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# VIDEO LECTURE MODULE: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

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## LECTURE 7: PATRIARCHS II

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**The John Knox Institute**  
of Higher Education

*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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# *Module*

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## **BIBLICAL THEOLOGY**

**30 LECTURES**

***ROBERT D. McCURLEY M.Div.***

**21 CHAPTERS OLD TESTAMENT · 9 CHAPTERS NEW TESTAMENT**

### *Old Testament Lectures:*

1. Introduction
2. Creation
3. Fall
4. Noah
5. Abraham
6. Patriarchs I
7. **Patriarchs II**
8. Exodus
9. Sinai
10. Tabernacle
11. Sacrifices
12. Priesthood
13. Inheritance
14. David
15. Psalms
16. Solomon
17. Temple
18. Kingdom
19. Prophets
20. Exile
21. Restoration

### *New Testament Lectures:*

22. Incarnation
23. Atonement
24. Resurrection
25. Pentecost
26. Church
27. Union
28. Application
29. Mission
30. Glory

## *Lecture 7*

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# **PATRIARCHS II**

*Lecture Theme:*

God provides revelations of his glory in Christ in unexpected places—outside the lineage of Abraham.

*Text:*

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

### **TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 7**

When you're reading a story in school, you will often discern the main plot lines and the development of the narrative, which will normally involve the main characters. But, you also find in many stories a supporting cast of other characters, interspersed throughout, who play an equally important role in the author's mind. This is also true in God's true and inspired account of the history of redemption in the Bible. Thus far, we have focused on the main themes and individuals in the line leading to the Messiah. But, God has also included other figures, whom He chose to use to reveal Himself and His salvation.

So, who is Melchizedek, for example? And why does he seem to appear and then disappear so quickly in Genesis? What relevance does he have to God's grand purpose and redemption? What about the several appearances of the angel of the Lord? Who exactly is this, and why is the answer important for our theological understanding of the Bible? And lastly, why does God include the book of Job, comprised of 42 chapters, and what role does Job play in the theology of the Bible? Thus far, we have focused on the main line from Shem to Abraham to the 12 sons of Jacob; but in this lecture, we will now turn to consider three important figures who fall outside the direct lineage of Abraham, all found during the same period of the Patriarchs. All three proved to be important for our understanding of the theology of the Bible, and they assist us in tracing the development of themes within the Bible as a whole.

So first of all, Melchizedek. Now you may be wondering to yourself, why should we consider Melchizedek important enough to include in this brief survey of the period of the Patriarchs, especially when he is only mentioned briefly in three verses in Genesis 14? Well, there are at least two reasons. First of all, Melchizedek is referred to in Psalm 110, and you need to know this. Psalm 110 is the Old Testament chapter that is most frequently quoted in the New Testament, quoted by Christ in the Gospels, the book of Acts, and throughout the

epistles. So, it's important for that reason. Secondly, God chose to use Melchizedek to reveal important things to us about the Lord Jesus Christ. As we see, for example in the book of Hebrews, Melchizedek shows us the glory of the Savior and helps us to understand how the Bible as a whole is tied together, both of which are important for this course.

Melchizedek was a real historical figure about which we know only a little. Some godly men believe that he was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, but the words "after the order of Melchizedek" in Psalm 110, and the words "made like unto the Son of God," in Hebrews 7:3, over against, for example, language like "the Son of God is Melchizedek," these things persuade me that he was not Christ Himself, among other reasons. Melchizedek means literally, "King of righteousness," and Salem means "peace." The name Salem is part of the word Jerusalem, and though we cannot say for certain, it is possible that he was king of Jerusalem at the time, but there is more. We are told he is a priest, a priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. We're told that Abraham was blessed by him, and that Abraham paid tithes to him.

Now, it should not surprise us that this soon after the Tower of Babel there would still be others who are following the true God, even though they're surrounded by many unbelieving idolaters. David, writing in Psalm 110, speaks of the Lord, God the Father, saying to His Lord, Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, "Sit thou at my right hand" (verse 1). Now, the New Testament uses this phrase countless times in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Psalm confirms that Messiah will be both a king and a priest, unlike for example, the sons of Levi, who were only priests, or the sons of David, who were only kings. He will be a priest and a king, a priest after the superior order of Melchizedek, a better High Priest than Aaron and his descendants.

