



# GENESIS

## FOUNDATIONS



Studies in the book of Genesis  
**PART FOUR—Genesis 10-14**  
Group Applications  
Personal Study



**FOUR OAKS CHURCH**

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# Genesis 10-11:1-9

*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.*

—1 Chronicles 29:11

## The Tower of Babel

My first language is Spanish, and to be honest, learning English was a great challenge for me. It was a difficult process that required every bit of God's help because I never actually enjoyed learning another language. Because of my struggles in learning another language, I have always looked at the events related to the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 with a little bit of resentment. If you suffered through years of foreign language courses that didn't bring you anywhere close to being fluent, chances are that we share the same feelings. There is, however, in this chapter a clear example of men's rebellion and a witness to God's sovereign grace placed here for our benefit.

Noah's ark rested on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:4) in modern day Turkey. As his descendants traveled east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar or what we know as Mesopotamia (Genesis 11:2). Here, with favorable conditions and new and improved methods for building, they set themselves to create a new world order. The problem, as Genesis 11 tells us, was the new world order that was created was a world where man was the measure of all things and independent from God. A world where we "make for ourselves a name" (Genesis 11:4) instead of honoring our God-given identity. And what a better way to start this new world order than by building a physical reminder, a magnificent celebration to the greatness of men. "A tower whose top will reach into heaven" (Genesis 11:4). What a monumental way to raise our fist to heaven and say: "We are our own god!" Or maybe in more familiar terms: "Believe in yourself!" or "If you can dream it, you can do it!"

We really don't have to dig too deep to find the seed for this ancient sin in us. How many times have we said in our hearts: "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit" without entrusting

our plans to God (James 4:13-15)? We have been tempted, many times, to believe that apart from Christ we can do something; that our strength, intellect, and skill are sufficient to create for ourselves a future and secure lasting joy.

The story of Genesis 11 is, however, not only the story of our own sin but also the story of God's solution for our sin. Not long after the flood, man is already walking on the same path that took him to the flood in the first place. It is here in the midst of sin that God intervenes in a miraculous way. He frustrated the plans of men and reasserted the plan of salvation He set in motion since Genesis 3. In the following verses, we read of the generations of Shem and his descendant Abram. From Abram's descendants, God raises up for us a savior, Jesus Christ. He bore the punishment for our sin and offers forgiveness and reconciliation to all of those who come to Him in repentance.

Praise be to God, who miraculously intervened in our selfish pursuits to give us life through His Son Jesus. Sin does not have the last word over our lives. May we often call the truths of this chapter to our hearts and remember that in a world broken by sin, Christ still stands victorious and He will bring His plan of redemption to completion.

## Sermon Notes

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## Discussion Questions

1. Imagine what it must have been like to only have one language and culture. What do you think are the main differences between that society and ours?
2. What is your initial reaction to God's actions toward the people of Babel? Why do you think God responded the way He did towards the people (see Genesis 11:3-4)?
3. Read Genesis 1:28 and 9:1. In these verses, what does God tell man to do? What is God's motivation for this? (see Matthew 28:16-20)
4. Compare the tower of Babel to the holy temple found in Ephesians 2:17-22. Who was the builder? What materials were used? What was its purpose?
5. In what ways are you striving to be the builder of your own life? In what ways can you seek to better live for God's glory rather than your own?
6. To what extent do your goals and desires reflect the command found in the Great Commission? How can we as a Community Group seek to make disciples right here in Tallahassee? Pray and ask the Lord for direction.

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
  2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.
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## Grow

1. The people in this passage forsake God in order to make a name for themselves. How would it look for us to try to make a name for ourselves? How are we often tempted to do so?  

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2. God's intervention not only prevented greater evil but it is also the only source of hope and salvation. How does God often intervene in our lives to remind us of the truth of the gospel? What does that say of His love for us?  

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## Go

1. Do you often rely on yourself to accomplish what you need or do you pray and trust God to help you according to His will?  

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2. Do you humbly and daily submit your opinions to scripture in meditation and prayer?  

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## Additional Reading

From *Babel and the Beauty of a Thousand Tongues* by Trevin Wax<sup>1</sup>

On the Day of Pentecost, we see an initial reversal of Babel. God gives everyone understanding so that instead of God's mighty works being proclaimed in just one language – Hebrew, for example – they can be proclaimed in many languages. O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise!

