

Genealogies from Adam to Abraham*

NAME	AGE AT BIRTH OF SON	YEARS LIVED AFTER BIRTH OF SON	TOTAL YEARS	GENESIS REFERENCE
Adam	130	800	930	5:3-5
Seth	105	807	912	5:6-8
Enosh	90	815	905	5:9-11
Kenan	70	840	910	5:12-14
Mahalalel	65	830	895	5:15-17
Jared	162	800	962	5:18-20
Enoch	65	300	365	5:21-24
Methuselah	187	782	969	5:25-27
Lamech	182	595	777	5:28-31
Noah 600 at beginning of flood			950	7:11; 9:29
Shem 98 at end of flood			600	11:10-11
Shem	100	500	600	11:10-11
Arpachshad	35	403	438	11:12-13
Shelah	30	403	433	11:14-15
Eber	34	430	464	11:16-17
Peleg	30	209	239	11:18-19
Reu	32	207	239	11:20-21
Serug	30	200	230	11:22-23
Nahor	29	119	148	11:24-25
Terah†	70	135	205	11:26-32

*The author does not mean to imply that these genealogies represent consecutive life spans.

†Terah was the father of Abraham, Nahor, and Haran.

Chronology of the Patriarchs

EVENT	AGE	DATE	GENESIS REFERENCE	AGE	DATE	GENESIS REFERENCE
ABRAHAM 2166-1991				<i>Job - was probably a contemporary of Abraham</i>		
Entrance into Canaan	75	2091	12:4			
Ishmael born	86	2080	16:3			
Isaac born	100	2066	21:5	ISAAC 2066-1886		
Mt. Moriah (?)	115	2051	22	15	2051	22
Isaac marries Rebekah	140	2026	25:20	40	2026	25:20
JACOB 2006-1859				60	2006	25:26
Abraham dies	15	1991	25:7	75	1991	25:7
Jacob goes to Haran	77	1929	28:5	137	1929	28:5
Jacob marries Leah and Rachel	84	1922	29:21-30 30:1, 22-26	144	1922	29:21-30 30:1, 22-26
Joseph born	91	1915	30:25 31:38-41	JOSEPH 1915-1805		
Jacob & family move to Canaan	97	1909	31:17-21	6	1909	31:17-21
Joseph sold into slavery	108	1898	37:2-36	17	1898	37:2-36
Isaac dies	120	1886	35:28-29	29	1886	35:28-29
Joseph given high position	121	1885	41:39-40	30	1885	41:39-40
Jacob and family move to Egypt	130	1876	45:6 47:9	39	1876	45:6 47:9
Jacob dies	147	1859	47:28	56	1859	47:28
Joseph dies	—	—	—	110	1805	50:26

Note: This particular chronological framework with the early dates is presented here as representative of the clear reading of the Masoretic text. Any of the other frameworks (see p. 25) can be derived from this.