So, Melchizedek is a figure greater than Abraham, greater than Aaron, and greater than David, pointing forward to the superiority of Christ's kingship and priesthood. The book of Hebrews picks up this theme and expounds it at length, demonstrating the superior glory of Jesus as the Mediator, God's ultimate Priest-King. You should read carefully Hebrews chapter seven, because God says that Melchizedek, this vague figure, points forward to what would be fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. It notes that there is no mention of the genealogy of Melchizedek in Genesis, and it draws a comparison saying that "Christ is the eternal priest who lives forever." His ultimate ancestry derives from the God of eternity.

We will learn much more about Christ's Kingship and Priesthood later in our studies of the Old Testament. But we already see in Genesis 14 early on, and David saw in Psalm 110, that the One we are looking for and waiting for is not only a kingly ruler, but also a priest. We have a Savior Who is the promised King, Who subdues us to Himself and conquers His and all our enemies, but He is also a promised Priest. He will be the Supreme High Priest, Who offers up Himself as the supreme Sacrifice to save His people. Both of these, King and Priest, are joined in one Person. Those three obscure verses in Genesis 14 must be tied to the whole of Scripture. Melchizedek shows us that all that we need for our salvation is supplied in Jesus only.

Secondly, we need to consider the angel of the Lord. This is the second figure that is important for us in our study of the Patriarchs under this lecture. But in considering the angel of the Lord, we must first understand the broader concept of theophanies, which I will explain to you. During the period of the Patriarchs, we find an important way in which God reveals Himself, one we need to discuss in order to understand the theology of the Old Testament. Hebrews 1:1 says that, "God who at sundry times and diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," and then it goes on to speak about the Lord Jesus Christ. But it [refers] to these diverse manners, that God revealed Himself in during the days of the fathers. One of those diverse ways was through what we call Old Testament theophanies.

Now, the word theophany just means "an appearance of God"; theophanies refer to "appearances of God in visible form." A related word and concept is the word "Christophany," which refers to the appearance of God the Son, or Christ, in visible form. And I believe that we should view these two things, theophanies and Christophanies, as basically two words pointing to the same thing. I think that largely because it is the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, Who is the eternal Word that reveals God. Remember John 1 verse 18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him." And remember that the Bible describes Christ as the One Who is the image of the invisible God in Colossians 1:15, and elsewhere, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," in Hebrews 1:3.

So, our knowledge of God is tied to His revelation of Himself, in the person and work of Christ. This is the position taken by most reformed theologians like Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards, and Bavinck and others. So, these revelations of God that we call theophanies are any temporary physical manifestations of God to men. For example, when God uses a human body or a human voice, and other forms, these would be theophanies. Now, they should not be confused with things like dreams and visions, which are impressed on the mind, but not to the eye. Also, and this is important, you should not confuse theophanies with the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament, which is a true and permanent union, in which the Son of God assumes to Himself a human nature. There are several examples of the Lord appearing with human form and behavior, but to better understand the role of theophanies, let's consider the most important Old Testament theophany: the angel of the Lord.

Understanding the broader concept of theophanies helps us, when turning to this specific example of a theophany in the angel of the Lord. Now we read about the appearance of the angel of the Lord in several places, and I'll mention a few. For example, he appeared to Hagar in Genesis 16. The angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham in Genesis 22 and Jacob in Genesis 32. He appears to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:2 and, later on, to men like Gideon in Judges chapter six. The word "angel" means "messenger," and so "angel of the Lord" could also be translated "messenger of the Lord." In other words, the angel of the Lord is not to be confused with the created angels that fill the heavens. Elsewhere, at the end of the Old Testament in Malachi 3:1, the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as the Messenger Angel of the Covenant.

So, the Angel of the Lord is the uncreated God Himself appearing in visible form. We know this for several reasons. First of all, He has the names of God. In Genesis sixteen, Jehovah is said to have spoken to Hagar, and she addressed him as God. Again, in Exodus 3 at the burning bush, the Angel of the Lord appeared and spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, calling Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and giving His name, "I Am That I Am." And so, we know that the angel of the Lord is God, appearing in visible form, first of all because He has the names of God. Secondly, He has the attributes of God. So, you think of the account of Hagar. There we see that the Angel of the Lord is Omniscient; He is all knowing, and we could multiply other examples. Thirdly, He receives the worship of God. The Angel of the Lord Receives Divine worship. This is seen in Exodus three.

