

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 03/02/08
The Abrahamic Covenant. Part 2.
Learning God's will for your life.

In relationship to our main verse in Rom 9:4, we have begun a study on the covenants, mainly the Abrahamic Covenant.

We have been noting the question of the will. First, there's the viewpoint will of God. In other words, what does God want you to think? Obviously, He wants you to think Divine viewpoint (Isa 55:7-9; Pro 23:7). There is also 2Co 10:1 *"Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!"* Paul had heard that they were gossiping about him, saying he had been cowardly when he was with them, but harsh and demanding when he was writing letters. Remember 1Ti 5:17-20, *Those pastor-teachers who have ruled well with the result that they keep ruling honorably, they must be considered worthy of double honor, most of all those who work hard to the point of exhaustion in the study of the word and the teaching of doctrine. For the Scripture says [Deu 25:4], 'You shall not muzzle the bull while he is threshing, and [Deu 24:15] The laborer is worthy of his wages.'* Do not receive an accusation against a pastor-teacher except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in the sin of receiving or making accusations, reprimand in the presence of all, in order that the rest of the congregation also may have respect. So be careful what you say about God's man behind the pulpit; let the Lord deal with him. As for God's man behind the pulpit, remember such scriptures as: 2Ti 4:14 *"Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds."* (See also Isa 54:17; 2Co 13:8).

So the Corinthians were gossiping and trying to discredit the apostle Paul. In 2Co 10:2-6 Paul is saying, please don't force me to take a hard line when I'm present with you. Don't think that I'll hesitate a single minute to stand up to those who say I'm an unprincipled opportunist. The world is unprincipled. It's dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn't fight fair, but we don't live or fight our battles that way. We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.

So, first, there's the viewpoint Will of God. Secondly, there's the operational Will of God. What does God want you to do? The operational Will of God involves everything that a Christian should do to the glory of God. Thirdly, there's the geographical Will of God. Where does God want me to be? This category has to do with location. However, the geographical Will of God is never considered apart from the operational Will of God.

And the third is the geographical will of God which is where God wants you to be and that's solved by resident doctrine.

Now, there are also classifications of the Will of God.

There's **the directive Will of God** which is the same as the desire of God. These are direct commands. It was the directive Will of God that called Abraham out of Ur of Chaldea, and it was the directive will of God to which he responded.

The **permissive Will of God** is permitted, but is not God's desire. For example when God permitted Abraham to lie twice about Sarah not being his wife.

The **overruling Will of God** means Jesus Christ controls history. For example when God revealed to Pharaoh that he was touching Abraham's wife in Gen 12:17-20. The overruling Will of God also took place when God took Abraham's father from Abraham when he was in Haran.

There are seven basic mechanics of the Will of God, or how you can receive Divine guidance: 1) Guidance through prayer (Act 11:5). 2) Guidance through objective thinking of Bible doctrine (Act 11:6). 3) Guidance through perception of doctrine (Act 11:7-10). 4) Guidance through providential circumstances, the people we meet (Act 11:11). 5) Guidance through fellowship and comparison of spiritual data (Act 11:13-14). 6) Guidance through recalling of doctrine (Act 11:16). 7) Guidance through disaster. In other words, you have to have a shock or a great disaster in order to realize what's really important. This happened with the death of Abraham's father.

The principle is that Bible doctrine in the soul plus the free will in man equals Divine guidance, and the execution of the Will of God.

Abraham was getting doctrine in Ur of the Chaldea, but because of his family and relatives, he never reached spiritual maturity until he was totally separated from them. This is why the Lord said to Abraham in Gen 12:1 *"Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, To the land which I will show you."* Abraham had to be separated from his father and his nephew Lot! Therefore, it was necessary for Abraham to have a change of residence because his spiritual growth was the most important thing. Abraham had to learn the principle of separation, but Abraham made a mistake and went to Haran which means the dried up place. As long as God's people do not separate from those weirdos who are in reversionism, they will be dried up spiritually as well.

Abram's name is also interesting. The first part of his name *Ab* means father, and *ram* means high and windy places. Abram lived in a very flat place, Ur of the Chaldees was very flat and it was hard to find a place above sea level anywhere. However, Abram was called father of heights because his father, who was one of the chief priests in Ur, named his son after the only high place around. Going over 100 feet in the air was the famous temple, and the last 75 feet a famous tower, on top of the tower another famous temple: the Ziggurat of Ur, and Abram was named after this. So his name actually means father of the heights or father of the high places. Abram was obviously ear-marked for a life of religion and idolatry in Ur, but God had better things for Abram just like God has better things for you. In Heb 1:4 *"We have become as much better than the angels, as we have inherited a more excellent name than they have."* (See also Heb 6:9; Heb 7:19; Heb 7:22; Heb 8:6).

