

Genesis 053
God Will Handle Your Crisis
Genesis 11:27-32
October 3, 2021
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Let us turn our attention this morning to Genesis 11:27. Lord willing, we are going to try to end the chapter this week. The title of our message this morning is "God Can Handle Your Crisis." Amen.

We have completed Genesis 1-11, the beginning of the human race, where we worked our way through four major events: Creation, Fall, Flood, and national dispersion. All through that material, right after man fell, there has been a tracing of a Messiah that is coming. He is predicted in Genesis 3:15. Now we are learning of the particular nation that will come into existence to bring forth that Messiah, the nation of Israel, which thus far has not existed yet in our study.

We move away from four events in Genesis 1-11 to four people: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. What the Book of Genesis begins to deal with is the beginning and the preservation of the nation of Israel. One of the things to understand about the nation of Israel is that it is unique in the sense that it is the only nation that exists or has existed in human history that was started directly by God Himself.

Isaiah 43:1 says:

*"But now thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel" (Isaiah 43:1).*

In fact, those words "create" and "form" are actually words you can trace back to Genesis 1. Just as God brought the heavens and the earth into existence in the six days of Creation, now God is doing yet another work where He is bringing a special nation into existence to be the carrier of the lineage to fulfill Genesis 3:15 and bring Jesus Christ to the earth.

Our story here in Genesis begins with Abraham. He actually begins in Genesis 11:27 and goes through Genesis 25:11. Here we are seeing the very beginning of Abraham, beginning in Genesis 11:27. We have a six part outline here. Number one, a new record (Genesis 11:27); number two, a new family (Genesis 11:27b-29); number three, there is a crisis (Genesis 11:30-31); there is a new journey (Genesis 11:32). After that there is a death, and then this will spill over into the next chapter, which most likely we will not have time to get to today, where that nation is launched through very special promises that God will give to her nationally.

GENESIS STRUCTURE



II. Genesis 12-50 (four people)

A. Abraham (12:1–25:11)

B. Isaac (25:12–26:35)

C. Jacob (27–36)

D. Joseph (37–50)



Notice, if you will, this new record (Genesis 11:27). It says:

"Now these are the records of the generations of Terah" (Genesis 11:27).

That expression "these are the records of" that should ring a bell. It is the Hebrew word "tôldôt" (תולדות). It has been used several times in the Book of Genesis when a new section is starting. The reason it keeps saying "these are the generations of, these are the generations of, these are the generations of," is because that wants us to understand that this is a new record written by another source.

The first use of the "tôldôt," or "these are the generations of," would be the introduction to the generations, and then the generations of the heavens and the earth. Then Adam wrote a section called "these are the generations of Adam." You can see where he wrote his section in Genesis 5:1-6:8. Then Noah wrote a section. Then the sons of Noah wrote a section. Then the son, through whom the Messiah would come, a man named Shem, wrote a section as well.

What happened is that these records, I believe, just kept getting passed down to the next guy in the chain, and He inherited all of the above, and he wrote his section. Now an entire section is written by Terah, Abraham's father in Genesis 11:27-25:11. Eventually all of these records fell into the hands of a man named Jacob. Jacob left Canaan to sojourn in Egypt in Genesis 46. He brought with him into Egypt all of these records, and they wound up into the hands of a man named Moses.

The Joseph story is about how Israel ends up in Egypt, which we have not gotten to yet. But eventually these records would land in the hands of Moses, and he would take all of these records, he would stitch them together, and he would compile them together into what we call today the Book of Genesis.

It is not too dissimilar from Luke's gospel, where Luke, who was not an eyewitness of the things of Christ, had to piece together all of his material that we find in Luke's gospel

through various sources and various interviews of people that were eyewitnesses to the things of Christ. Luke tells us that is how he put his material together (Luke 1:1-4). That is how Moses put it all together.

Moses, of course, was not an eyewitness to many of these events that took place long before he lived, but he inherited the records and put them together. So when you see that reference to "these are the generations of," it is a reference to the fact that now Moses is compiling a new written record. This one is written by Terah, Abraham's father.

So we move away from a new record and we move to a brand new family. Notice the second part of Genesis 11:27. It says:

"...Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot" (Genesis 11:27).

