

Sunday School - Genesis - After the Flood 12

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Preacher: Roger Phipps

[0 : 00] Okay, Genesis chapter 15. Has anyone else, has anyone else almost forgotten where we came from creation through, you know, and now since the flood, right?

We've been a long time with Abram. I wonder why. Why? Okay, that makes it important.

And it's a historical document written specifically to Israel. Now, in 1 Corinthians, we know that all these things happened unto them, for example.

All these happened unto them, for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the age has come.

So, we know that it's recorded in Scripture. It's written to Israel. But it is for our benefit that we pay attention.

[1 : 36] And actually, Paul, in that passage, will explain, look, don't do what they did that was wrong.

He said, this is written so that, remember the words, nevertheless, God, everyone passed through the sea, he said, our forefathers, all of them, using that as a picture of spirit baptism.

All our forefathers passed through the manna, they all got the law, nevertheless, God was not well pleased with all of them.

And when they grumbled, 30,000 of them fell in one day. Now, I'm thankful again that I live in the day of grace. If I rebelled against God, boom.

Right? As a matter of fact, as a Gentile, I have no hope. I have no hope. I'm separated from the promises. But that was done away with in Christ.

[2 : 51] Now, I know we're getting way ahead of the Genesis chapter 15, but it's important for me to remember. So, Abram is the first patriarch.

He has received a promise already. What is it? Before chapter 15, Abram's been told to do what?

Leave where? I'm sorry? Well, even before then, lever of the Chaldees, head for Canaan.

Now, the whole bunch, including his father and their household, moved up to Haram. Then he was told again, I want you to get up and leave your kin, leave all your family, and go to the land I'll show you because of what?

Because I'm going to give you that land. And then he gets a promise that I'm going to make of you a great nation, and in you, in your seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

[4 : 23] Now, the Apostle Paul tells us later on, he uses that scripture to illustrate what? He's talking about Christ.

We're beneficiaries of that promise to Abram. And spiritual children of Abram. Now, when I say we, is that all inclusive for every person on the earth?

Only those who believe or trust Christ. Right.

And that's what makes it effective. I'm not saved because I have faith. I know this isn't Genesis chapter 15.

I'm not saved because I have faith. I'm saved because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross. And it is by God's grace, that free gift, unmerited favor, that free gift, that I am able, by believing that he did that for me, I'm in.

[5 : 45] I'm in. Wow. Now, that's the gospel, isn't it? That is the good news. Because now, it's not a performance base.

I don't have to measure up. And in fact, how did I get over here? In fact, we're told that I can't measure up, right?

I can't measure up. The law isn't given to get me to God. The law is given to show me that I can't get there. It's the tutor that leads us to Christ.

That's the grace of God. The grace of God is his beneficence, his love, his mercy, his free gift in Jesus Christ.

So, Abram's been given some promises. Has he seen them? Right.

[7 : 04] The covenant's not given yet. That's coming in a couple chapters. Right.

Right. Right. Right. Now, the covenant that he will undertake in a couple chapters is for a signature. It is not for his righteousness. And Paul makes that really, really clear in Romans chapter 4. That the covenant does not set aside the promise.

Okay, this is a different covenant. I'm talking about chapter 17, the covenant sign of circumcision.

So, there's no sign of circumcision yet. And, in fact, we're still a number of years away from that.

See, when we read it chapter by chapter, it goes pretty quickly.

[8 : 21] But, when you think, when you study it, these are, he's going to go, well, I'm not going to say. You're going to answer that later.

Anything else before we get into our reading? Look at chapter 15, verses 1 through 3, to begin with, if you please.

After what things? See how it starts? After these things? After what things?

Boy, we forgot it already. This was just last week. After the slaughter of the kings and the return and the ties to Melchizedek and the blessing from Melchizedek.

And the returning of Lot and his household goods. Okay.

[9 : 32] After these things. Now, what does God say to him? You notice when God speaks frequently, the first thing that he says is, don't be afraid.

Especially when the angels come. As we're approaching Christmas, right?

We're approaching Christmas, or at least when we celebrate Christmas. When you think about that, the angelic host that announced the birth to these shepherds in the fields, what was their first word? Fear not. Well, why would they say that? Well, because that's a pretty frightening experience. That's a pretty frightening experience.

In fact, most people will say, have I seen God and still live? The few people that see the pre-incarnate Christ, the Christophany.