In our study of Abraham, there are five geographical locations that illustrate different principles concerning his life. The first is Ur which represents separation from glamour (Ur was the glamour city of Abram's time) and all the human advantages of life. 600 miles north up the Euphrates river we have Haran, the trade center between Syria and Egypt, and it represents the dried up spiritual life. It represents separation from the idolatrous place of Ur, but not enough separation. It represents going in the right direction, but making a wrong turn into the dried up spiritual life. The third area is Canaan which represents the place of blessing, the place of positive volition, and the place of spiritual advance and blessing. Then there is the Negev; Abraham will break camp and go south from Canaan into the Negev, which represents not rejection of doctrine, but neglect of doctrine. The key to the Negev is neglect. It represents neglect of doctrine, apathy, indifference, once interested, but now starting to get sloppy in the daily attendance to Bible class. Then, after he was in the Negev a while, he went on down to Egypt, and Egypt is the place of the rejection of doctrine. To neglect the Word is to reject the Word, but the neglect comes first. First comes the Negev and then comes Egypt, and both came after Canaan, the land of promise. For us it is a picture of individuals getting into doctrine, and then falling away! So don't miss the principle behind those five cities:

- Ur represents separation from glamour.
- Haran represents the dried spiritual life.
- Canaan represents the place of blessing.
- The Negev represents neglect of doctrine.
- Egypt is the place of rejection of doctrine.

Gen 11:28 *And Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.* Beginning in verse 29, we are getting ready to move out of Ur but before Abraham can be taken out of Ur, we have to have some weddings.

Gen 11:29 *And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves.* Please notice that the subject is the man not the woman. This of course is an old custom that goes back to the nature of the male; he is to be the aggressive one, he is to do the wooing or the charming. No male should stand around waiting to be introduced when he finally thinks that he spots someone who is his right woman or someone who is attractive; you just don't stand around and wait, you get into action as quickly as possible. By the way a woman in response can be aggressive. She doesn't have to stand around and wait for the right man to be aggressive, he doesn't have to be the aggressor on every occasion.

Before we study this verse, we have 18 principles concerning the selection of a mate or really 18 reasons why relationships fail: 1) The most obvious one: bad decisions in the selection of a mate (Pro 12:4). This is why believers should never make a decision for marriage until doctrine matures them. 2) The inability to handle personal problems before, during, and even after the marriage. If you can't deal with your own problems how will you deal with the problems of your mate? (1Co 7:28). 3) Another reason relationships fail is because of failure to learn and apply the problem-solving devices. This means that if you are unstable in the intake of doctrine that you bring that instability in any of your relationships in life. 4) Relationships fail because of taking bad advice from friends, ministers, mommy, daddy, etc. People with problems will usually listen to anyone. Remember Psa 1:1 *"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!"* In sharing your problems with others, when you tell your side of the story, the other person always looks like the rat. One of the signs of growing up is keeping your personal problems private and to yourself. 5) Relationships also fail because of disloyalty or unfaithfulness on the part of one or both mates. Faithfulness is extremely important in the selection of a mate (Pro 6:23-32). 6) Relationships fail because of no personal sense of responsibility on the part of one or both mates. Many are getting married today as children mentally. 7) Remember that relationships and marriage are not designed for perfect people, but for people with old sin natures who are far from perfect, so don't think there's a person for you who is perfect. It is true that God has designed someone who is perfect for you, but that does not mean that they will be perfect. 8) Therefore, the only thing wrong with marriage is not the Divine institution of marriage designed by God but the people involved in marriage. 9) No woman can be successful in any relationship unless she has learned to entertain herself. Ladies, if you can't stand to be alone and he has to be there, you'll never be successful in marriage. You did not marry an entertainer, but a provider. 10) No man can be a successful lover of a woman and at the same time be a lover of himself. Arrogant men do not make good lovers; this also includes the sexual realm. 11) No man can exercise his authority properly without honor, integrity, and virtue. If he has no honor, integrity or virtue, he will abuse his authority. Col 3:19 *"Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them."* 12) No woman can respond to authority without humility, integrity, and virtue. Col 3:18 *"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."* If she lacks these qualities she will be hypersensitive and react to authority instead of responding. 13) Beauty, health, and attractiveness are not necessarily permanent; the only permanent thing we have in this life is truth or doctrine. God is permanent, so relate your love life to God! Doctrine is permanent so relate your love life to doctrine! 14) Because the body is related to the soul only the right soul can satisfy the body of the woman or the man. The greatest sexual organ is the soul not any other part of the human anatomy. 15) Beauty is not the basis for recognition of the mate God has for you! Recognition signals are not related to the body but to the soul. 1Co 7:9 talks about the burning of the souls wanting to be with each other, not lust, when it says *"But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."* This is soul compatibility; it has nothing to do with libido. It refers to when two souls have climaxed because the two people are soul compatible, even though they are not yet able to make love and enter into extreme intimacy. No sex can compare with the sex between right man and right woman. Therefore, it is better to marry than to burn in personal love for right man or right woman **after** you have made the soul identification. 16) Recognition signals are revealed in the soul, so how are you ever going to find the right one if you're touching the body and not the soul? Many people today begin their relationship with the touching of the body and not the soul, when in reality the soul must be touched first. In other words men, she has a soul, she thinks, she has a viewpoint and opinion. In the right man right woman relationship that will turn you on as well. There's Pro 18:22; Pro 19:14; Gen 2:22; Ecc 9:9; 1Co 7:17, for those of you who doubt right man, right woman. 17) Identification is made in the soul, but there is also a physical attraction to you because God has designed it.

