

An Act of Appreciation

Consecration 2022 Study Notes/Overview

Reverend Herman Washington, Pastor/Teacher

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Every year we take a week to fast and pray corporately, uniting our hearts together to seek, hear and receive instruction from the Word of God. While we did not have this opportunity last year due to Covid restraints, this year we were blessed by Pastor's vision, and the technical support of our Media & Communications Ministry, to be able to host our first Virtual Consecration Study, via GoToMeeting format. "MAC", under the leadership of Trustee Stanley Ridley, together with his spirit-led team provided access to any, and everyone who was able to participate. For five evenings, we gathered at 7PM, and needless to say, when it was all said and done, we came away with a better understanding of tithing, and what it means to operate under grace.

Using Genesis Chapter 14 as focus for our study, following is an overview of our Study from notes taken during our time together, and the Chapter Outline:

Genesis 14

- Verses 1-12 the Conflict (Of the Kings)
- Verses 13-16 the Conquest
- Verses 17-24 the Consequences

Objective: Pastor's goal in this teaching is to strengthen our faith; to confirm our convictions about Christ, so that we can move forward therein.

What is Faith?

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17 KJV

Pastor's definition for faith is that, "Faith is the intellectual and volitional response of the soul to the truth about God as it is revealed by The Holy Spirit. God has chosen to reveal Himself to us through His Word, as the result of the work of The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes His Word and shows us who God is, and what He has done. Our responsibility is to respond intellectually and volitionally, as an act of the will to obey and respond to the will of God.

We begin where the Chapter begins....

The Conflict (v.1-12) Abram's name has not yet been changed. He may be approximately 84, or 85 years old at the time of the conflict. The story unfolds, as Abram and Lot have separated from one another, and the Eastern tribes & kings have under their authority a group of Kings from the Southwest who pay tribute to them. The kings of the Southwest have served the Kings of the East for 12 years, but they rise up and rebel in the 13th year.

Chedorlaomer is the leader of the group who set out to shut the other kings down. The movement of the Kings of the East is very strategic. They move from the East to the Southwest, confronting the kings,

and dominating them. Four Kings of the East are outnumbered by the kings of the Southwest. They have the advantage numerically and geographically. The kings of the East literally beat down the kings of the Southwest and take all the spoils. They did not burn the cities down, but they totally humiliated them.

They conquered, and were on their way back home until verse 12, where they took Lot (Abram's brother/nephew) and his goods. The kings of the East don't care who Lot or Abram is. Lot is there because his men did not get along with Abram's men, and chose to live in the at risk territory. Lot finds himself in a predicament.

Here the story changes and up to verse 12 everything is normal. It changes because something has happened to someone connected to someone living under a covenant relationship.

V12-“And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”

Lot is not the one in covenant relationship. Abram is, and it is because of his connection to Abram that the story changes.

Genesis Chapter 12:1-4- Context: Abram/Lot’s Background

Terah is Lot's grandfather. Terah has three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran, who is Lot's father. Haran dies and Abram (uncle) and Terah (Grandfather) take responsibility for his son Lot. When Abram leaves home, Lot follows Abram; and he is blessed due to his relationship with Abram. Abram is in the covenant relationship, so that when Abram is blessed, so is Lot.

¹Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: ²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ⁴So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

God establishes His covenant with whomever He chooses, and it can extend to those who are connected to the person under covenant. This principle is explored further at 1 Corinthians 7:14 KJV, where Paul says if you are a Christian married to an unbeliever, even in this relationship the whole house will be blessed; ***“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” 1 Cor 7:14KJV***

The King in the covenant relationship is the KING. He is God who makes the covenant and keeps it. ***“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” 2Timothy 2:13 KJV.***

The Lord God of Heaven is both the covenant maker and the covenant keeper.

Growing in Relationship with a Living God- Context

God has called us to a life that is built on and connected to what we cannot see. This life requires faith.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight:” 2 Cor. 5:7 KJV

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Hebrews 11:6 KJV

Sometimes repetition of the word of God is necessary so that we don't miss the message. Living our life with God, in practice, can cause us to lose the urgency of the word. The word of God is important, and we can never become too familiar with it. ***“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;” 2 Cor 4:17 KJV***

Unavoidable offenses will come, but God allows the offenses to show up in our lives and he comes along side of us. He lets us know that He is better. The things that we cannot see have more weight to them.