So now, we need to know family information. Why do we have to know family information? We have to know family information because this nation that is starting here is going to be very special. The Messiah Himself is going to come through this nation to bless the world. Genesis 12:3 tells us this when it says: *"And in you [that is Abram's family] all the families of the earth will be blessed"* (Genesis 12:3).

That is the end game. That is the goal of God.

This new family and the details of the family, who married whom, becomes pertinent data and pertinent information. Terah, Aabram's father, has three sons. Those sons are named Abraham, Nahor, and Haran. Haran also has a son whose name was Lot. Lot then is the nephew of Abram, whose name had not even been changed yet to Abraham.

We continue on in Genesis 11:28, learning about this new family. It says:

"Haran died in the presence of his father Terah" (Genesis 11:28).

So you will notice here that Abraham's brother died. Haran's death, I think, was somewhat tragic. We are not sure how he died, but he died even before his father, Terah, had died. This means that Lot, Abraham's nephew, fell under the authority of his uncle Abram. Why is that piece of information necessary? Because there is going to be a lot of tension between Lot and Abraham, and here we are told why. Haran dies, and Lot comes under the authority of Abraham. That builds a case for what is coming later: tension. It sets the stage, if you will, for subsequent events that are going to be unfolded as we move through the Book of Genesis.

Back to Genesis 11:28, it says:

"...in the land of his birth, in the Ur of the Chaldeans" (Genesis 11:28).

So Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans. What in the world is the Ur of the Chaldeans exactly? It is an area there that we call Mesopotamia. "Meso" means "middle," and "Potamia" means "rivers," as in the Potomac. Mesopotamia then is a Greek word for "between the rivers," between the Euphrates and the Tigris. This is where human history began. This is most likely where the Tower of Babel existed. Many of the families of the earth were scattered, but many of them were lingering in what they knew and what they understood in this place called Ur of the Chaldeans.

Charles Ryrie, concerning Ur of the Chaldeans, the place where Haran died, says:

"Ur of the Chaldeans. A wealthy, populous, and sophisticated pagan center of southern Mesopotamia (220 mi., or 354 km, SE of Baghdad). Its most prosperous and literate in this particular era was during the time of Abraham. A great ziggurat [archeological remains of a tower] was built there, and Abraham must have seen it."¹

What did Abraham see? Did he see the Tower of Babel? I doubt it. I think probably what he saw was people trying to imitate the Tower of Babel in that same region of the world. It is very interesting that when you study Ur of the Chaldeans, what you discover is this is a place of education. It is a place of security. It is a place of wealth. It is a place of worldly stability.

What is so interesting about this is that God is going to call Abram out of that area. When Abram, as we are going to study, begins to walk by faith according to the Word of God, to him, he is leaving everything that he knows. He is leaving everything that is safe. He is leaving everything that is secure. God has the audacity to not even tell him exactly where he is going.

I say that because many of you are walking by faith as I speak. Your job has changed. Your job has shifted. Your relationships have changed. Your health may have changed for the worse. I want you to understand that those are things actually that God brings into our lives so that we will walk, trusting Him. God is the expert at taking us out of our comfort zone, and Ur of the Chaldeans was a comfort zone. As long as Abram was sojourning in Ur of the Chaldeans, "Everything's working out well. I do not really need to trust the Lord." God says, "We will change that. We will have you leave your comfort zone."

I remember at the end of the 1990s, when God was beginning to deal with me about going into ministry. I had graduated from law school, I was in the legal profession, and God basically began to impress upon me to leave everything. I did not understand exactly where I was headed, where I was going, but the calling of God on my life at that

¹ Charles Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible*.

time, and my wife's life, was undeniable; and I am glad I listened, because God apparently knew what He was doing.

It is going to be the exact same way in your life. God is not going to pull out the 'Mapsco' and tell you exactly what is going to happen in your life. You really do not need to know when you think about it. If you trust your tour guide, all you have to know is that He knows what He is doing. The problem is, we do not really trust Him because we are so comfortable where we are. And God moves us—He adjusts things—and this is just a normal walk of faith that God has the believer on.

Hebrews 11:6 says:

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

If you are finding yourself in a situation where you really have no one to trust, because the security and comfort that you once knew has been kicked away from you, do not get discouraged about that. That is the obvious hand of God at work in your life.