For men, your right woman may not be attractive to someone else, but she will be attractive to you, and the same is true for women. 18) The right woman is never shocked by the good or bad points of her right man and vice versa.

So much then for the introduction to a wedding in Gen 11. In Gen 11:29 *And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai;* The name Sarai is very meaningful; it means contentious, a fighter, domineering. We think of men many times like this, but here is a woman who was a fighter. Ten years younger than Abraham, Sarai (Sarah) was his half sister; they had the same father but different mothers according to Gen 20:12. She was contentious at times, a fighter, and even domineering. However, she was a ravishing and stunning woman because whenever she is described it takes two and sometimes three Hebrew words to describe her beauty. She had maximum beauty, the epitome of feminine magnificence after 65. Many probably would like to know how did she stay that way, and we'll actually take that up in view of the fact that she is famous as being a nag. Abram married a nagging woman, he was carried away by her great beauty, and she was one of the most beautiful women of the ancient world. Living at home under the authority of his father Terah, Abram apparently never had the full impact of her personality until after marriage. Many men have started with a terrible handicap by marrying someone who was totally attractive to him but whose soul turned out to be totally unattractive. However, Sarai was a woman whose beauty did not fade. She was a very petty woman and quite a nag; however we are going she made God's hall of fame as time goes on. She starts very poorly and ends very well.

Gen 11:29-30, *"And 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. And Sarai was barren; she had no child."*

The barrenness of Sarai is mentioned because it constitutes a test to determine if the circumstances of life are more real than the attributes of God. God has told Abram in Ur that out of him would come many great nations, and yet the first thing he finds is that Sarai is barren. So God says to Abraham in effect, What's more important to you, what I say, My word, My character; or your circumstances? That's what God is saying to you right now. One of the things that Abraham had to overcome through doctrine was that God is more real than the apparent adverse circumstances. God must become more real than adverse circumstances or you will be miserable all of your life. Always remember that the persistence in learning doctrine causes the believer to seek Him who is invisible.

Heb 11:6 *And without doctrine resident in the soul it is impossible to please Him, for he who is occupied with the God must be convinced by resident doctrine that He is, and that He becomes a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* This is how the invisible becomes more real than the visible. If God is not more real to you than people, through perception of doctrine, you will never discover the true meaning of life. Doctrine has to be real to you; in fact, it has to be more real to you than anything else in life or as Heb 10:35 says *"you will throw it away as trash."* When God becomes more real to you, and Christ becomes more real to you, and the power of the Holy Spirit becomes more real to you, all of this will be because Bible doctrine has become more real to you than anything else in life.

The more doctrine we **learn** the more **real** become the unseen blessings designed for us from God the Father from eternity past. The more doctrine we learn, the more real becomes the Lord Jesus Christ...we are able to see Him Who is invisible. The more doctrine we learn, the more real becomes the plan of God and the perfect essence of God behind that plan.

So in the first half of his life Abram must face a challenge. Is Bible doctrine more real to me than the circumstances of life, or are adverse circumstances more real than doctrine? It took Abraham about half of his life to work that out. Once he worked that out things worked out a lot better for his life.

All of us have problems in life that take time to work out; they can't be worked out instantaneously. God is not the little fairy god-mother who touches you with the wand and tells you that everything is going to be alright. Work out your problems through the daily intake of doctrine. Don't look for solutions; look to the source of solutions, doctrine resident in your soul. The environment for all solutions to the problems of life is bound up in doctrine resident in your soul.