But notice especially Joshua 5:14, and then notice the reaction in Judges 6 at the time of Gideon. The angel of the Lord is given divine worship, unlike the angels. You'll remember in Revelation chapters 18 and 19 when John attempts to give worship to the angels, they forbid him. And the angels say that they are like him, servants of the Most High. But that's not the case with the Angel of the Lord; He gladly receives this worship. So, the question is, what are the purposes of theophanies, and what is the purpose therefore, of the Angel of the Lord? This is helping us in our theological understanding of the theology of the Bible. Let me give you five very brief purposes of theophanies, like the Angel of the Lord.

The first one should be obvious. The first purpose is revelation. So, it was a mode of special revelation in the Old Testament. God was showing His people things about Himself. He wanted to disclose some aspect of God's character and will. Secondly, another purpose has to do with salvation. It was part of God's communication, these theophanies. The Angel of the Lord was part of God's communication of the good news of salvation to sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ. Each appearance has its own function within this grand scheme. Well, this already connects the importance of the Angel of the Lord to our whole series of lectures. It's about revelation, showing us who God is and what His will is, and it's about redemption or salvation, the story of God's plan of Gospel grace to His people. A third purpose is confirmation. Theophanies were usually personal appearances to key individuals in the unfolding of God's covenant of salvation, in order to confirm His Word to them.

A fourth purpose is consolation. It was through the Angel of the Lord that God granted comfort, along with this confirmation to His people. But then fifthly, "Angel of the Lord" and other theophanies have the purpose of building anticipation. The main purpose was anticipation of the Son of God coming in the flesh. In other words, it prepared the Church of the Old Testament for Christ's coming, Who would be Emmanuel, God with us. And so, we see that the Angel of the Lord is also important for us in our understanding of the theology of the Bible. Lastly, we need to consider Job. He is the last figure who we'll discuss in this lecture. And to be honest, he is one of my personal favorites from the period of the Patriarchs. The last figure we'll consider is Job, whom we read about in the book that bears his name.

The New Testament [refers] to him. For example, in James chapter 5:11, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.” This inspired story provides us with another window into the revelation of God during the period of the Patriarchs. Now, some are tempted to pass over the book of Job or to treat it very briefly under the consideration of the Old Testament poetic books. But it’s a large book, it consists of 42 chapters. We cannot, I believe, overestimate its significance. Well, why? Because as we shall see, it clearly shows us the corresponding relationship between what transpires on earth, and simultaneously the events that are unfolding in the heavens. Earth is the stage, if you will, on which heavenly transactions are carried out, displaying God’s glory and His cosmic purposes through His people, and through His church.

Seeing this helps us understand many other different passages. In the New Testament, for example, we’re told that the angels rejoice over the repentance of a single sinner. Think about that for a moment. What’s happening on earth is corresponding to what’s happening in heaven. God in Heaven is choosing, and then He is coming to regenerate and to give faith to individual sinners on the earth. And it could be that there’s a very small obscure village in a very remote place, and just a small band of believers. There the congregation is listening to the preaching of God’s Word and the Gospel. And God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, on that occasion, saves a sinner in that small congregation in a very remote place.

The Bible says that at that moment, there are thunderous shouts of joy that fill the heavens from these powerful angelic beings, angels, who are rejoicing over the repentance of a single sinner. So, understanding this theological point in the book of Job helps us with other portions of Scripture. We’re told that Job, in Job chapter 1:1, was like this: “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” He was also wealthy. We’re told, “This man was the greatest of all the men of the east” (verse 3). I want to highlight three theological themes that are important for us in our study of Job. First of all, God’s providence in this world. Providence is God’s work of preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.

God controls every detail of the universe, every molecule. John Calvin, the great reformer, writes, “If you pay attention, you will easily perceive that ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries. The highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it.” God provides an inspired commentary within the book of Job. In other words, He tells us not only what’s happening, but why it’s happening. He tells us at the beginning that Job was a God-fearing, upright man, and then God defends that view again at the end of the book. Contrary to the statements of Job’s three friends, not all suffering is God’s chastisement for personal sin. We learned that Job suffered because he was godly and because God chose to display His own glory through Job. And you’ll note that Job has this God-centered perspective. He doesn’t focus on the calamities, and they were huge calamities, that were immediately before his eyes. He looked past them, and he traced them to the ultimate hand of God.