The only way we can see them is by faith. God has prepared us for a life with Him. The One we can't see is more real than what we can see. He made it all. The invisible One is far more real.

Genesis 1:1-4 KJV says it this way: ***“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ²And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.”***

At Galatians 3:7, Paul writes and notes that Abraham became the model of faith, and everyone who lives a life according to faith is an extension of Abraham. So are we too; children of Abraham.

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” Gal. 3:7 KJV

Biblical faith is never exercised apart from understanding. We may not understand all that God is doing, but we do understand the truth of God's word. He has chosen to reveal Himself in the record of the Scripture. Our faith is not to be on what we expect, but rather our faith is anchored in Him.

The Conquest- Genesis 14: v 12-16- Context

“And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”
Genesis 14:12;

“And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.”

Genesis 14:13

From the conflict to the conquest, the conflict has been squashed. The story changes because Lot, is connected to Abram (his uncle), who has a covenant relationship with God.

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: ²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ⁴So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.”

Abram has a sense that things are not going well, but he does not know that Lot is gone. The acts of Abram at this point are clearly acts of faith. Does Abram understand the severity of the moment? Does he understand the magnitude of what's about to happen? Sometimes our simple acts of faith only register in the state that we're in.

Lot's father, Haran, dies in the land of the Chaldees, and Abram takes the paternal guidance of Lot's well-being. But there is another side- the covenant relationship side. Abram loves Lot. God loves Abram. Abram has made a conscious decision to be Lot's provider and protector. God has done the same for Abram.

“And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. ¹⁵And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. ¹⁶And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.”

The victory in verse 16 is clear evidence that God showed up whether Abram asked Him to or not; but God had committed Himself to Abram by means of a covenant. God never allows those to whom He has made a covenant with to do anything on their own.

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a binding agreement. The covenant relationship ties them to one another. There is mutuality amongst those who are in covenant. There is balance and they are identified as equal with one another.

Covenants are not spiritual tools, but when God calls Abram He uses something that the culture is familiar with. But when God makes a covenant there is no one who can stand toe to toe with Him. He makes the covenant with Himself.

There are two types of covenants. One is conditional. God initiates the covenant with Abram and He puts a condition on it. Abram has to obey. He has to leave. In the context of a conditional covenant the person involved is not equal with God. God wants him to obey Him as a condition.

Covenant two is unconditional. As seen in Genesis 15:18, God expands on the original covenant because of Abram's obedience. God accepts our obedience and He takes over the rest.

"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:" Genesis 15:18 KJV

Abram hears that Lot has been captured and he organizes his guys, and they slaughter their enemy. Abram fought for Lot. God fought for Abram. When we are in relationship with the Living God, we never have to fight our own battles. The battle is not ours. It's the Lord's! Our faith, our confidence has to be in God Himself.

We've looked at the conquest amongst the kings who fought against each other. The people of the defeated lands have been snatched up and humiliated. The possessions along with some of the people are going back home with them, including Lot. The kings from the East are in jeopardy because Abram goes after Lot. ***"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." Gen 14:16 KJV***

The Consequences

What happens next is the result of Abram's victory.

"And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale." Gen 14:17 KJV

He is met by the King of Sodom who previously confronted the kings of the East. Their meeting is interrupted because a "Mystery Man" shows up.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. ¹⁹And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: ²⁰And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. ²¹And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." Gen. 14: 18-21 KJV

The verses that reflect him are the only verses where he acts and speaks; but other Books in the Bible talk about him. He is mentioned here, but never seen again. Melchizedek! He's interesting because of the definition of his name, which at its root means, "King of Right", or "King of Righteousness." He is identified as "King of Salem," which means, "King of peace." He is a strange character in scripture. The Bible's Mystery Man.

"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; ²To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; ³Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. ⁴Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." Hebrews 7:1-4

The implication is that he is Jesus Christ Himself in the Old Testament, but the verse argues against it this way: Jesus had a mother and a father. Jesus is from the Tribe of Judah.

