

The Journey

The Story of the Bible: Lesson 5 Outline

One Sentence Summary: God is serious about keeping His promise to Abraham about the Abrahamic covenant, "...blessed to be a blessing to the nations."

A. Outline

a. Introduction

- i. Bob talks about the time he taught his son, Luke, that Sjogrens always keep their word; they keep their promises.
- ii. God made a promise to Abraham and He gave it great emphasis.

b. Body

- i. God shows us the importance of His promise to Abraham through two key ways: through swearing and through repetition.

1. Swearing :

- a. Genesis 22:17-18 Abraham has just passed the test of offering his son on the altar and he says, "I swear by myself, that because you have done this and not withheld your son... and He repeats the covenant.
- b. In Hebrews 11, the writer connects Abraham's test of faith through the offering of Isaac as a sacrifice to the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant.
- c. Most people connect the two thinking about the Top Line (about his numerous descendants, Bob says that is incomplete; Connecting the Bottom Line ramifications to the test makes it be much clearer. Bob says that God is testing Abraham's commitment to the Lower Level by asking him for his son Isaac. This is seen by his earlier encounters with people from other nations.
- d. Genesis 12:10- there is a famine and Abraham and Sarah go to Egypt and Abraham tells Sarah to lie about being his wife to save his life. Bob says this was really his first missionary journey to bless a Gentile nation and he was a terrible example and so this results in a negative mark on his commitment to the covenant.
- e. Genesis 13- There is a quarrel between Abraham's workmen and Lot's workmen because the land could not support both herds. Bob says this shows Abraham to be a bad cross cultural witness and a negative mark for Abraham's commitment to the lower level.
- f. In Genesis 14, Abraham blesses the king of Salem, Melchizedek, a Gentile priest for God, so he gets a positive mark for his commitment to the Lower Level.
- g. In Genesis 18, God alerts Abraham that He is going to bring judgment to Sodom and Gomorrah, cities God

wanted Abraham to bless. Abraham interceded for them and asked God to not destroy them if 10 righteous people were in those cities. The cities were destroyed, but Abraham did his part by praying for them and saving 4 people.

- h. In Genesis 20, Abraham goes to live in the Negev and encounters Abimelech, the King of Gerar. He again tells Sarah to lie to save his life and therefore Bob says he is forgetting the Bottom Line of the covenant. He gets another negative mark. But then Abraham prays for Abimelech's household and they are now blessed with the ability to bear children. So this is a positive mark for Abraham.
- i. In Genesis 21:22 Abimelech asks Abraham to swear that neither he nor his descendants will deal falsely with him or his children. Bob says Abraham is known as a liar so this is a negative mark. A few verses later, Abraham complains to Abimelech about a well and Bob says that is a negative mark for Abraham.
- j. Bob says, "Abraham has proven himself to be undecided about his commitment to the Lower Level of the covenant and God is thinking that he is getting rich through lying and arguing with the Gentiles." So God is going to test him and "purge him of his unwholesomeness about the accomplishment of the covenant purpose."
- k. Bob says "God's bad reputation was established so the only way to go on with God was to face the test about Isaac." Abraham passes the test and God repeats the covenant the third time and says, "I swear by myself"
- l. In the Hebrew custom, if you wanted to "sign your name on the dotted line" you would do it, not with ink on paper, but by swearing by something greater than yourself. You would swear by God or by heaven, and in so doing, you were bound to your word. Bob says by doing this God wanted to communicate to Abraham that he was "serious" about fulfilling the Lower Level of the covenant.

2. Repetition.

- a. God repeats the covenant five times; three times to Abraham, and once each to Isaac and Jacob. Repetition in the Bible shows its importance to God.
- b. Hebrews 6:13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, He swore by Himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."
And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all

argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

3. Bob says that God wants to reveal His glory by blessing you. And He wants you to take His glory to the nations.

c. Conclusion

- i. Bob says, “Get involved in reaching the nations; get involved in fulfilling the promise God made to Abraham”.
- ii. God made a promise and He always keeps His word.
- iii. “Be the world Christian God is calling you to be.