This is the end of Babel and the beginning of a new humanity.

Instead of people climbing up to God, we testify that God came down to us – not in judgment, but for salvation.

Instead of people gathering in one location to make their own name great, we are now scattering all over the earth to make God's name great.

Instead of language being a barrier to man's mission of self-glorification, languages are now redeemed in order for the Triune God's mission of glorifying Himself to move forward!

He knows your nation, your city, your town, your neighborhood. The Holy Spirit knows your dialect. He speaks to ordinary people like you and me, prompting us to share our faith, reminding us of what Jesus taught us.

Babel is no match for Pentecost. The nuances of thousands of languages are not enough to capture the glorious nature of salvation through Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Gospel Coalition (TGC)." *The Gospel Coalition*, 18 Sept. 2019, [www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/babel-and-the-beauty-of-a-thousand-tongues/](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/babel-and-the-beauty-of-a-thousand-tongues/), 2012.



# Genesis 12:1-9

*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* —Ephesians 4:4-6

## The Call of Abraham

Abram is in Chaldea (Haran). There is no nation of Israel, no Jewish culture, no Law. God offers Abram a conditional covenant. Leave your country, your people and your father's household...and I will bless you. He believes God, and that seemingly small act sets in motion God's redemptive plan through Abram's descendants. Just as important, it also establishes the basis of our personal relationship with God for eternity. Faith alone.

From all indications, Abram was a wealthy and prosperous man. It can be assumed that he was comfortable in his present surroundings. But he believed God's promises, he believed that God could and would bless him, and he moved. Not as an act of obedience, as to the command of a worldly ruler, but in faith to God who always keeps His promises. He moved without knowing where he was going or what to expect but without doubt in God to provide. Just as we must strive to do to grow closer to God and more Christ-like in our person.

Abram traveled the Fertile Crescent through Canaan and stopped in Shechem. There God appeared and told him that He would give His offspring the land. Abram believed the promise and built his first altar dedicated to the Lord.

Abram's life was not perfect, but he walked without doubting, in full assurance of the greatness and love of God. His actions were part of God's redemptive plan; a plan that would use a chosen nation to bring forth the Savior of the world.

We are called to walk in the same faith, with the same dedication as Abram. Not out of fear of reprisal or abject obedience but in joy and thankfulness that He loved us so much He gave His only begotten Son.





## Discussion Questions

1. Share a time in your life when God called you to do something beyond your ability and how you responded. If you can, share how God was glorified through this situation.

Read Genesis 12:1-9.

2. What are God's promises to Abram? As a group, read at least two of the following passages and discuss how these promises are being fulfilled: Matthew 1:2, 16; Galatians 3:7-9; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Hebrews 11:8-10, 16.
3. What comparisons can you make between the goals and desires of the men who built the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:3-4) and the promises God made to Abram (Genesis 12:2-3)?
4. Compare the faith and obedience it took for Abram to pack up his family and follow God to the gospel call on the life of a Christian today (see Matt. 16:24).
5. In what area of your life is God calling you to radical obedience? How can your Community Group pray for you?

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

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## Grow

1. Where do you see the hand of God's blessing in your life?

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2. What is a promise that God has made in His word that is special to you?

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## Go

1. What are 2-3 areas where God is calling you to serve?

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2. What "Land" do you need to leave in order to obey God?

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## Additional Reading

From *Community Is Important* by Aaron Menikoff

There's no doubt that when we ransack the pages of the New Testament we find pictures of profound community. There was a "day by day" quality to the koinonia of the early Christians (Acts 2:42–47). The church did more than gather on Sunday. New believers spent time in one another's homes, breaking bread and sharing life.

Paul promoted this church-as-family model. When writing to the believers in Thessalonica, he remarked how much he loved them, and how thankful he and his team was to have shared with them not only the gospel, but also "our own very selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess. 2:8).

The apostle modeled what his Savior taught him. Jesus exhorted the disciples to practice community. After humbling himself and washing their feet—communicating intimate care and concern—he said, "You also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). And in case they didn't quite grasp his point, Jesus added a new commandment: "Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34). Jesus valued community.

