

# GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



## GIG43-Our Destiny As Sojourners

In this podcast, we're going to talk about Abraham and his sojourns through the land of Canaan. The reason I want to touch on this is because I think there is more significance for us as believers today that we can derive from the story than maybe we have ever thought before. We know that Abraham was in the land of Canaan, and yet he was a stranger there. In some ways we have to recognize that we, like Abraham, are sojourners in our land of promise. This earth is to be our inheritance when God establishes His Kingdom on the earth, installing His Son, Messiah, as King. In the meantime, we find ourselves living in a land oppressed by the god of this world, living subject to the laws, governments, and influences that emanate from his dominion of darkness. As it was with the land of Canaan, the earth is occupied by a ruling government that must be removed before God's Kingdom can be established.

Sometimes we wonder, what is the story about? What is God trying to show us by having Abraham sojourn all those years; and not Abraham only, but Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and really all of Israel? What is the lesson that we are to learn of the fact that he had to sojourn in the land? Why could Abraham not just go into the land of Canaan and establish a city, establish his own government, whatever it was that God was looking for as the beginnings of His Kingdom? Well, that is what we want to talk about in this podcast.

First, I want to touch on two Scriptures that deal with this issue of the fact that the god of this world is different than the Lord who is establishing His Kingdom. We must recognize this reality, because without the recognition that this age is under the god of this world – and that is not the Lord, that is not Yeshua, that is not God Himself, but there's another ruling force here – it gets difficult to understand what it is that we are facing. In John 12, starting at verses 31-32, it says, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I," this is Yeshua, Jesus speaking, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." So here again, we see out of the mouth of the Lord that there is a ruler of this world that was not Him, and that that ruler must be cast out.

In Second Corinthians 4, Paul reiterates this concept starting at verses 3-4. It says, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Once again, we are given really clear explanation that at this time, there is a god of this world which is not God the Creator. There is a lord over this world which is not Christ the Lord. So we have to see the similarities then of what Abraham faced. Abraham was sent into the land of Canaan; but he was sent into a land that was already possessed by inhabitants, governmental rulers, kings, all of these things. And so because of that, God sent him into the land as a stranger, as a sojourner.

Let's look then at the story of Abraham and see if we can have clear for our understandings the illustration of what God wants us to really receive, that our lives on this earth at this time are to be. We are sent into this world not to possess it as it is, not to try to establish the Kingdom of God with the world as it is; but we are sent here instead as ambassadors. We are sent here as a colony of His

Kingdom. We are put here in the midst of what is already being ruled over by the prince of the power of the air, by the god of this world. And at some point, yes, the Kingdom comes; but until all of this is removed, God's Kingdom cannot be established.

Genesis, the 12th chapter, starting with verses 1-5, says, "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.' So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan."

Now I'm going to go to Genesis 17, starting at verses 5-8. God meets Abram again and speaks this: "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

So we see that they are to be sojourners, they are to be foreigners in this land that He is sending them to. They are to go through all of the land, they are to live in the land, which they did. They lived in tents and they picked up and moved from location to location. But He also is promising that, "I'm going to make nations of you, kings are going to come forth from you. So out of you will be established, at some point, the leadership, the government, the rulership over the land of your inheritance. But you're not going to inherit it at this point; you will remain a sojourner in the land, because I cannot create My Kingdom as a mixture of what My will is, what My government is, and what man has created in this country."

We're going to go now to Hebrews 11, because we want to pursue this imagery and the story all the way into the New Testament. Hebrews 11, starting at verses 8-9, says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise." So the story isn't limited to Abraham. Instead, we see that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all fellow heirs of the same promise and they have this same lifestyle. And we'll see more about that as we go on.

Going back to verse 10, it says "For he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." Now get this in our minds, because this is what Abraham is looking for. He's looking for a new city. He is looking for a city which is founded by God – not founded by the Canaanites, not founded by others, but instead founded by God – and whose architect, the planner, the one who draws up the plans for this great city, for this great nation, is God Himself. And more than being the founder and the architect, God also is the builder.

So once again, we see in this verse 10 that what God plans to do in establishing His Kingdom on this earth cannot be done by trying to build it on top of what already exists in the land of Canaan, or in the earth itself as we now exist in it. We see an earth filled with nations, filled with cities, filled with

countries, filled with borders, filled with governments and societies and cultures. And God cannot build upon that foundation the Kingdom that He has planned. At some point, all of this must be removed. And it's this illustration that He gives to us in our day and age through Abraham. He says, "You're going to go into the land which you will possess; but as you go into it, you'll be a stranger, a foreigner. You're going to sojourn in the land, because when I build My Kingdom, it will have My foundation. I will be the architect and the builder." This was what Abraham was looking for. It says he was looking for the city whose foundation, architect, and builder is God.