[10 : 47] Okay. So, the word of God comes to Abram in a vision this time. This time it's not a face-to-face meeting.

He has done that before. He will again. But this time, in a vision. And he says, fear not. Why? Or, for, I'm your shield and I'm not only your protection, but I'm also your reward.

That's easier to sing in the hymn than it is to live, isn't it? The song's easier than it is to actually do. Nevertheless, God says, I'm your reward.

I am your reward. Okay. Now. What else does God say?

Anything else? Okay. So, what does Abram reply? He recognizes God as who he is.

[12 : 05] Right. He says, Lord. Okay. What else? I'm childless. Okay. That's not all he says.

Right. Now. Who is this slave? Eleazar. Now. There's. There's. Does anyone else who read this notice anything interesting?

He. Where. Eleazar. A servant or a slave. Where? Okay. He's from Damascus. But. How does Abram.

He's the heir of Abram's estate. Or will be the heir of Abram's estate. That's Abram's. Current plan. That's what he thinks is going to happen.

But what else? There it is.

[13 : 15] Okay. So. Where is he? Eleazar born. Do we know that? See. He says.

Eleazar. Of Damascus. But yet. Eleazar. Is born in. In my house. Now. What does he mean by my house? His household.

His. His. See. He doesn't have just one tent. He. He has a bunch. Because he had. How many people did he take with him that were men at arms?

Over 300. You're not getting in one tent. That's way too cozy. And that doesn't include all the others.

Did it? So. My best guess. Is. First of all. I don't need to guess. I know.

[14 : 11] That this isn't a contradiction. My best guess is. That. He's born. In Abram's house. On the way.

To Canaan. As they move. From. From her. They're coming. They're swinging down. Past Damascus. There's where the. The corridor.

Of. What do they call that? The. The. That. Crescent. The fertile crescent. Okay.

He's going to swing down. Past that area. My guess is. That Eleazar. Is born. In. Abram's. Household.

Somewhere. Around. When they're passing down. Past Damascus. So. That's his plan.

[15:09] Is that legitimate? As far as he is concerned.

At this point. As far as Abram's concerned. At this point. His adopted son. Is going to be as good.

As his. Seed. Right? It's going to be. Same thing. Same thing. Now. Did he.

Mistrust God? I'm going to ask this question again. We have no reason to say that.

Because we don't have the revelation. That would tell us that. That God said he's going to come from your body. Until now. Okay. So let's go on. Let's read.

[16:06] Well. Wait a minute. Before we go on. I'm childless. So.

I'm going to adopt Eleazar. As my heir. And he. He will be the one. That fulfills this promise.

Let's rehearse that. Just a little bit. In Genesis. You don't have to turn. If you. Unless you desire to.

But in Genesis chapter 12. The Lord said unto Abram.

Get thee out of thy country. And go to this land. That I'll show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation. And. So Abraham gets up. And he goes.

And he arrives. And he settles around Shechem. At that time. And in verse 7 of chapter 12. He goes on and says. And the Lord appeared unto Abraham.

[17:04] And said unto thy seed. I will give this land. And. Now. And Abram removed. And went to the mountain.

In Genesis chapter 3. He goes on. And he. Sojourns in Egypt. He leaves Egypt. Comes back. And he and Lot separate.

And. In 1314. The Lord said to Abram. After. Lot had gone. All the land.

Which you see. I'm going to give it to you. And to your seed forever. And I will make your seed. As the. Dust of the earth.

Numerous. Okay. That's. But that isn't now. This is years later. So far. Isn't it?

[18:01] Now. He goes on. And he battles. The kings. And after all this time. Maybe I could understand.

Abram's response. Maybe. It's going to be Eliezer. That does this. Maybe I misunderstood. I'm sure I never misunderstand.

God's plan in my life. Day to day. Do I? I never. Eh. Maybe I didn't hear that right.

Maybe I didn't understand that right. Is what I should say. Okay. Let's go on then. Chapter. Chapter 15. Verses 4 through 6. God corrects Abram.

What does God say to him? Amen. Amen. You say. That's truly not the one. He's going to be the head. It's not going to be Eliezer. What?

[19:05] One of your own body. One. One who comes. From you. Now that's going to be important. That's going to be important.