Something else that is very interesting about Ur of the Chaldeans is that it was a place of paganism. In fact, Terah, Abraham's father, as well as Abram himself, were steeped in paganism. Joshua 24:2 says:

"Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods''" (Joshua 24:2).

You will notice that when God called Abram, his background was not exactly squeaky clean. He was a man that was basically steeped in paganism. Now, I bring that to your attention by way of encouragement, because a lot of people have this mindset that if you have skeletons in your closet, then somehow you are disqualified from being used of God. That is utter and total nonsense. That is what Satan wants you to think. "You are not qualified. Look at your past. Look at your background."

The truth of the matter is, God does not use perfect people for the very simple reason that perfect people do not exist. God uses crooked sticks to draw straight lines, which encourages me because I can apply for the job no matter how much I may have messed up things in the past. God is really not as much concerned about that as we are. He is not so much concerned about our ability as He is concerned about our availability. God does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

So whatever God has put on your heart to do, step out by way of faith and pursue that. Do not let Satan whisper a bunch of nonsense in your ear that somehow you are disqualified, because in Christ Jesus, all of us who are disqualified become qualified.

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Ecclesiastes 1:9 says this:

*"That which has been is that which will be,
And that which has been done is that which will be done.
So there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).*

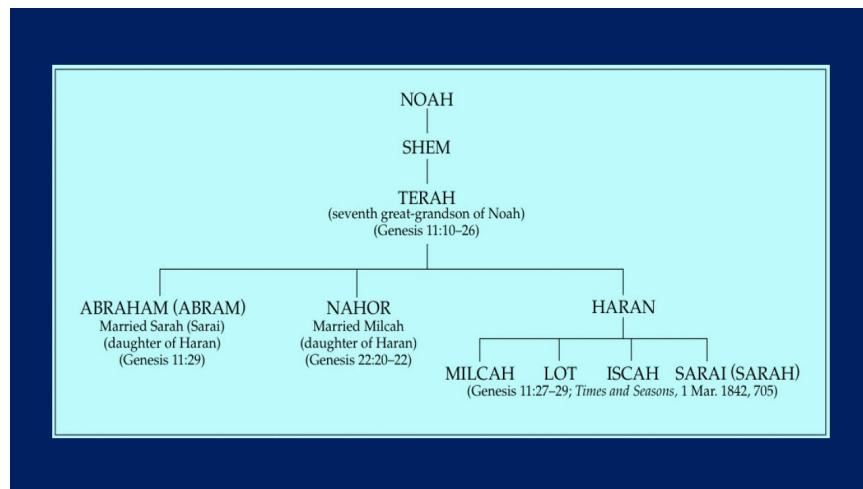
I find it very interesting that God's whole program starts here in Mesopotamia, Ur of the Chaldeans.

If you followed our teachings on the Book of Revelation, particularly Revelation 17 and 18, we tried to make the case that that also is where all of human history will end, on the plains of Shinar, in God's End Time program.

We continue on into Genesis 11:29, and we have more of a description of this budding and growing family. Notice what it says there:

"Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah" (Genesis 11:29).

Here again is our family tree.



You will notice that we have a description of the wives that Abram and Nahor, brothers, took for themselves. Abram is going to marry Sarai. Sarai's name has not yet been changed by God to Sarah, just as Abram's name has not yet been changed to Abraham. Why do we have to know this information? We have to know this information because this is the seed line, the seed or the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. The Messiah Himself is going to come through this line.

So Abram marries Sarai, and Nahor marries Haran's daughter, and remember Haran is his deceased brother. You read this with Western eyes and you say, "This is unbelievable. Isn't this incestuous? Family members are not supposed to marry each other, are they?" Yet it happened here.

One of the things to understand here is that incest is not something that would be prohibited by God until the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law at Mount Sinai is not going to come into existence until about six centuries later. So when God created everything, it says:

"God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Yes, incestuous relationships within extended families can corrupt the genetics, but this is very early on in the human race. The sin effects have not yet taken place, so you see this kind of thing happening in the Book of Genesis. It is not something that has to be followed today. It is not normative. But the Mosaic Law will clearly outlaw it or forbid it in Leviticus 18 and 20. We are a good 600 years before the Law of Moses was handed down.