Over the years I've seen countless examples of Christians caring for each other, putting the interests of others first, and generally sharing their lives. Cancer-plagued believers being driven to chemo treatment by brothers and sisters in Christ. Couples learning how to care for children with special needs so that tired parents can have a night out. Families opening up their homes to welcome singles on a weekly basis.

Community is biblical, and it's important. But it's not the whole story. Community is the fruit of Christ-exalting worship. Community is not what we're to aim for; Christ is. And when we find him (or, rather, when he finds us), community naturally follows.

So what should you do if you aren't experiencing the kind of community you want?

Pray for your church faithfully. Pray the body of Christ you're part of would grow in this area. Churches fall short. No church is perfect. So pray your church would be so filled with Christ's love that it would overflow into personal relationships within the church.

Examine yourself. Are there patterns of behavior in your own life that serve as obstacles

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<sup>1</sup>Menikoff, Aaron. "You Don't Find Community by Looking for It." *The Gospel Coalition*, The Gospel Coalition, 31 Oct. 2017, [www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/you-dont-find-community-by-looking-for-it/](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/you-dont-find-community-by-looking-for-it/).

to the community you desire? Maybe your work schedule makes the kind of face time needed to live together difficult. Perhaps you're prioritizing certain hobbies over gathering with God's people (Heb. 10:24–25). Maybe, for whatever reason, you've kept others at arm's length—refusing to let them really get to know you. Consider how you could make a greater effort to create the community you want to see.

Seek solace in Christ. True community is never found by looking for it. It can only be found by pursuing Christ. He understands loneliness better than we do. Jesus hung alone, deserted by his closest friends, bearing the shame of sins he never committed. He knows what it's like to be ignored, abandoned, overlooked. Fallen humans are inherently disappointing. Only Jesus is perfectly fulfilling. So let your seasons of loneliness point you to his sufficiency.

We all need community. We need Christ more.

## Genesis 12:10-20

*I said, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments."* —Nehemiah 1:5

*Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness, Do not let all the hardship seem insignificant before You, Which has come upon us, our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers and on all Your people, From the days of the kings of Assyria to this day.* —Nehemiah 9:32

### Fear and Lies

Fear. It follows all of us in one form or another. Fear that we are going to lose what we have. Fear that we will not have enough. Fear that we will get a dreaded disease. Fear we will lose a loved one dear to our heart. Fear is like that game where you pound down a peg and another pops up..you pound down this peg and still another pops up.

After having been promised that God would always be with him and his offspring, Abram tries to pound the peg of fear that says he is going to be killed in Egypt. He deals with this by telling a lie. He tells Sarai to say she is his sister and not his wife.

What is truly amazing about this passage is God is faithful to His covenant with Abram and rescues Sarai from the house of the Pharaoh. God sent plagues to the house of Pharaoh and one can almost hear Pharaoh say "Whoa here, what's going on? This was not happening before Sarai came to stay!"

It is unclear if Abram repented of the fear of not trusting God for his life, or of the lie saying Sarai was his sister. But the momentous event in this section of scripture is how God kept His promise to keep Abram free from danger and harm in spite of fears and lies. Abram was not a shining star at this moment, but this did not stop God from protecting him and his family.







## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever told a white lie thinking it wouldn't hurt anyone? How did you justify your decision? What were the consequences?

Read Genesis 12:10-20.

2. Abram and his family went to Egypt during the famine. Read Genesis 11:4 and 12:10. What difference do you see? Why do you think this is important?
3. How quickly we see Abram move from obedience into sin. Based on the passage, what were the circumstances surrounding his decision to lie? What do you think was going on in Abram's heart?
4. What circumstances in your life are currently tempting you to choose fear over faith and make unwise decisions? How can you guard against falling into this sin? Are there any specific promises that you can hold onto to keep you trusting in God despite your circumstances?
5. Our sin never just affects us; it brings consequences upon others as well. How were each of the following people affected by Abram's lie: Abram, Sarai, Lot, Pharaoh, and Pharaoh's house/family?
6. Scripture is full of flawed men and women, yet God rescues them and still uses them to accomplish His purposes! How do you need God to rescue you today? How might we encourage one another through prayer in light of the truths found in this passage?

