

The Life of Abraham: A Journey of Faith – Part 4

What Is True and What to Do – Genesis 14:1-24

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Jan. 30th, 2022

Intro:

- The BIG story of the Bible: **Creation – Fall – Redemption – Restoration**
- When reading the Bible, look for: "**What is true and what to do.**" "What is true" is seen by revelation, observation, and illumination, and "what to do" comes from meditation and application. So, to put it simply, see what is true and apply it to your life.
- In the story of Abraham, we are relating everything back to God's promises, how they are fulfilled as people interact with them, with our overall theme to **trust God's promises by living a life of faith.**
- In our passage for today, we will take the original promises God gave to Abram and compare them to what continues to develop in Abram's life and those around him. Here is the original promise that was given, and we will continue to see that it will be repeated, clarified, and explained to Abram as time goes on.

Genesis 12:2-3 ESV

"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and he who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

- The word of the Lord stands forever, and nothing can be added to it or taken from it. (1 Peter 1:25)
- God promised that He would make Abram into a great nation—not just a great family within a nation—that from Him would come a great nation. Abram would be blessed by God, and from this blessing God would make Abram's name great (God delights to make nobodies into somebodies), so that he would be a blessing. The reason God's blessing comes to us is so that we will be a blessing to others as a reflection of Him. God's blessings, like his gifts and His callings, are for us but not about us.
- Those who blessed Abram, God would bless, and those who dishonored Abram, God would curse. Through Abram, all the families of the earth would be blessed. These were incredible promises made to Abram and his family.
- Abram stepped forward in following God, learning and growing in his relationship with Him, and experiencing the reality of the word of God in the world. In our passage this morning, we will see what is true, giving special attention to look for how the earlier word of God works out in his life and the lives of those around him as they interact with the God of the word. And then we will look at what to do, how what we learned from this passage can be applied to our lives.

What is true?

- At this point in the story, Lot and his immediate family, along with those who were with him, have moved away from Abram, and Abram has returned to live in the land of promise with his immediate family and those who were with him. War broke out in the land. Four kings from the

north and east came to deal with the people around the area of Sodom and Gomorrah who had been subjects of theirs but had rebelled.

- On their way down to the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, these four kings conquered many cities, towns, and territories (Gen 14:1-10). When they reached their final destination:

Genesis 14:11-12 NIV

The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. 12 They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

- Lot now starts to face some of the consequences of his actions of dishonoring Abram (those who dishonor you, I will curse), according to the word of God. Lot and all his possessions were carried off.

Genesis 14:13 NIV

A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram.

- Why did this man who escaped go all the way to Abram? Because he had undoubtedly heard about Abram, that he was a man who could help. He could help because God had blessed him, and we see that Abram's name was becoming great because of God's blessing. He was blessed so that he could be a blessing (help) to others.
- Abram also was making allies with those around him. He was becoming stronger and made people stronger because of good relationships with them. He was becoming a nation and blessing those around Him.
- After hearing this report, Abram and his allies rushed into action.

Genesis 14:14-16 NIV

When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. 16 He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

- Abram took the lead, bringing trained men to the cause, and marched north (the people of his three allies were with him as well, see verse 24). Abram could have remained passive and uninvolved because neither he nor his allies were attacked. But he was called out so he could return to make a difference. He was aligning his will with the word of the Lord and took action to bless those around him as individuals, peoples, and nations. This was actively participating with the promises of God, expending time, energy, and resources for the blessing of others. They literally put their lives on the line against a great foe.
- God helped them win the victory through His power, timing, and wisdom. They routed the enemy, recovered the goods that were taken, and redeemed the lives of the people, including Lot and his household.

Genesis 14:17 NIV

After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

- The "King's Valley" was just north of Jerusalem, more than likely the place where Abram and his people would turn to go to their homeland and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 14:18-20 NIV

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

- Melchizedek, whose name means "king of righteousness," who was the king of Salem (Jerusalem), the "king of peace" (see Hebrews 7:2), physically blessed Abram and his people with bread and wine. (Wine was a common drink, 1/20 part wine to water. He fed the people; don't think "communion" here.) This king was also a priest of "God Most High." Melchizedek knew God, who created heaven and earth, had blessed Abram, and he, in turn, blessed him and praised the God Most High for what he did through Abram. (Melchizedek knew that it was God who delivered Abram's enemies into his hand.)
 - Melchizedek is an interesting study. He is mentioned in Psalm 110 and also is talked about at length in Hebrews 5-7. He is both "King and Priest." Jesus is the "high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20). The NT points to Melchizedek as the OT grounds of Jesus being a priest and also a king. For more information, see this helpful talk/article by D.A. Carson, "Getting Excited About Melchizedek."
https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/conference_media/getting-excited-melchizedek/
- God blessed Abram, and the king of "righteousness and peace," the priest of "God Most High," blessed him as well. And Abram "blessed him" as well by giving him a tenth of everything (this is referenced and seen in the NT as a tithe (see Heb. 7:4-10). So, Abram was a blessing, and those who blessed Abram were blessed.

Genesis 14:21-24 NIV

The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself."

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23 that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' 24 I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share."

- Because of his trust in "the Lord, God Most High," Abram would not take anything from this king, so that no one would say that it was by the king of Sodom's hand that he was blessed. He trusted in the Lord and blessed people not to get a blessing back, but to bless them, and he trusted in the Lord to give to him. This was his commitment to the Lord.
- Abram did want those who had gone with him to receive their share, and he did need food for his men, but he would not take a thing for himself. Those around Abram continued to be blessed by aligning themselves with him in their relationship to the word of the Lord.
- Now that we have seen all these things, would are we to do with this information, and how are we to apply and live these things out in our lives?

What to do?

- **Trust that God will fulfill His word to you.** God fulfilled His word to Abram; He will fulfill His word to you. Seeing how God fulfills His word to others gives us confidence that He will fulfill His word to us. Be encouraged and have hope knowing that God will keep His promises. You have more in holding onto God's word than you will have in holding onto anything in the world.
- **Build friendships.** Abram built friendships and made allies with those who lived nearby. Be intentional about building relationships with others around you. These are some of God's greatest gifts to you, and you are to them. Bless them, love them, help them, connect yourselves with them. "**Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.**" (PROV 27:10 ESV)
- **Use your power and resources to help others.** Abram used what God had given him to bless and help those around Him, even to those who had gotten themselves in trouble and who were not "good" people. How does your faith bless those around you? Are you a blessing to your family, your neighbors, your church, your city, your country? Trust the God Most High. The Creator of heaven and earth will help you and bless you along the way.
- **Don't help others for what you can get back.** Abram was not there to get anything from them. He was there to be a blessing. He was there to help, and that was it. Do what is right just because it is right without ulterior motives. Do so as an extension of your faith, and God will reward you for it.

Conclusion

- We have so much to be thankful for and so many of God's promises to hold on to. Let us be people of The Word, that we read it, and it reads us. Let us align ourselves to the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word. Let's put our faith into practice by trusting in God's promises and living a life of faith.