So we move away from a new record, a new family, and now we have a problem. We have a crisis. Look at Genesis 11:30. It says:

"Sarai was barren; she had no child" (Genesis 11:30).

That is a problem because how is the Messiah supposed to come into the world through the line of Abram and Sarai when Sarai, who would later become Sarah, could not conceive? I was thinking about this issue of crisis as I was preparing this sermon, and the Lord impressed upon my heart that the whole Book of Genesis is one crisis after another. Every time you turn the page, there is another problem. There is a problem so big that only God can fix it.

For example, we know from Genesis 3:15 that a Messiah is coming from the lineage of the woman, or Eve. We have an immediate problem in Genesis 4, because Cain just murdered Abel. I thought the Messiah was going to come through Abel's line, yet now we have a crisis. What is poor God going to do? God, of course, quickly gets around that crisis through the birth of Seth. What is a crisis to man is not a crisis to God at all.

You have another crisis in Genesis 6, where the sons of God began to procreate with the daughters of men. A very bizarre and strange angelic eruption took place between the fallen angels and human women to create the pre-Flood gene pool. The Nephilim were the product of that. "Nephilim" means "fallen ones" (or "giants")², a race of people

² "Nephilim," *International Standard Bible Dictionary*, via Blue Letter Bible, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?topic=ET0002704,IT0006350> (accessed August 7, 2026).

that are not fully human, partly human, partly angelic. Now we have another crisis because the Messiah, when He comes, must not only be fully God, but also fully man. In fact, it says in Genesis 3:15 that He must come from the seed of the woman. That is a crisis.

God says, "I will get around it," as God always does, through Noah and his wife and Noah's three sons and their respective wives, who were innocent, or perfect, in the sense that their genetics were preserved. Because their genetics were preserved and were not corrupted by this angelic eruption, they were qualified, particularly Shem, because the Messiah must come through Shem's line. They are qualified to bring forth the Messiah. Crisis number two solved.

But then you get to Genesis 10 and 11, and you learn that every single nation on the face of the earth has been corrupted by the Tower of Babel. The mother-child cult, or the mother-child system, as we have tried to explain it, corrupted every single nation because all the nations have been contaminated by this idolatry and this mother-child system. So what nation is poor God going to use to bring forth the Messiah? God resolves it by saying, "I will get around this by creating a new nation, a nation that has not been negatively impacted by the Tower of Babel." That is why now, subsequent to the Tower of Babel, we are beginning to see that new nation formed.

Here we have another crisis: the Messiah is going to come through the line of Abraham and Sarah, and Sarah cannot conceive. Crisis, crisis, crisis. God says, "O ye of little faith. I will get around this one too." Just keep reading, and we are going to learn how God delivered His people from this crisis as the events of the Book of Genesis unfold.

As I was thinking about this, I was reminded of Genesis 18:14 which says this:

"Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14).

I do not know what crisis you are in, but I would suggest that there is something in your life to navigate that is bigger than you. I am not exactly sure what it is for everybody, but everybody has these problems where it is almost as if there is no way out.

What we do with our crises is we treat them as the unwanted intruder and the enemy, when the fact of the matter is, God is the one that put that crisis in your life. Why in the world would God put that crisis in your life? He put it in your life to show you that He can fix things, and if He can fix things, at the end of the day, who gets the glory? God does.

Isn't the purpose of our life to glorify God? What better way to do that than to be in a problem or a crisis or a situation that, from the human perspective, is unfixable, where you have to completely rely upon God so that God can come through for you. So that God Himself can receive the glory.

The problem with us is that in the midst of our crises we are very good at taking our eyes off God and putting our eyes on the problem. That, by the way, is where Satan wants you to look. He wants you to look at your problem, not at God. Because if you look at your problem, which is bigger than you, through your human lens, what is going to set in is despondency and discouragement. But if you look at it from the perspective of God, who is all powerful, suddenly the crisis is not something that is there to destroy you, rather, it is something there that is designed by God to build your faith and give you greater opportunities to glorify Him.

I think a lot about the children of Israel who were taken out of Egyptian bondage. They were taken to Mount Sinai, and they had an 11-day journey into Canaan. They looked into Canaan at a place called Kadesh Barnea, which is the southern border of Israel, and they saw giants in the land and they went into unbelief. So the nation that had seen the kindness and the preservation of God went into unbelief.