Is going to be your descendant. Now. in verse 5 he takes Abram outside what does he tell him how many of you have ever been to a I know you have I've seen one of your pictures you've ever been to a place on a clear night where it was it was a fairly cloudless night and you were miles from ambient light it's impressive Sherry and I sat on a point at a lake in Ontario on a clear night you could see satellites tracing you could see the Milky Way I can't see that in New Coral can I there's too much light other ambient light around but if you're in a dark place now

I'm fairly sure that there's not electricity where he is and there's not a lot of ambient light and God takes him outside and he says look up at the sky can you count it and he said this is what your descendants are going to be looking like I read this I read this I read this number of times and I like it first of all when he said you're going to have air as the number of the sand the earth the grains of the earth and now he's saying your numbers are going to be as the stars well I think when he's talking about the stars he's talking about us he's talking about us we are the heavenly inheritance of him the Israelites are the earthly heirs of him that why else when one place he uses an example of the sand of the earth and then ours he uses an example of the stars in the sky well how do you explain that it may just be two examples it may be it may just be two metaphors

I don't know without a revelation without it specifically stated in a revelation I can't say that that's what that means it certainly we know later that the apostle Paul is going to say that he is spiritually the forerunner or the father of all those who will believe but that is not here revealed and to the metaphor is a metaphor and so there are two of them and it may just be two I can't really say that there's to read into something it's it's by the way you know someone who has gone through and tried to take numerous numbers and tried to work out this is what this means and this is what this means and this is what this means and therefore God's coming back this time has that ever worked so so I want to be careful with reading into it more than what God has put there it's a it's a nice illustration but it doesn't necessarily

I don't know that there are more stars than there are sands grains of sand so you know that's kind of pushing it the point is you can't really count them that's the point you can't really count them I'm going to make them numerous it's going to be a big people okay so what's Abram's response to that and there's the there's the key isn't it because that's going to be used in Romans this is Abraham believed God now he believed in God he believed what God said and it was reckoned to him as righteousness now for those who have who were raised by folks from Appalachia sometimes reckon is used just to mean think about but that but it really doesn't mean that the definition of reckon is to account it so it was put it it was yeah it's a ledger kind of a term it's put on the positive side of your ledger it was given to him or assigned to him that's going to be important and it's going to be important to me when I come when I think about

[25 : 07] Christ because that's the same way I'm reckoned as righteous don't answer this I already know what you're thinking am I practically righteous well John you answered it anyway but I'm reckoned righteous before whom God that's impressive that that is awesome in the truest sense of the word that is in fact awe inspiring I don't to pretend that I can somehow comprehend that I don't I'm a saint set apart

I'm thankful I live now under this dispensation where because I trust what Christ did on the cross I'm secure in him not in me so Abraham believed God God reckoned that as righteousness so Abraham is what he's righteous now is everything Abraham going to do going to be righteous as far as is he going to make bad decisions is he going to make maybe even wicked decisions we're not necessarily told but is he going to knowing mankind yeah is he going to be righteous righteous yes why and God said so that's important for me to remember isn't it you've never come to a point in your life and your walk with

Christ when you thought am I really in who says so God does now am I going to believe what I feel or am I going to believe what God says what did Abraham do he believed what God said and it was reckoned okay so so I need to know that it rests upon the veracity the character of the almighty God right it's secure that's a wonderful comfort that's a wonderful comfort so well let's look just a moment at

Romans I wasn't going to go there but Romans in that chapter four let's look at verse five well verse four Paul says look if if Abraham's righteousness was because of works he has what he has something to boast about but not before God that is but he really doesn't why but to him verse five but to him who does not but believes in him who what justifies the ungodly now wait a minute wait just a minute who's

God justifying is God justifying the the good guys and of course the good guys are anybody who's like me right see there's that gets dangerous though in this running after every wind of doctrine doesn't it because I know who's going to be the righteous me no God justifies the ungodly so he who does not work for it but believes on him who justifies the ungodly what his faith is reckoned or credited as righteousness for this reason verse 16 if you drop down he gives the reason tell me what the reason is well so that it okay in order that is your key word there that's the reason in order that it is by grace it's in accordance with whose grace

[31 : 16] God's grace it takes away any merit it takes away any boasting of man it is so that it will be by God's grace that's that's that's important yes Joe right right right so that it may be by grace it may be guaranteed to all Abraham's all friends not only to those who are of the law.