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

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## Grow

1. Name a time when your fear led to another sin. Did you eventually see God and turn from this sin? How can you share this with another struggling person?

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2. What does God's faithfulness look like when you see you have been rescued from your own lacking?

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## Go

1. Abram goes on to be the father of all nations. How do you go forward from something you have done that you feel is sinful and shameful?

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2. In what practical ways do you suggest looking forward and not dwelling in the past?

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## Additional Reading

From *Why Did God Punish Pharaoh For Abram's Lie (Genesis 12:17)?* at [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)<sup>1</sup>

In Genesis 12, Abram and his wife Sarai travelled to Egypt due to a famine in Canaan. Abram instructed his wife to tell people in Egypt that she was his sister instead of his wife. His reason was to protect himself. Because Sarai was so beautiful, Abram feared someone would kill him and take Sarai as his wife. The plan to pass her off as his sister would ensure that Abram would be well received by those he met.

In Egypt, Sarai's beauty attracted the attention of Pharaoh, the ruler of that country. Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's house, and many gifts were given to Abram (Genesis 12:16). Genesis 12:17 says, "But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife." This seems puzzling. After all, the king was the victim of Abram and Sarai's deceit.

The result of this punishment reveals the reason for it. When Pharaoh realized Sarai was Abram's wife, he summoned Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go" (Genesis 12:18-19). If God had not caused the plagues to come upon Pharaoh and his household, he may not have known anything was wrong. The affliction led to the discovery that Sarai was Abram's wife. If Pharaoh had kept Sarai, Abram would not have had a son by Sarai in fulfillment of God's promise to him (Genesis 12:2; 17:19). Abram was wrong to lie, but God graciously intervened in order to keep His covenant with Abram.

In the end, Pharaoh returned Abram's wife and provided protection for him: "Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had" (Genesis 12:20). Despite Abram's wrongdoing, God worked to fulfill His promise. Abram left Egypt with his wife Sarai, the protection of the king, and added prosperity.

This incident is a good example of how God sometimes allows bad things to take place in someone's life as part of a larger situation. God used the affliction of Pharaoh's household to bring about good for Abram. We may not always know why bad things happen, but that does not mean they are without purpose. God has a larger purpose behind everything that takes place in life (Jeremiah 29:11). As Paul taught in Romans 8:28, "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those

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<sup>1</sup>"Why Did God Punish Pharaoh for Abram's Lie (Genesis 12:17)?" *GotQuestions.org*, Got Questions Ministries, 29 Jan. 2013, [www.gotquestions.org/Abram-Pharaoh-Lie.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Abram-Pharaoh-Lie.html).

who are called according to his purpose.”

Abram unwisely trusted in his own cunning to preserve his life, and he was caught in a lie. God proved His strength is perfect and that He is the only One with the power to save. Further, we see God has a greater purpose in all things, including suffering. His will is sovereign, and His Name will be glorified.

# Genesis 13

*And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord.*

*—Genesis 13:4*

*... for, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

*—Romans 10:13*

## Faith and Sight

What we see in this passage is a contrast between Abram and his nephew Lot. Abram continues to walk by faith as he “called upon the name of the Lord,” whereas we see Lot displaying a kind of worldly wisdom by following his own thinking and desires. Verse 10 says he “lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord.”

As the story begins in verse 6, we notice that Abram and Lot are quarreling about the number of flocks and herdsmen that both Abram and Lot had acquired. A separation of the families needed to occur in order to keep the peace. Abram allows Lot to choose any part of the land he wishes.

One commentary says that, “Lot could have responded to such a gracious suggestion by endeavoring to share the most fertile parts of the available land with his uncle. Yet he does not do this.”<sup>1</sup>

I think we can relate to Lot. We often are drawn to what is beautiful to our sinful eyes and heart: having the best jobs, beautiful families, popular social media accounts, best clothing brands, or great financial status. If we were given the choice to live on land that is similar to the Garden of Eden (Genesis 13:10), we are often more likely to choose to keep it for ourselves instead of sharing it. In that way, it's easy to understand why Lot “chose for himself all of the Jordan Valley,” yet this passage points us to an even better response to the same scenario. Abram displays faith. “The entire land was rightfully his (Genesis 12:1–9), yet he did not consider that right something to exploit.” Abram is also

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<sup>1</sup>Ligonier Ministries: The Teaching Fellowship of R.C. Sproul.” *Abraham Settled*, [www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/abram-settled/](http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/abram-settled/).