I often ask myself, "Why did they do that? Why didn't they just say to themselves, 'God brought us to the Red Sea. What are a few giants?'" The answer is that they started to look at their crisis through their own lens. It says this in Numbers 13:33:

"There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight" (Numbers 13:33).

The operative phrase being "in our own sight." There is the problem. That is why they went into unbelief, because they looked at their crisis through their own human lens and they forgot God.

It reminds me of Peter. I call Peter the Apostle with the foot-shaped mouth. He is probably one of my favorite characters in the Bible. You remember that in Matthew 14 Jesus invites him to walk on the water. "Come out, Peter, where I am," Jesus says. "Walk on the water." Peter did pretty well until Matthew 14:30 where it says:

"But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!'" (Matthew 14:30).

Why did he begin to sink? Because he was looking at the wind. He was looking at the waves. He was looking at the water. Why is it that this whole generation in Numbers 13 and 14 never entered Canaan? Because they became grasshoppers in their own sight.

So when Sarai cannot conceive, the temptation, obviously amongst Abram and his family, is to focus on the crisis. Sometimes Abram does pretty well. He does not focus on the crisis, but he focuses on God; other times, he falls flat on his face. It kind of sounds like us a little bit, doesn't it?

By the way, what is our ultimate crisis? Our ultimate crisis is that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. You want to talk about a problem? That is the biggest one you have if you are unsaved. Romans 6:23 says:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Why would Jesus Christ step out of eternity into time to bear a consequence that you could not bear, and that I could not bear, just to desert you in the moment of your crisis? It is an argument from the greater to the lesser. If Christ already delivered us from the ultimate crisis, the sin debt hanging over our heads, if He fixed that problem, I don't know what problems you are facing, but they are pretty minor when you think about it in light of what He has already done. You can trust God in the midst of the crisis.

So we move away from that, and now we have a new journey. Look at Genesis 11:31:

"Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there" (Genesis 11:31).

Now we have a journey. God is into journeys. You are in the middle of a journey in your life. I am in the middle of a journey, and God is in the process of stripping us of what we understand and what we know, what makes us comfortable, what gives us security, and we are supposed to walk by faith. When that starts to happen in your life, do not resist that; do not fight it. It is the unmatched, unparalleled type, or prototype, of the work of God in the life of the child. This is how He works with all of us.

God loves us so much, and I will tell you this much, He is not going to let too many of us get away without growing up. You get saved, and it is a wonderful thing, and it is sort of euphoric. You are in that state of infancy, and all of these things are new. Then all of a sudden the warm fuzzies stop; the applause of people, family, church, or whatever stops; and your work situation changes because you are speaking up about Jesus in your workplace. People don't want to hear that.

When the warm fuzzies stop, we are thinking, "I must have missed God's will. I must be out of the will of God." No, you are exactly in the will of God, because this is what God is doing with Abram and his family, as He is taking them on a new journey away from the prosperity and the security of Ur of the Chaldeans that they had known.

The participants in this journey are Terah Abram's father, Abram Terah's son, Lot Terah's grandson, the son of Haran who died in the Ur of the Chaldeans, and then, of course, Sarai Terah's daughter-in-law and Abram's wife.

You will notice some geography is mentioned there in Genesis 11:31, They are going from somewhere to somewhere. They are going from Ur of the Chaldeans, and they are going to a place called Canaan.



Now, as we are going to discover, God did not tell them where they were going, but ultimately that is where they were headed. So they are in the east, you will see Ur of the Chaldeans, and then in the west you will see Canaan, which would later become the land of Israel, and that is their destination.

There is another crisis, because who is in Canaan? The Canaanites. Where in the world did the Canaanites come from? The Canaanites are the sons of Ham, Ham being the son of Noah. You remember from Genesis 9:25 that the Canaanites were put under a curse. The apple does not fall far from the tree. It is not a genetic curse. It is not a racial curse, as we have tried to describe. But these people became vile and they became wicked because of their forebear, Ham, who uncovered Noah's nakedness.

