I can see you in all these things. We wrongly tend to believe in a deistic god.

²¹Compare to King Herod, who sinned with his brother's wife.

The encounter between Abimelech and God led his whole community to change to the fear of God, the beginning of wisdom (Ps 111:10, Pr 1:7, Pr 9:10). Not fear as terror, but as of great respect and admiration.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever. (Ps 111:10)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Pr 1:7)

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Pr 9:10)

When God appeared on Mt. Sinai, people were terrorized. God wanted people instead to put God first in their hearts.

Abraham’s half-truth led to risking the death of Abimelech and his clan.

Most probably Sarah might be a cousin, and the father here is a grandfather. She is not really a half-sister. You can see that in the genealogy of her family. Research the genealogy of Sarai. She is not the daughter of Terah but his daughter-in-law.

In Genesis 20:7, we see that Abraham is a prophet. We know he is more than a prophet. He is a prophet, priest, and king, the three offices of Christ. He is a priest because he offers sacrifices. He is a king because he is a patriarch.

“Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore

her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."
(Ge 20:7)

God is very much confronting Abimelech. The prayer of Abraham is what opens up their wombs and gives them fertility.

So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. (Ge 20:17-18)

But check this out:

"And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'" (Ge 20:13)

Abraham was scared. Apparently Sarah was exceptionally beautiful. Abraham wanted to protect himself. In his mind, instead of killing him right away, they would approach him to ask for her hand. But contrary to that idea, in both cases, he just let them take her.

To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated." (Ge 20:16)

Addictions

Whenever someone has some sort of addiction that they cannot let go, there is a power that is holding them. Whenever they manage to let that addiction go, that power is killed and suddenly the person is let loose. If not addiction, it may be depression or anxiety. It is something to heal. This is not physical medicine, this is something that has to do with blessing. The Lord had closed up the wombs of Abimelech. They do not know why. Suddenly they understood it was the woman they kept. When they let go of her, suddenly the floodgates were opened and their fertility was restored, and they were able to give birth.

Some people are not able to pray to God. They are like inside a rock. Even if they get outside, they do not feel like their words reach anybody. Then you go into it and you find out they are holding a grudge against someone. They have to let that go. Jesus says, before you pray, if you hold anything against anyone, go and forgive him first. All these little things that people keep, thinking they are not significant, are extremely significant; they obstruct the path to God.

Here, even though there was no sexual immorality (yet), the keeping of Sarah obstructed Abimelech's entire house! Therefore, we need to get rid of whatever we have before we can go to God.

About this holding of sin or holding a grudge, it is like Sarah kept in Abimelech's house is what led Abimelech to be barren. We need to examine our life, to take out, as the Song of Songs says, the little foxes that ruin the vines. They look not harmful, but they are.

Catch us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vines have tender grapes.
(Song 2:15)

Genesis 21: Birth of Isaac, Exile of Ishmael

1. Birth of Isaac
2. God protects Hagar and Ishmael
3. Treaty with Abimelech

Isaac means laughter. Sarah laughed when God visited Abraham and said that you will give birth. To give birth and nurse at 90 is a lot of trauma. God made me laugh, Abraham laughed, and all who hear this will laugh. This laughter has two meanings about God's gifts: that they are *astounding* and *joyful*!

The day Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast, which the Jews today celebrate as *Rosh Hashana*. It is the feast of the new year in which they remember Abraham's feast of Isaac's weaning.

Isaac was circumcised on the eighth day. (We do not know exactly when he was weaned.) Notice that the day he received his name is the same as the day of his circumcision. He enters the covenant by circumcision, a joyful surprise. St. Paul is going to take that theme and build upon it.

Isaac was given by God to Abraham and Sarah. He was not born of man's efforts. He is God's work. Genesis is a sequence of stories about fathers and sons with their relationships who become fathers with their own sons with their own sets of relationships,

and the process repeats for several generations. After Chapter 22, the story becomes about Isaac and then one chapter later about Jacob.

- Abraham: Gen 12-22
- Isaac
- Jacob: Gen 23-24

[We will pick up here next time with the relationship of Ishmael and Isaac and what will happen with Ishmael and what happens when people persecute the people of God.]