## Discussion Questions

1. Chapter 13 is a story about Abram's contentment versus Lot's greed. Can you share a time when you were tempted toward greed? What happened?
2. One consequence of Abram's sin was being expelled from Egypt. What is significant about the place he took his family and what he did when he arrived? (Read Genesis 12:8 and 13:3-4.)
3. Because Abram and Lot had great possessions and people, it became necessary to separate to avoid conflict. Abram gave Lot the opportunity to choose where to settle. How are Abram's actions in chapter 13 different from his actions in chapter 12?
4. After separating from Lot, God spoke to Abram again and reminded him of His promises of a land and a people. Despite Abram's sin, God's grace continues through His covenant. How might God's actions towards Abram encourage you in your situation right now?
5. At the end of this passage, Abram builds another altar to the Lord and gives thanks. How can you give thanks today to the Lord? Now spend some time in prayer thanking God for His plan, provision, and protection for each member of your Community Group.

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
  2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.
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## Grow

1. What circumstances in your life do you feel you have trusted in what you can see, rather than the promises of God that you know?
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2. How can we respond like Abram in our current struggle?
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## Go

1. Why do you think Abram “calls upon the name of the Lord” (Genesis 13:4)?
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2. How might calling upon the name of the Lord be an act of deliverance and an act of worship?
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3. What do you think our neighbors would see if they were to watch us call on the name of the Lord?
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## Additional Resources

From *Calling on the Name of the Lord: The Meaning and Significance of ἐπικαλέω in Romans 10:13* by Joel D. Estes<sup>1</sup>

In Romans 10:13, to “call on the name of the Lord” (ἐπικαλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) involves more than simply invoking the Lord, but expresses a prayer for deliverance with cultic connotations, that is “to worship Jesus as Lord.” Paul’s use of ἐπικαλέω in Rom 10:13 resonates with strong liturgical overtones, draws on a long OT tradition of employing such language in cultic settings, parallels closely other NT texts that are cultic in orientation, and coheres with our earliest evidence about the worship practices of the early church. These observations, in turn, suggest a tighter thematic relationship between Romans 10 and Paul’s description of humanity’s fundamental predicament as false worship in chapter 1, his exhortation for renewed spiritual worship in chapter 12, and his vision for unified Jew/Gentile worship in chapter 15.

*Ligonier Devotional Series* on Genesis 13

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/abram-settled/>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/abram-went/>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/abram-moved-his-tent/>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/abram-rescues-lot/>

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<sup>1</sup>Estes, Joel D. *Calling on the Name of the Lord: The Meaning and Significance of ἐπικαλέω in Romans 10:13*. Themelios, [tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/themelios/Themelios411.pdf#page=22](https://www.themelios.com/themelios411.pdf#page=22).

# Genesis 14:1-16

*Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.*

—Deuteronomy 7:9

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

—Jeremiah 29:11

## Circumstances Are Challenging, But God Is In The Business Of Reclaiming His Own

In those days, Amraphel, king of Shinar, and three other kings, made war with several other kings in the area. In this turmoil, Lot and all his possessions are captured. Abram is informed of the situation. Abram forms an army and rescues Lot. It is such a comfort to know that even though circumstances seem out of control and overwhelming, God is faithful to Lot. Even though Lot and his family were ensconced in the heathen ways of Sodom and Gomorrah, God is faithful to save His people.

Are we as sinful as Lot? Of course we are! Do we need to be rescued from captivity as Lot did? Of course we do! Abram did not look at Lot's state of righteousness but rescued Lot as he was the son of Abram's brother. This is our comfort. This is our joy. This is our peace. We serve a God who is faithful and has steadfast love for us. We don't deserve it and we didn't earn it, but God keeps His promises to give us His hope for our future.