Melchisedec is not an early manifestation of Jesus, but he is a type of Jesus. The scripture says there is no record of his beginnings. We have a record for Jesus. WE have a record for Noah, and for Moses, but no record for Melchisedec. In the Old Testament there are types of Jesus so that God can see what His future is going to be. Whatever Melchisedec says or does is very important (

¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. ¹⁹And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: ²⁰And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. ²¹And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

Melchisedec appears almost out of nowhere. His presence says that the King of Sodom knows who he is. However, that the King of Sodom is familiar with him, does not mean that Melchisedec was associated with the battles. He is the Priest, and King of Peace. He is the King of Salem, which is Jerusalem. He is the first king that we meet. He sits on the throne of the city that would become the City of God, and Jerusalem's future. He brings out bread and wine, which is the meal of fellowship between the redeemer and His redeemed. It was an act of communion between the King of Righteousness and those to whom the victory was given; but it also says something. He blessed them (V19), and he is identified at the Priest of The Most High God.

Melchisedec is both King and Priest. The culture of the people has moved to multiple gods. Everybody has their own god. It's a polytheistic culture. Not monotheistic. The knowledge of God has been passed on to men and the world has been re-populated (after the Flood) but the knowledge of one God has been handed down to Noah' descendants. Melchisedec represents that there are still people left who still serve the True & Living God. Job also lives in the culture of monotheism. Interestingly, he too is gentile and does not know Abram. Because he is a worshipper he has influenced his people to be led politically and spiritually by him. This God owns everything.

[Melchisedec - "El-Elyon" = The Most High God; Possessor of Heaven & Earth]

God delivered Abram's enemies into his hands and Melchisedec emphasizes this victory to Abram. God knows how to fight. When you are in right relationship with Him, He will fight your battles.

An Act of Appreciation

God is the one who gives Abram the victory. Because of His faithfulness due to the covenant relationship that He commissioned with Abram, God made sure that Abram's enemies would do him no harm. Melchisedec mentioned here, the Bible's Mystery Man, appears as a type of Christ.

In the Old Testament there are a series of people, events, etc., that would be identified as a type of Christ, i.e. Noah's Ark (Salvation of the people); Joseph (Salvation of the people); Stone struck by Moses (Salvation of the people); Melchisedec is King & Priest. He holds spiritual and political position in the New Testament. He comes in as Priest of The Most High God. He clarifies for Abram how blessed he is-blessed beyond measure. God sends him in a public manner so that everyone could know that God has delivered him. Abram had connected himself to people in the land but they were not people of the covenant, but found themselves blessed by the same God who blessed him.

The reason why you want to maintain a good relationship between you and the covenant person (by keeping the lines of communication clear and open, and confession of sin. Quick confession keeps the connection), is that it will never be broken; from the God-side. If your heart's desire is to be in the right place with God, you will make the effort to keep the lines of communication open with Him. The covenant relationship between me and God is such a blessing that He will also bless those who are attached to me. He will fix it so that the message is clear to them that someone in their life is true to Him.

Genesis 14:20, "***And he gave him tithes of all,***" is the first time that the concept of tithing appears in the Bible. When Abram does this keep in mind that tithing did not originate with Israel under the Law. It was known culturally long before Israel came into existence. Abram was familiar with the practice. He knows about it, perhaps from experience. **When Abram gives the tithe to Melchisedec it is an act of appreciation and not obligation.**

The Law Section of the Bible follows all the way from Exodus Chapter 20, to the Gospels. The people are living under the Law; the Laws are all obligations. The Law is 850 years in the future from the giving of the Law. Abram is grateful to God for his faithfulness and protection. His response was automatic in giving the tithes to Melchisedec. This was a common attitude toward God. The offering of a tithe to a god, false, or idol, was a common thing.

It appears that the tithe was a ritual performed by tribes and nations by those who did not know God; it could be a secular practice. God takes that which was dirty and sanctifies it for His glory. He does the same thing with us. He makes us worthy, as in the context of the tithe. The tithe is 10%. The common mindset was that the 10% represented the whole, 100%. Exodus 20 is not the whole, but the Ten Commandments represent the whole Law, totaling 613.

In Hebrews 7:4 the priestly tribe of Levi has oversight of the Priesthood, and represents the people before God, and God before the people in the temple. In the context of blessing, He who is better always blesses the lesser. When Abram gave tithes to Melchisedec, the priesthood did also. Melchisedec is a type of Jesus Christ. When we show our appreciation to Him it is not a gift that comes out of obligation. It is a gift of appreciation. **We are not under the Law. We are under grace.** An attitude of gratitude will change your whole life. Appreciation flows from the heart.

~Amen.