Verse 11 likewise is extremely important for us, "By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him" – God – "faithful who had promised." Now this makes a distinction between Sarah and Hagar; because Hagar got pregnant by Abraham, yes, and Ishmael was the son of Abraham, but not the son of a promise. Sarah had a promise and had to believe the promise, just as Abraham had a promise and had to live by faith, believing the promise. So in this verse 11, we have something very distinct; because we know that Abraham did have as a son Ishmael, and he had that son before he had Isaac.

Some people claim that Ishmael was the son of promise. No, he wasn't the son of promise, because his mother did not have him by promise. Sarah had a promise of a son, and it was impossible for her to bear a son. And because of her faith in God, she was able to get pregnant and to bear a son. Therefore, Isaac was a son of promise to both Abraham, for whom it was impossible at his age to have a child, and Sarah, for whom it was impossible at her age to have a child. Isaac was the son of promise. He was the son of promise to Abraham and to Sarah. Ishmael was not. And that's not to say that God didn't save his life and bring promises over him; but he was not Abraham's son of promise.

We'll go to verses 12-16. "Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

Now we should have clear in our hearts the illustration that God has given to us in this day and age through Abraham. God has promised us a Kingdom. He has said that we will live with Him in His Kingdom. We will rule and reign with Christ in His Kingdom. And we know that Kingdom is the Kingdom of heaven, but it is brought to earth and manifests on this earth. And He has put us on this earth as He put Abraham into the land of Canaan and had him on this earth, looking for a city that had not yet been built. So there again, we must recognize that God has us on this earth, and our destiny is being on this earth as ambassadors, as a colony.

Now, why this is so important right now in my mind is because we are in a time, and have just come through a time, of elections and politics. And I think a lot of people are really feeling as though they are trying to somehow reform this world into the Kingdom of God. I know there's a terminology about a Christian nation that has existed for a long time; and there is no such thing as a Christian nation as it stands now. There will be a nation under Christ. There is a nation that has been committed to God. We know America was committed to God. You have to realize many of those who established America committed and dedicated it to God. They weren't necessarily Christian; many were deists. And the

language we have is "One nation under God," not "One nation under Jesus." This is not a Christian nation, has not been a Christian nation. I don't believe there's such a thing as a Christian nation on this earth at this time, at least that I'm aware of. Because this world is still, as we read in those first two Scriptures, under the god of this age, under the ruler of darkness. And so all of that has to be removed. And that is what Yeshua said in John. Jesus said in John 12:31, I'll read it again, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out." So the ruler of this world must be cast out if there is going to be a successful ability for God to bring the Kingdom of God out of the heavenly realm and to plant it into this earth. All of that, that exists today, must be swept away at some point. And there are other Scriptures, like Matthew 13, which give us another clear picture of how that will work.

So we want to have this idea, and it's necessary for us as believers today. We're not going to get into politics and vote in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God will never be voted into America or any other country. The Kingdom of God is not going to be a mixture of what exists today, even America. We may love America. We serve America. It's the nation that many of us exist in now; and there are other nations and people from those nations that love those nations. But those nations, likewise, they are not going to be the Kingdom of God, because the Kingdom of God is not going to be built upon any foundation that we observe around us in today's world. It's only going to be built on a foundation that God Himself lays afresh in the earth; and then it's going to be built according to His plan as the architect of that Kingdom, and it will be He Himself that builds that Kingdom on the earth. We must see this.

Do we pray for our governments and our countries? Of course we do. Are we to be submissive to those governments? Of course we are. Are we to love those nations and the people of those nations? Yes, God so loved the world as it was that He sent His only begotten Son. He loved, it was out of the deep love. And it's out of the deep love that we must have for the world, for the nations, for the peoples of the nations, that we are on this earth as His ambassadors crying, "Come to God. Be restored to God through Christ," and see this picture change until His Kingdom comes to this earth. So it's not that we aren't involved. It's not that we don't participate. But I don't want us to be confused to think that whatever we do in working with culture, in working with government, in working with things as they are on this earth, that we will ever morph the existing governments and nations and countries and cities into God's city.