We read in chapter one, the end of verse 20 and following, Job “fell down and worshiped and said, ‘Naked came out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.’ In all of this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” Augustine, the early church theologian, notes, “Job does not say the Lord gave and the devil took away, but the Lord hath taken away.” Now, think of how this helps us when we fast forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows. He was not merely subjected to the hands of Judas, and the high priests, and Pilot, and Herod and the soldiers, or to the devil himself. God was orchestrating all the events in Christ’s suffering to secure the salvation of His people.

The apostles talk about this in Acts four, verses 27 and 28. “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” The second theological point is this: the believer’s life and story fits within God’s broader and bigger story. This is perhaps the most profound theological point of the book of Job. What is going on in this account? We discover that the big story is not found in this world at all. The book pulls back the curtain, and tells us of the transactions that are happening in the heavens. In order to make sense of these events on earth, you must find the answer before the presence of God. In chapter 1:8, God takes the initiative and boasts to Satan of Job as His trophy of grace.

God is setting Job on display before the unseen angels. Well, Satan objects to this, and he tells God that Job only loves the gifts that God gives, but doesn’t love the Giver, God Himself. But God triumphs over Satan’s

accusations, by bringing glory to His name, through demonstrating that Job esteems God above all else. His suffering shows that God is paramount to His people. You notice how in the early chapters, the events unfold, and the tension is building until we reach a crisis point in chapter two verse nine. Where we read “Then said his wife,” Job’s wife, “unto him, ‘Dost thou still retain thine integrity, curse God and die.’” No doubt Satan smiled at this point, and you can only imagine all of the eyes of myriads of angels glued on Job, holding their breath. What would happen?

Well then comes the answer in the very next words, in verse 10. Job says, “‘What? shall we not receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all of this, did not Job sin with his lips.” Well, I can imagine hundreds of thousands of angels cracking open the heavens with shouts, “Worthy the is the Lord of Hosts, worthy is God Almighty.” We’re told that Satan flees from God’s presence, defeated. Satan aims to demolish the believer’s love and delight in God. Our chief end is not our own comfort or prosperity. It is to glorify Him, and we do that even in suffering. We see the big picture in Job, but Job did not see what we do. He couldn’t see the things that are described for us in the heavens, in Job one and two. Remember, the world does not revolve around us. History is not all about us, but it is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, the unfolding of the display of His glory.

The last theological theme that we see in Job is Christ-centeredness, and we notice this in a few ways. Job sought fellowship with Christ. He says that he esteemed God’s Word more than his necessary food. Even when the Lord seemed far away to him, he affirmed in chapter 23, “But He,” that is God, “knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” We also see that he looked by faith, beyond this life, to Christ in glory. In Chapter nineteen, in verses 25 to 27, Job says, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

We also find themes unique to Job, and we don’t have time to cover them here, but they’re traced out throughout the Bible. Let me provide you one brief example. We first find the language, “Darkness and the shadow of death,” in the book of Job. Indeed, it’s found 10 times in that book. This language is carried into the Psalms. You see it, for example, in Psalm 23:4, Psalm 44, Psalm 107 and so on. And you see the language carried throughout the prophets, in Isaiah, and in Jeremiah and in Amos. But it resurfaces again in the New Testament in beautiful ways, after the coming of Christ. In Matthew 4:16, we read, “The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” Or at the end of Luke chapter one, “The dayspring visited us,” and then it goes on, “to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

Well, to understand this New Testament language, you must know the origin of that language in the Old Testament, just as the early Jewish Christians would have surely recognized. We need to know the Bible, and the details of the Bible, in order to put the pieces together. Job teaches us that the life of the individual believer in all ages must be connected to God’s grand plan to display His glory through His people before the whole of the heavens and the earth. This culminates on the last day, when God will reveal the masterpiece of His redeemed and perfected people.

Well, we have considered three important figures outside the lineage of Abraham, whom God chose to use for the revelation of Himself. In the next lecture, we will return to the line of Abraham, and specifically to the era of Moses, beginning with one of the greatest events in the Old Testament: the Exodus from Egypt.