And we know that the Jews are the ones of the law. But also to those who have the faith of Abraham. That's us. Right.

That's a wonderful thing. Because that means we can get in on the promises. Now, not every promise. That diddy, some of you are old enough to remember. In fact, almost all of you are old enough to remember.

Some of you might not. A couple. Three. Every promise in the book is mine. Every chapter, every verse, every line.

All the blessings of his love, divine. Every promise in the book. That's not true. It was a nice ditty in 1956, but it's not true.

[33 : 17] Is it? No. There are some promises that were given only to Israel. They don't belong to the church.

There are some promises given to the church that don't belong to Israel. I should be happy with mine, right? But if I start to confound them, then I start to get messed up.

And I start to mess up other people. Because they're not to be confounded. Okay. Enough about that. Look at verses 7 through 12.

Genesis chapter 15 verses 7 through 12. Abram has just said to God what?

He believes him. Now, what does God say? I'm the one who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land.

[34 : 48] Okay. And what does he say? Essentially.

Essentially. How do I know? Now, I remind you of the history of Abram thus far, right?

You may have heard this verse preached out of context. Where they say, well, Abraham's starting to shake here.

Well, I'm glad I never shake. I'm glad after 20 years of the first promise I never waver.

How much of this fulfillment has he seen yet? How much? None. Maybe I can commiserate a little bit.

[35 : 51] Right? You know, it's the same way as when I read chapter 3 of Genesis and I said, if it would have been me, I wouldn't have done what Adam did.

Right. If I'd been in that group of Israel that came through the Red Sea, I'd have been all right. I'd have been right in there with the rest, wouldn't I?

So, anyway, Abraham says, how do I know? How do I know? So, what's God do? He tells him to do something.

What is it? This is not a sacrifice. This is not a sacrifice.

It's a covenant. The literal word is, he cut the covenant. Now, I'm not good, I can't read a jot nor a tittle of Hebrew.

[37 : 14] So, I'm going on what I'm told. But, the idea of the covenant was to split the carcasses and lay them side to side with an aisle between.

Now, how would the covenant be sealed? the two parties, arm in arm, walk through the carcass. And the idea being, thus be it done to me if I should break this covenant. That's the idea. Now, we see something that moves me every time I read it.

every time I read it. Let's go on. What happened, well, it's not really important.

He's going to sit there all day with this covenant because he's driving the vultures and the eagles and the hawks away, isn't he? He's keeping them off the carcass.

[38 : 23] What happens then when the sun goes down? So, Abram goes to sleep. Does he go to sleep because he's tired?

Not necessarily. I doubt it. When you read the whole section there, it looks like God put him to sleep, doesn't it?

It's a deep sleep and a sleep full of terrors. Okay. Now, we're ready for verses 13 through 16.

We'll keep reading because here is where it always gets me, frankly.

This is a beautiful picture of our salvation, isn't it? What happens in the covenant?

[39 : 42] There appears what? where was Abram?

God went through the covenant alone. Is this covenant going to depend on Abram?

No. God. Who's it going to depend upon? God. That's a wonderful picture of our salvation, isn't it? Does my salvation depend upon me? Upon whom does it depend? God. Christ Jesus on the cross. This gets me every time I read it because God said, cut a covenant with me and God goes through by himself.

[40 : 48] It's a guarantee. And in fact, the apostle Paul later on in Romans is going to use that too. He's not going to describe that but he's going to say that the covenant that was made at Sinai with the law does not set aside the covenant that was done 400 years before with Abram.

It doesn't set aside the promise. There was nothing in the Mosaic Law that God gave Israel as Israel's covenant nation covenant.

There was nothing there that superseded the promise. The promise was guaranteed. So, when God said to Abram, to you or to your seed I will give this on whom did it depend?

God. He keeps his promises. He keeps his promises. He cannot, this is one thing God cannot do, he cannot lie.

And he cannot deny himself. judgment comes, by the way, Romans 1, judgment comes because people refuse to acknowledge God as God.

[42 : 22] That starts the ball, doesn't it? The behaviors actually follow the rebellion. Now, the behaviors are going to be judged, but the behaviors followed the rebellion because they refuse to acknowledge.

Did God really say? God knows that you won't really die. You'll be like him.

knowing good and evil. How'd that work out? Okay.

I'm going to leave it there. God went through the covenant alone. We will pick that up next week, God willing. Have a great day.