## Discussion Questions

Read Genesis 14:1-16

1. What does it mean for us to walk by faith and not by sight? (2 Cor. 5:7) Why is this important? Why is it hard to live this way?
2. At the end of the war described in this passage, we find that Lot has been taken captive along with his possessions. Why is this not surprising? What choices led up to this? Had he chosen to walk by faith or by sight? (Genesis 13:10, 12b-13)
3. When in your life did you make a poor decision and have to reap the consequences? How did God meet you there?
4. What decision did Abram have to make when he learned about his nephew's capture? Did Lot deserve to be rescued? Compare Abram's response to the good news of the Gospel.
5. Where in your life do you need the rescue of the Lord? How might others help or support you through this particular hardship?
6. Spurgeon said, "Those believers who conform to the world must expect to suffer for it." In what ways do we compromise our faith and our witness by choosing to act like the world? (Remember this is unique to each of us.) Pray together as a Community Group for God to lovingly reveal anything He wants us to change and humbly seek to support and love one another well.



## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.

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## Grow

1. Name a time when your circumstances were so overwhelming they seemed to block God's faithfulness. In reflection, how did God show up in the difficult circumstance(s)?

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2. How has your view of God's faithfulness grown after reading this passage?

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## Go

1. Abram puts his faith into action by rescuing Lot and conquering Lot's enemies in the land. Abram trusted God to work on his behalf. What does God reveal to you in difficult times? Choose three words to describe God's faithfulness to you.

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2. In what ways can you parallel Lot's rescue to your own life experience(s)?

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## Additional Reading

From *God is Faithful. No, Listen, He IS Faithful* by Erik Raymond<sup>1</sup>

God is faithful. I mean, he is really faithful. I am not just saying that because I have to or because that is what Christians say. No, God is really faithful. He keeps his promises, he blesses, he works through prayer, and he opens the eyes of people to believe the gospel. As a pastor I get to see this quite a bit. To my shame, I sometimes get used to it and forget to marvel. On such occasions God tends to graciously grab ahold of my collar and really get my attention. This happened this last week. My daughter Alexis was baptized at our church on Sunday morning. She gave testimony to the work of Christ for her and her desire to follow Jesus. We rejoiced and blessed God for his faithfulness. As parents we can remember praying for years for her salvation and now we see God answering these prayers. But God did not stop there. He showed me an extra reminder of his faithfulness and the importance of the day to day basics of Christianity. When I came into my office this morning I moved some books around and a couple of small pieces of paper fell out of one of them. On one side was a Bible reading schedule and on the other a prayer list. It was from 2004 and included requests for my family and friends. Among those listed was little Alexis, less than a year old at the time. On the list for her was “salvation, be kept from (devastating) sin, grow into a godly woman and be a fiery evangelist.”

This is one of those examples where God reminds me of his faithfulness. He is faithful in the big picture, the salvation of sinners and the restoration of broken things. He is also faithful in the seemingly little things like hearing the prayers of a guy working in the insurance industry as he pleads for his daughter’s salvation. This serves to be a good reminder and motivator for me today. God delights to hear and answer prayer. He is with us, listening and working through circumstances. Sometimes I just need to be still so I can smell and savor the buffet of grace that he has prepared.

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond, Erik. “God Is Faithful. No, Listen, He IS Faithful.” *The Gospel Coalition*, 14 Oct. 2013, [www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/god-is-faithful-no-listen-he-is-faithful/](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/god-is-faithful-no-listen-he-is-faithful/).

# Genesis 14:17-24

*For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. . . . For it is witnessed of him (Jesus) “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”*

*—Hebrews 7:1-2a, 17*

## Confidence in God Most High

We live in a world that seems hinged on possessions and wealth. Our understanding of success is so often shaped by the idea that the more we have, the better off we are. This is nothing new; possession and ownership have been a scale of power and security for ages. No matter a person's wealth, we are always “looking up” at one who has more. The question that seems to tug at the human heart when we gaze upon someone with greater wealth than ourselves is: where did that wealth come from? To know this answer seems to shape our perception of this person. Abram knew man's heart and inclination and thus refused the spoil offered to him by the King of Sodom. Abram refused the spoil because he would not allow anyone to say that a man had made Abram rich. He demanded all of the credit for his success and wealth go to God and God alone. Abram refused the offer from the king of Sodom, trusting in the promise of God.