Genesis 9:25 says:

*"So he said,
'Cursed be Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brothers'" (Genesis 9:25).*

That is where these Canaanites went. So that is another crisis, isn't it? How could they be going to the Land of Canaan when it is already occupied by vile people, the Canaanites? The rest of the Bible, particularly the Book of Joshua, is going to explain how that crisis is overcome.

If you see or hear nothing else today, see this: problem, problem, problem, problem, problem. But God says, "Answers, answer, answer, answer, answer. I have given you

three answers. Now trust Me for the fourth." Do not go into unbelief. Do not become like a grasshopper in your own eyes, but trust God through the circumstances of life.

So they went and settled in a place called Haran. Again, Genesis 11:31 says:

"Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife..." (Genesis 11:31).

This gives you the picture that these events actually happened, by going into all this detail and geography. This is not "Jack and the Beanstalk" here. This is not "VeggieTales." This is real history that happened. That is the way it reads:

"...and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there" (Genesis 11:31).

Why not just make a beeline from Ur straight across to Canaan? The problem is something called the Arabian Desert. Charles Ryrie explains it as follows:

"Genesis 11:31—God called Abram while he was in Ur (Acts 7:2-3). Only two routes to Canaan were available: one was directly across the Arabian desert (impossible for transporting large herds), and the other along the Euphrates up to Haran, in [modern-day] Syria, then down to Canaan, a 1,500 mi. (2,400 km) journey."³

We look at that figure 1,500 miles, and we just sort of let it go in one ear and out the other. This is before airplanes. This is before helicopters. This is before the internet. You mean God can work without the internet? I am stunned! Without modern-day luxury and travel, no doubt without sophisticated equipment, and there they left everything they knew to go up, and did not even know where they were going. They left to go up into Haran, up the Euphrates River, into Haran, modern-day Syria, and then back down again into the land of Canaan, and then they settled there.

What is very interesting is that somebody dies. This will be the second person that has died. You will recall that Haran, Abram's brother, died in Ur of the Chaldeans. Now we learn about the death of Abram's father. Look, if you will, at Genesis 11:32. It says:

"The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran" (Genesis 11:32).

Watch this very carefully, because I am about to take you into one of the greatest theological controversies Christendom has ever been pushed into, and it all comes from that last expression: "Terah died in Haran." Abram's father did not die in Ur of the

³ Charles Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible*.

Chaldeans. He died up north in Syria, in this place called Haran. Why is that a big deal? I will explain it to you in just a second.

This is death number two. Isn't it interesting that God's program continues to march forward no matter who dies? This is very important, because a lot of movements in Christianity will anchor everything around a leader. Then when the leader dies, everybody acts like, "I guess God's not going to work anymore." Nonsense. If God is in it, it does not matter who dies. In fact, the deaths of some might even be an actual advantage to things moving forward.

Notice Acts 5:33-39. This is something that Gamaliel, a leading religious leader that Saul, as a Pharisee, studied under, said in the Book of Acts concerning the church, which was a growing movement. It says:

"But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them" (Acts 5:33).

And you think we have problems. Boy, they had problems in the Book of Acts. "Let us kill all these Christians."

"But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time" (Acts 5:34).

This is a Pharisee speaking up on behalf of the growing infant church in the Book of Acts.

"And he [Gamaliel] said to them, 'Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered. So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men, and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God'" (Acts 5:35-39).

What Gamaliel says is, "Let's just take our hands off this for a minute. If this is a man-made movement, this early church, it is going to fizzle; but if it is of God, it is going to be different, because movements of God outlive the leadership of those movements. If this is truly of God," Gamaliel wisely says, "I do not want to fight against God."

You will notice you have the death of a father and you have the death of a brother. I say this because even in this flock, we have had people that have passed on recently, people in key places of leadership. "Oh, no. What are we going to do?" What we are going to do is we are going to continue to follow God, because God's work is not somehow chained to a particular personality or a particular leader.

It reminds me very much of Joshua 1:2. Moses died, not having entered Canaan, but only having seen it from a distance. There is no doubt that people were upset over the death of Moses. So finally, God speaks to Joshua, the next leader in Israel. He says this in Joshua 1:2:

"Moses My servant is dead..." (Joshua 1:2).