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NOAH



HAM



SHEM



JAPHETH



ASSHUR



ARPHAXAD



ARAM



LUD



ELAM



SALAH



EBER



PELEG



JOKTAN



REU



SERUG



NAHOR

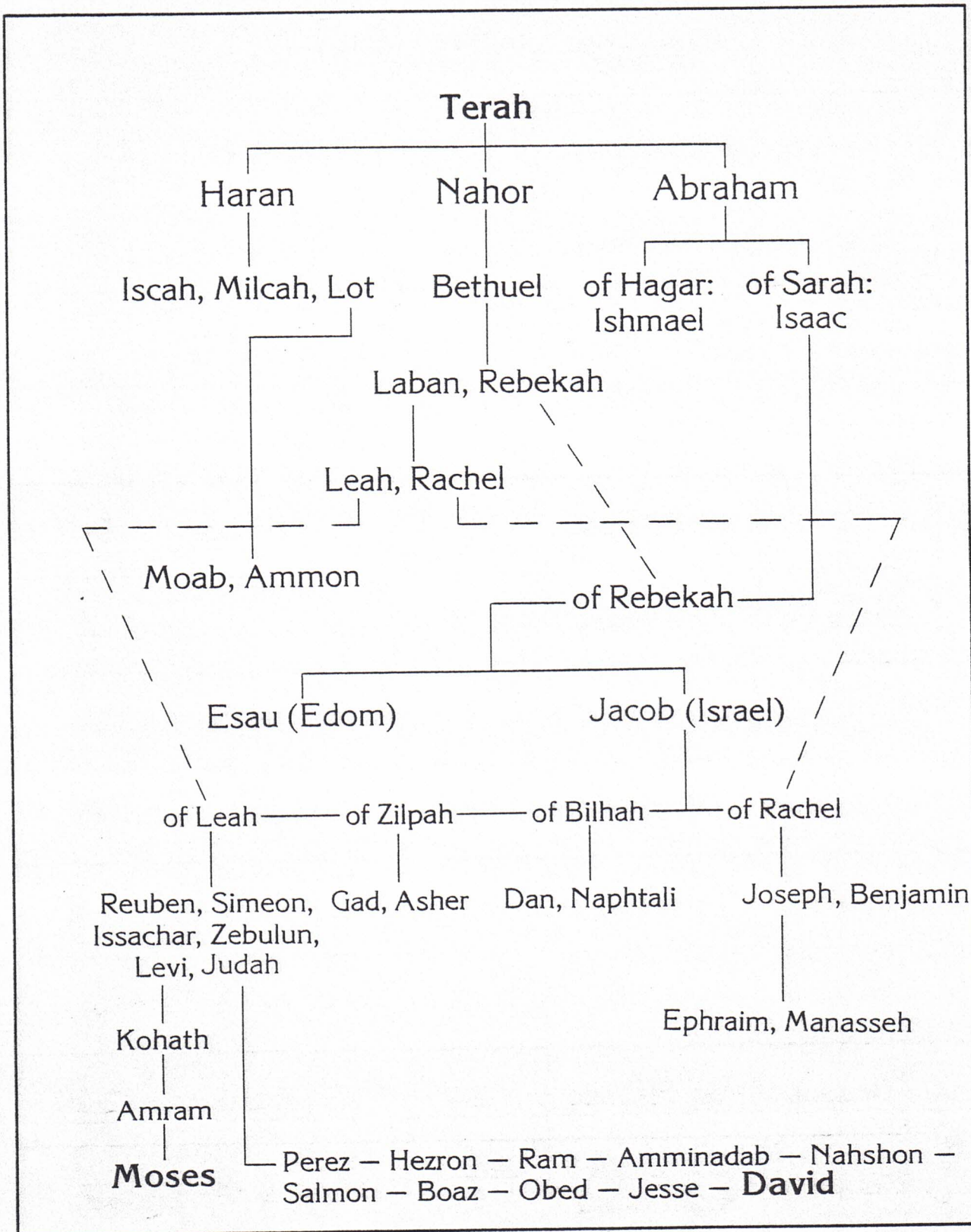


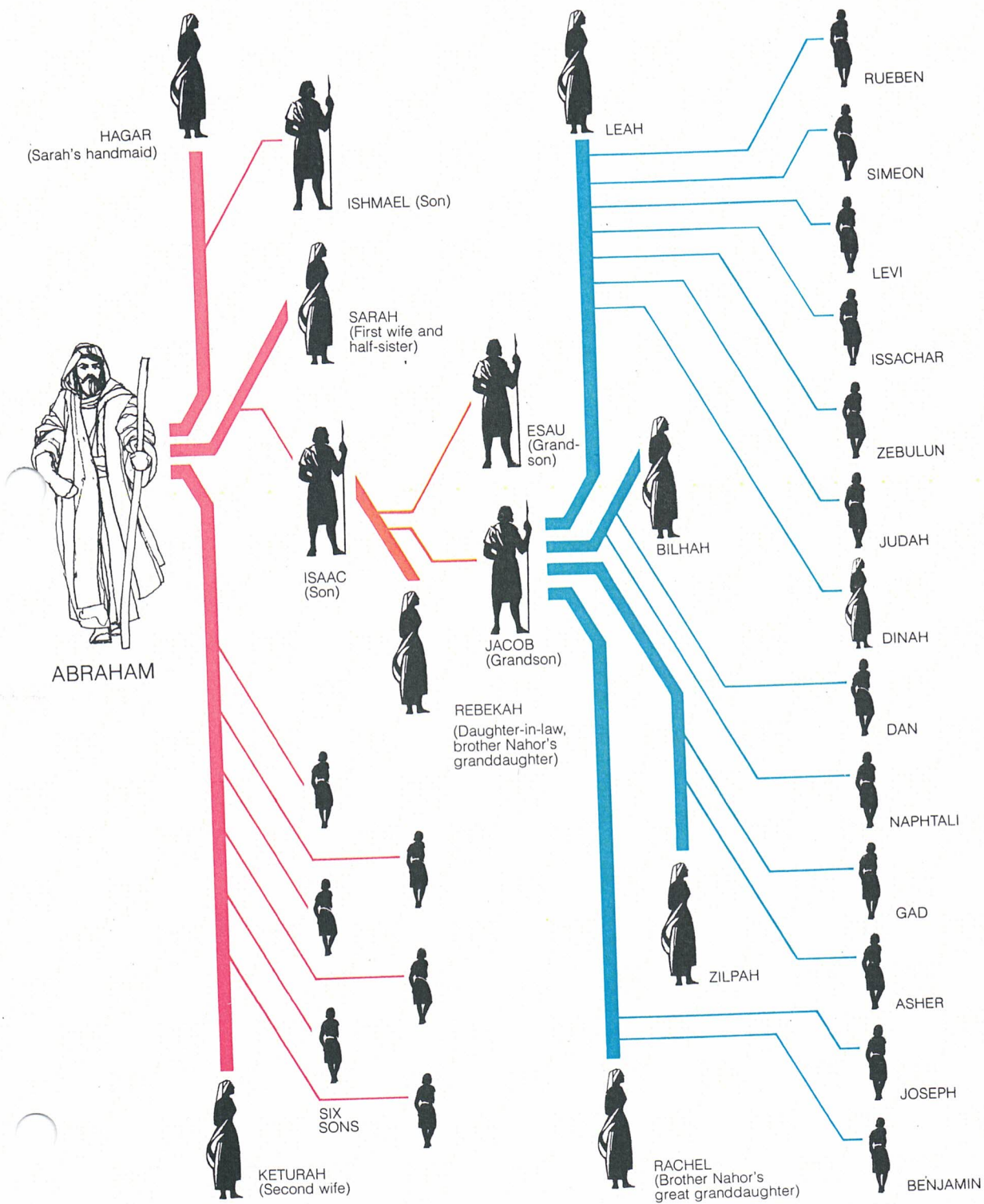
TERAH



ABRAHAM

Patriarchal Family Tree





Abraham



NOAH (Genesis 6-9)
 When God had decided to destroy the world with a flood as a punishment for humanity's sin, God chose Noah and his family to save them from the flood. Noah built an ark to save the animals.

NOAH		CHRIST
Noah was a kind of "second Adam" since all living human beings come from him (Genesis 8:15-9:17).	Christ is called "the second man" (Adam) since eternal life can only be found in him (1 Corinthians 15:47).	
Noah's ark provided refuge for all kinds of animals (Genesis 6:19-7:5).	Christ's body (the church) provides salvation for all, both Jew and Gentile (Romans 11:11; Galatians 3:28-29).	
Human evil had reached an unacceptable high. So God decided to undo his creation with a flood (Genesis 6:6-7).	When the time is right for God, he will undo his creation by fire (2 Peter 3:12-13) to re-create it (Revelation 21:1).	
Noah's ark was delivered from the flood waters (Genesis 7:7).	Christ's body (the church) was delivered from death through the water of baptism (1 Peter 3:21).	
Noah offered a sacrifice of blood (Genesis 8:20-9:6).	Christ offered himself as a sacrifice (1 Peter 1:18-19).	
Noah's ark came to rest on Mount Ararat on the Jewish month of Nisan 17 (Genesis 8:4).	Christ's resurrection took place on Nisan 17 (which corresponds to the month of March or April).	
Although Noah was not perfect, he is described as a "righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God" (Genesis 6:9).	Jesus was the perfect, blameless man (Hebrews 4:15).	

QUESTIONS

*Each of us is a bit like Noah. See 2 Peter 3:12-14. We too know this world will end. How should we live today?
 What made Noah a "righteous man" even though his life was far from perfect?*



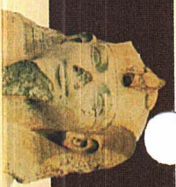
ABRAHAM (Genesis 12-25)