When we pursue human measures of success and wealth, using man-centered wisdom and methods, if success does come, how can we really say that God gave the success? It is much better to follow God's wisdom so that when success comes, He gets the glory, and it is evident to everyone that it was His work. As Abram swore he would not accept anything from the King of Sodom, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal (something that would seem so minuscule and almost without value) he stood to his word trusting in the provisions of God. The king of Sodom had only possessions, but God Most High owns it all. He is the possessor of the universe. Therefore, Abram puts his confidence in God counting on Him, rather than human resources

When we look at Melchizedek, he is a foreshadow of the priest who is to come.





## Discussion Questions

Read Genesis 14:17-24.

1. Share a time of celebration from your life. What were the circumstances? Who celebrated with you?
2. In this passage, we are introduced to a king and priest named Melchizedek who celebrates the victory with Abram and blesses him. What was significant about this man and what he did? How does Abram respond?
3. Melchizedek is mentioned in 3 other passages of Scripture: Psalm 110, Hebrews 5, and Hebrews 7. Choose 1 or 2 as a group to examine. How does Melchizedek help us better understand the roles and responsibilities of Jesus as our priest and king?
4. We are also introduced to the king of Sodom. What does the king offer and how does Abram respond? Why do think Abram responded differently to this king?
5. Based on Abram's interactions with the two kings, how might we apply these principles to our own lives as we seek to relate to different rulers and authorities and ultimately to Jesus Christ?
6. Jesus is our priest and king. How might this fact encourage you today? Spend some time praying to your priest and king as a group.

## Treasure

1. Read through the passage two or three times.
  2. Write down 10 observations about the text. Start by asking who/what/where/when/why/how.
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## Grow

1. How does Melchizedek point to Jesus' work and why do you think it is important that Jesus' priesthood is based on His merit and not on His birth family?
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2. When we are willing to pursue human measures of success, using man-centered wisdom and methods, if success does come, how can we really say that God gave the success?
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## Go

1. What are some ways we can be tempted to buy into an offer like what the king of Sodom offers (to compromise following God for financial blessing)?
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2. How can we explain to a non-Christian our ultimate trust in God alone to provide for our needs?
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## Additional Reading

From *Serve and Suffer with Confidence* by Darryl Dash<sup>1</sup>

Every time Paul talks about the gospel, it's like a mini-explosion goes off. Paul interrupts himself, starts run-on sentences, and erupts in praise. It's like he can't contain his excitement about the good news that's gripped his soul. It's because of this gospel that Paul "was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher" (2 Timothy 1:11). It's because of the gospel that we serve—Paul as an apostle as teacher, and the rest of us in our various roles. Paul seems amazed that he has the privilege of serving God by telling others about the gospel. Our service for God is an overflow of the gospel. The more we're captured by what Jesus has done for us, the more we'll be motivated to serve. I'm occasionally overwhelmed by the cost of serving God. Paul's frequently overwhelmed with the privilege of serving God. Sitting in a jail cell, abandoned by many of his friends, expecting to die, Paul can't believe that he's been given the privilege of serving God because of the gospel.

It's also "why I suffer as I do," writes Paul (2 Timothy 1:12). Ajith Fernando, missionary in Sri Lanka, observes a blind spot in the West: we don't expect to suffer. "The New Testament is clear that those who work for Christ will suffer because of their work," he writes. "Tiredness, stress, and strain may be the cross God calls us to.... Since the Cross is a basic aspect of discipleship, the church must train Christian leaders to expect pain and hardship." Suffering seems strange to us, but not to Paul.

Because we serve a Savior who suffered, we can expect to suffer too. Paul's okay with that, and we should be too. "I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me" (2 Timothy 1:12). If the Christian life were up to us, we would have little reason to hope. We are very skilled at messing things up. But Paul's confidence is that all of this has been God's eternal plan, one that he's committed to completing. We can have confidence because God's promised to finish what he's started. When we're weak, we can turn from our strength to God's. He will hold us. Our hope is in him and not in ourselves.

I want explosions to go off in my heart every time I think about the gospel. And like Paul I want the gospel to motivate me to serve, suffer, and know that God will finish what he starts. The gospel changes everything.

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<sup>1</sup>Dash, Darryl. "Serve And Suffer with Confidence - The Gospel Coalition: Canada." *The Gospel Coalition | Canada*, 24 Apr. 2019, [ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/straightpaths/serve-suffer-confidence/](http://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/straightpaths/serve-suffer-confidence/).











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