Abraham was looking for a city which did not yet exist, but he knew would exist because God promised him that it would be, and that it would happen. And we likewise have a promise from God that we are going to dwell with Him in His Kingdom. We have the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures that talk about the establishment of the Messiah upon the throne of David sitting on this earth, reestablishing it. This is one of the reasons why we see great tribulation. Do not be afraid of the tribulation. It's a necessary reality, because what exists around us must be removed, and God's Kingdom then must be established. And believe me, the prince of the power of the air, the ruler, the god of this age, is not going to give up easily. His determination is that his kingdom is going to continue on this earth and that he is never going to give it up, and it is never going to be removed, and it is never going to be replaced by God's Kingdom. That is his set of heart and his determination. Satan is dedicated to his kingdom continuing to be the dominant force on this earth as the world of darkness that will prevail. And God is saying, "That's not going to work. It is not going to happen. It will be replaced." And we are here. Our destiny, like Abraham, is to be ambassadors of God's age, of God's Kingdom. It's to be that we are colonists. We're the first ones to come here, to begin to proclaim by our very presence here as believers in Yeshua as Mashiah, as believers in the Father and His reign on this earth, that He is the Lord. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; and He will establish, as He has proclaimed, His Kingdom on this earth. We are here as that voice.

That is what Abraham did. Abraham was a testimony. He didn't just walk throughout the land and live silently. He was recognized in the land. He was seen as a prince. He was respected because he was a witness and a testimony to God, and he was a witness and a testimony to the coming Kingdom of God. We see it in Genesis 14. We know that Lot was taken captive, and Abraham went after Lot and defeated the kings. And as he was returning, he was met by Melchizedek, the King of Salem, or the King of Peace; the King of Jerusalem, if you will. So we're in Genesis 14, starting at verses 18-20, and it says, "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' He gave him a tenth of all." So Abraham tithed, we know, to Melchizedek.

Verse 21, "The King of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.' Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.''" My, this is so awesome, the testimony of Abraham saying, "Look, nothing of this world, nothing of you, King of Sodom, nothing of Sodom, nothing of any of the governments, the rulers, the kings that live in this land, are going to be able to say, 'We made Abraham rich.'" Abraham said, "I will be rich because of the blessings of God in my life, and I will only take that and receive what it is that God is giving to me." Abraham didn't just wander in the land; he was a testimony to the kings, to the peoples of the land.

One other illustration we find is in Genesis 23 at verses 2-6, after Sarah's passing. "Sarah died in Kiriath-Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. Then Abraham rose from before his dead, and spoke with the sons of Heth, saying, 'I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a burial site among you that I may bury my dead out of my sight.' The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, 'Hear us, my lord, you are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our graves; none of us will refuse you his grave for burying your dead.'"

We've got to grasp the impact of this. The people of the land saw Abraham as this prince of God. They saw him as the authority of God that was living and dwelling in their midst, even though as Abraham proclaims in verse 4, "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you." So the respect they had, the testimony that Abraham had been to the peoples of the land – they respected him, they saw him as a prince. And they said, "Listen, any one of our graves, we will give you. No one will refuse you, Abraham." Everyone respected him that mightily. And I think we as believers, being ambassadors, being witnesses, being a testimony to God, being a testimony to the Kingdom of God and to the Messiah in this earth, we are to gain that same respect. And the way that we gain that respect is by walking in the righteousness of God, walking in the ways of God; not mixing ourselves with the cultures, with the lands, with the peoples in a wrong way, but keeping ourselves separated under God, following His righteousness, following His laws, following His commandments in our lives so that people have a testimony.

Remember that Abraham was the only testimony at the time that there was one God; everyone served multiple gods. And so people were watching him, looking, saying, "Who is this guy? And what does he represent in our midst?" He represented the God of creation, the only true and certain God that ruled over all of the earth. He was the witness and the testimony to God Himself, and he lived in such a way that he gave that testimony to those who were around him. This is what the Lord is looking for, for us. He is not looking for us to mix ourselves with this government and with that culture and with these

people in that nation, and become so much a part of them that you can't identify us from them. We are to be identifiable. We are to be clearly a colony of God's Kingdom, dwelling wherever it is on this earth that we dwell. We are the representatives of the heavenly Kingdom that has been proclaimed and is coming to exist and to dwell on this earth. Lord give us that testimony. Help us to walk as Abraham walked. Help us to follow this illustration and example that we see from our father, Abraham.