In other words, do you think somehow that everything stops because Moses died? Yes, but Moses was the law giver. Moses was the redeemer. Look at all of the things Moses accomplished for God. Moses wrote the first five books of the Pentateuch. What is God going to do without Moses? God says, "I will raise up the next leader." In other words, Joshua himself had to be reminded of this because we have a human tendency to think that if an important person or leader dies, somehow the work of God stops. It does not stop. If it stops, then that movement is not of God anyway, and you do not want any part of it.

That is what Gamaliel is saying in Acts 5.

"Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel" (Joshua 1:2).

There was something that happened at Dallas Seminary. It was the death of Dr. John Walvoord. His death was such a traumatic thing that they did something over there that I thought was semi-ridiculous. They took his chair that he studied in, and they almost made a monument out of it. You could actually go into a room and sit in John Walvoord's chair, as if the chair had some sort of magical power to grant wisdom. The truth of the matter is, God used John Walvoord, but God's work is not limited through John Walvoord. God raises up others.

This is the kind of thing that I think Abram is learning here because he has the death of his father, and he has the death of his brother. God says, "Keep walking by faith."

So Terah dies, and now look very carefully at the end of Genesis 11:32. This is a big deal.

"The days of Terah [Abraham's father] were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran" (Genesis 11:32).

The Bible is very clear that Terah died not in Ur of the Chaldeans, but he died in Haran. In fact, when Stephen gives a speech recording this history, he makes an issue out of this point. Stephen says in Acts 7:2-4:

"And he [Stephen] said, 'Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and he said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.' Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died—'" (Acts 7:2-4).

Did you catch that? He went to Haran with Terah, where Terah died. I will explain in a minute why this is so significant.

"From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country [Canaan] in which you are now living" (Acts 7:4).

Houston, we have a problem. The problem is in Genesis 12:1, where the the command that God gave Abram is recorded: *"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your own country..."* Check. Did that one well. They left Ur of the Chaldeans and headed toward Canaan, taking the route first up to Syria. *"Go forth from your country, And from your own relatives..."* Whoops! He did not obey, did he? Because he brought Lot with him, and he brought Terah with him. Look at this. *"And from your father's house..."* Whoops. Did not fulfill that one either, did he? What in the world do we make of this? What we make of it is.

Abram's faith was partial at best. His obedience was partial at best. He got from God maybe a C-, but he did not obey God perfectly. A plain reading of the Book of Genesis tells us this. Why is that a big deal? One reason is that it reminds us of ourselves, doesn't it? I will let that one sink in.

The second reason why this is such a big deal is that the dominant view that is taught in terms of eschatology, the study of the end, is something that the Roman Catholic Church, going back to a man named Augustine in the fourth century, has taught. Roman Catholicism still teaches this. Most Christians by way of denominational affiliation, are absorbed. They absorb this teaching over and over again. It is the doctrine of Amillennialism. It is the doctrine of Replacement theology.

It is the doctrine that God is through with Israel. God is through with Israel, and the church has now eclipsed Israel's place in the outworking of God's program. The church has become the new Israel. The church, Roman Catholicism, is the vicar of Christ on the earth—vicar is in the place of. The church is the kingdom of God. All of Israel's blessings have been allegorically transferred to the church. Israel as a nation means nothing to God.

Some call this doctrine Supersessionism, which is the idea that the church supersedes Israel—Replacement theology. This is an old teaching. It goes back to the fourth century. It is the dominant eschatological view in Christendom even today as I speak. What they will say is that the promises that God is about to make to Abram are conditional. We do not have time to get to them today, but there are going to be eight promises that are coming in Genesis 12:1-3, things that God is going to do in and through the nation of Israel. There are eight promises total.

What the Amillennialists want you to believe is that those promises are conditioned on Abram's obedience. If Abram obeyed, the condition was met. If that is true, then why, in your system, is God through with Israel? God is through with Israel according to the amillennialists, because Israel later did not make good on these conditions. She rejected her Messiah nationally. So God took Israel's cord and clipped it. The promises are conditional, if Abram met the condition.

The truth of the matter is, beloved, it is the exact opposite. These promises were never conditional. They were unconditional. Abram did not even meet the condition because God said, "Do X," and he did almost X, he did Y. God said, "Leave your father, leave your household." He did not do that. Now he obeyed the part about leaving and going to Haran.