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. (Ge 21:9)

Why was Ishmael 14 years old scoffing? Abraham did not do a feast when Ishmael was weaned. When Isaac was born of Sarah, it was like a resurrection. This woman 90 years old was pregnant with a child. Who is that child? Why was God so interested in Sarah? The fact that Sarah is the wife, the free woman, the one Abraham loved since the beginning. Ishmael sees his mother crying, and he is burning with jealousy, envy, “Why is it not me,” in a very tender and vulnerable time of life. The intensity of that scoffing made Sarah worried. “Cast out this bondwoman and her son.” Sarah knew that Abraham is not going to be happy. She saw this as a danger to her son, and she would not tolerate any compromise. A more moderate approach would be some sort of separation, but she goes to a radical extreme. She feels Ishmael might cause harm. But the matter was displeasing in Abraham’s sight. Abraham loved Ishmael and prayed that God would protect him.

But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. (Ge 21:12)

Isn't that unfair? Your only son? What about Ishmael?

Ishmael is "the lad," "son of the bondwoman," cf. John "born of the flesh" vs "born of God."

So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. (Ge 21:14)

Covenant oath treaty binding power between two parties, Abraham & Abimelech. The oath is putting themselves under a curse when they don't fulfill that oath and treat each other like family members. Beer-sheeba = Well of the Oath or Well of the Seven.

"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me,

for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." (Jn 8:37-47)

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written:

"Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband."

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless

what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. (Ga 4:21-31)

The Jews crucified Christ in the same way that Ishmael scoffed at Isaac, because of that difference in prestige. Any time you have a greater person threatening a lesser person, you get jealousy and envy.

Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. (Ga 4:30-31)

As Christians, we need to learn to deal with jealousy and envy. The best solution for them is to move things around. Sarah understood this. This boy is jealous of my son. There is going to be no other way to deal with it. And God agreed!

The divine jealousy of God on His part never accepts competition. If you let go, I'll take care of you better. God said, don't worry I'll make him a nation too. God sent the angel to take care of him immediately.

The reason I'm unhappy is this other person who is going to steal away my happiness. Deep-seated fear that Ishmael had in his heart. Made him subconsciously fight Isaac with his teeth. Same thing with early persecution of the Church. Christians are going to take away all our stability, credibility, financial issues.

This jealousy is written in Paul's writings.

Notice the symmetry between the sibling rivalry and the divine jealousy of God that one of his sons has two masters or another God.

Jealousy is out of a limited resource. However, “Love does not envy,” because my Father is unlimited, and I will never exhaust Him.

Jesus to Peter when John came following Christ, “what is that to you.”

Genesis 22†: Oath and Swearing

Abraham is tested by the sacrifice of Isaac.

First, a question: What was so special about the people of Israel? Why did God “choose” them? Why are they called the “People of God?” The answer is in Exodus.

God wants children. He wants an earthly father to take care of them and bring them His way. He held Abraham from having children. He had children by God, by a miracle. “You and I will have children; you will make me children.”

When the children come by Isaac, God says, Give me Isaac. Why? I am going to have him as my son. You are going to take care of him, and I will have my people.

Isaac on the altar—dedicated to God. No longer a child of Abraham. Abraham’s generations are now on the altar. Now God has promised through Isaac that Isaac is a child of God, a living sacrifice.

There are two children of Isaac, Esau and Jacob. Esau rejects sanctification. We are left with Jacob who lives to be the people of God who produces twelve tribes.

God renews the covenant with them through Moses. He expects them to honor Him. They did not do it automatically. God made them go through rebirth through water and spirit. They wandered from the wilderness to the promised land.

However, they wanted to live as their own people, with their own king, doing their own thing.

Therefore God does it again, through His Son. Now we all go to the cross with Him. Buried, we rise again with Him. We are the people of God.

God says, take back your physical son, I have made out of you a spiritual son, that will work and serve me. That is why Paul says we are all children of Abraham, we are all promised people. Through Christ God takes a new nation to him. He becomes a new Isaac.

God said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called" (Gen 21:12, Heb 11:18), and as Isaac had to suffer the anxiety of the knife, Jesus Christ had to suffer the anxiety of the cross. Thus in Jesus Christ will we be called.