As we go in through the Scriptures, we see that not only with Abraham, but all of his seed. Jacob lived as a sojourner and confessed that to Pharaoh, saying, "All these years of my sojourn." Then we get down even into Chronicles, and this is a good one because David in First Chronicles 29, in his prayer to God, states that he himself and all Israel are sojourners in the earth. Now, this is interesting because David is talking from the place of having to setup his kingdom in Jerusalem. But he says in verse 15, "For we are sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow." And so he is talking about the fact that still in the minds of all Israel, in the mind of David himself, even though he was King, he was still seeing himself following that pattern of Abraham and being in the land a sojourner. What a beautiful picture that is.

We see again, David in Psalm 105, he talks about the fact that they are sojourners in their generations on the earth. We see that not only did the people consider themselves sojourners – not only Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David – but these are interesting Scriptures: God Himself sees Himself right now as a sojourner on earth. Why? Because His Kingdom has not yet been established in this place. So He, likewise, is a sojourner. Leviticus. 25:23 says, "The land, moreover," and this is God speaking to Moses, "The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me." So again, God is saying, "I'm sojourning in the land." God Himself is here as a sojourner, as a witness to His Kingdom until His Kingdom comes. David again in Psalm 39 says, verse 12, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner like all of my fathers." So again, the Lord Himself, David, all of these people saw themselves as sojourners.

Then we come into the New Testament, and we see that Peter makes the same proclamation and confirms that even after the Ascension of Messiah and the Resurrection, we are still aliens and strangers in this world until the Kingdom of heaven is fully colonized to this earth. First Peter 2:9-10 says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Verses 11-12, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." So Peter is saying, "Listen, Christ has come; He's gone to the cross; He's been resurrected and ascended; and you and I are still here as aliens and strangers. Therefore, we are to abstain from fleshly lusts. We are not to be mingled with this age, and the things of this age." He says, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that we have a testimony to them, that they may proclaim our good deeds, see our good deeds and observe them, and glorify God in the day of visitation." So we again find ourselves living this pattern of Abraham, and we are to have this lifestyle before our hearts as something that's an illustration for us in the way to live. We truly are sons of Abraham.

We see that Messiah King is not from this world; we know this through the Scriptures. And He does not remodel His Kingdom from the governments and nations of this earth. He removes them and replaces them with His Kingdom, which has heavenly foundations, whose architect and builder is God, just as Abraham proclaimed he was seeking in his sojourns that same city.

John 17 – and I want to emphasize these Scriptures again from Christ, declaring that He and His Kingdom are not of this age. John 17, verses 14-18, "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As you sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." Our destiny is that we have been sent into the world by the Messiah while He is garnering and establishing His Kingdom in heaven, preparing to bring it to earth. We are His colony here; we are His ambassadors. We are His witnesses here in this earth, waiting until He manifests Himself and brings forth His Kingdom in all the earth.

John 18:33-37 says, "Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?' Pilate answered, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me; what have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.'" It doesn't come from here. It has no roots in this world.

"Therefore Pilate said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'" When Yeshua first came into the world, He came to testify of the truth that He was Messiah and that He would return and establish His Kingdom in this world. Then He went into a far place, as the parable says, to gain that Kingdom and bring it back. And how did He teach us to pray? "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." And we pray that, and we believe that, and we witness to it on a daily basis.

Another beautiful testimony of this is Job. In Job 19 he testifies of these same things. Verses 25-27 say, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!" What a beautiful, beautiful few verses these are! Job knew his Redeemer lived; and he knew that he would be resurrected, and in his flesh he would stand on this earth and see his Redeemer here in the earth once again. And it's a beautiful thing, because the book of Revelation then confirms this wonderful testimony of Job.

In Revelation 11:15, it says, "Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.'" At some point, as Christ prophesied that the god of this world would be cast out, that judgment would come on this world to him and to those who are with him, he will be cast out and he will be displaced, replaced by Christ and His Kingdom.

Lord bless this podcast to our hearts. I want to remind us of just a few key points. Like Abraham, we are sojourners in the nations which, as sons of God, we will possess in the Kingdom. It can be confusing and frustrating to submit to the present inhabitants, governments, and cultures that currently have the rule and authority over this world. It is very difficult, especially in the days we are now living. We have to

remember that Abraham lived and proclaimed his monotheistic faith to the people, rulers, and cultures he was forced to live among, never wavering on the promise that the land belonged to him and his descendants. So God help us with that. We too must have the same faith. The last point I'd make is, our vision and purpose must be to establish the city whose foundation is Christ and whose architect and builder is God. I bless this teaching to your hearts. May it be alive, and may it help us to recognize our destiny as sojourners in this world. Amen.