God is going to say, "Go to the land." You are going to see Abram get into the land in Genesis 12, but then there is a famine in the land. What does Abram do? He leaves the land. When he gets under pressure from Pharaoh of Egypt concerning Pharaoh who wanted his wife sexually, what does Abram say? "Oh, yeah, she is my sister." Which is partially true. It is his half-sister.

So you see, what is happening is God is making promises which are unconditional and Abraham is failing. That is not what the amillennialists want you to see. What they want you to see is that the promises are conditional if Abram met the condition. The opposite is true, beloved. These promises are unconditional and Abram is going to inherit them regardless of what he does, which means you cannot theologically cut Israel out of the equation. You could, if this was conditional and Abram met the condition, but others did not. But that is not the scenario that is being developed here.

This is why God says in Jeremiah 31:35-37:

*"Thus says the Lord,
Who gives the sun for light by day
And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,
Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar;
The Lord of hosts is His name:
'If this fixed order departs
From before Me,' declares the Lord,
'Then the offspring of Israel will cease
From being a nation before Me forever.'*

*Thus says the Lord,
'If the heavens above can be measured
And the foundations of the earth searched out below,
Then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel
For all that they have done,' declares the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:35-37).*

God says, "You cannot cut Israel out of his program any more than you can get rid of the sun and the moon and the stars." You want to get rid of Israel? It is pretty simple. Do not aim your rockets at Israel. Aim them at the sun and the moon and the stars, because as long as the sun and the moon and the stars are in existence, Israel will always be a nation before God.

I want you to understand something. When God spoke this through Jeremiah, Israel could not be more disobedient. On a scale of one to ten, this is a ten plus. On the eve of the Babylonian captivity, they were taking their own children and putting them into a fire to satisfy the god of prosperity. God, of course, chastens them for this and tells them that they are going into the Babylonian deportation. Right as this is happening, God says, "As long as there is sun, moon, and stars, the nation will always exist."

How could God say something like that if the promises to Abram were somehow conditional? The great truth of the Bible is that.

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." (2 Timothy 2:13).

It is true as God is dealing with the nation of Israel. I want you to understand something: It is true with you. You may have totally blown it big time, done something you should not have done, or left something undone or failed in this way, or failed in that way. Satan is going to whisper in your ear, "It looks like you blew the condition. If you had just kept the condition, you could be secure in your salvation."

The truth of the matter is, when God gave you salvation, He gave you no conditions. Just like when God gave these promises to Abram, He gave him no conditions. That is why his failure in these areas, as we have talked about, does not ameliorate or destroy the initial promise. Do you follow?

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

In other words, what God is doing with Abram here is a prototype, it is a prefigurement of salvation history. So when the Amillennialism in a denominational church tries to convince you that somehow these are conditioned and Abram was a good boy and he kept the condition, the whole thing is nonsense. It is nonsense right out of the gate. Yet, sadly, this is how people think.

We wrap up here with new promises. We have seen a new record, a new family, a new crisis, a new journey, and a death. There are going to be eight promises in Genesis 12:1-3, which I will give you next time.

In the meantime, God offers the human race a promise. The promise is to trust in what He has done for you—not yourself, not your performance, not what you do on the front end or the back end. Trust what He has done in your place, and in a nanosecond you are given the gift of eternal life.

"Well, Pastor, you are teaching that people can live unholy. If people believe what you are saying, they will just go out and live unholy. You are giving people too much security." Nonsense. When a person grasps what they have in Christ, how can any rational mind look at that and not want to glorify God? "Great work of grace, Lord. I am just going to go out and live how I want." That is not even reasonable.

The truth of the matter is, when the human mind grasps the grace of God, the natural inclination is to surrender one's life unto Christ and to let him live the way He wants to and express Himself through you. You are doing it not because you are trying to keep some kind of condition, but you are doing it because you cannot believe what you have.

What is logical and what is rational, as Paul says in Romans 12:1, is that in light of these mercies that we are speaking of here, is to deposit one's body unto God and let him do what He wants with it. I do not think that grace leads to licentious living. I think it unleashes holiness in the lives of God's people. Rather than threatening people over and over again that they have broken a condition, maybe we should just teach the truth and communicate what they have in Christ unconditionally, and let that sink in and watch how your life changes. Some have called this the great grace awakening, and I think in our current climate, we need a little of that. Amen.