God chose Abraham and commanded him to leave his home and travel to an unknown place. God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation and that Sarah, his wife, would give him a son. Through this son, God would bless all the nations. When they were elderly, Abraham and Sarah had Isaac, the son of the promise.

ABRAHAM		CHRIST
Abraham is called the "Father of the Faith" (Genesis 15; Romans 4:16-18).	Christ is the author and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2).	
Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son (Genesis 22:2), and Isaac was ready to do what his father said (Genesis 22:9).	God the Father was willing to sacrifice his only Son (John 3:16) and Jesus was ready to do what his Father said (John 10:17-18).	
Abraham's faith allowed him to trust that God would keep his word, even if that meant raising Isaac from the dead.	As Abraham's faith allowed him to look forward to Jesus' own resurrection with hope, we now look backwards to that same resurrection that gives us hope (1 Corinthians 15:54-58).	
Abraham's sacrifice took place on Mount Moriah (Jerusalem; Genesis 22:2, 2 Chronicles 3:1) and a ram was substituted for Isaac (Genesis 22:8, 13-14).	Christ was sacrificed on the outskirts of Jerusalem (John 19:17-18) and he is the Lamb of God (John 1:29-31).	
Abraham's son (Isaac) was the child of the promise. The book of Hebrews connected Isaac to the idea of resurrection (Hebrews 11:17-19).	God's Son Jesus is the child of promise (Isaiah 9:6) who is resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:1-11).	
In Isaac's birth, all nations were to be blessed (Genesis 12:3).	In Jesus Christ all nations are blessed (Acts 28:28, Matthew 28:18-20).	

QUESTIONS

Throughout the Bible, there is a theme of sacrificing lives, wishes, and desires. How could Abraham's story help you in your faith journey?



Melchizedek

MELCHIZEDEK (Genesis 14:18-20)

After Abraham came back from fighting enemy armies to free Lot, his nephew, Melchizedek, king of Salem, met him on the road with a gift of bread and wine. Abraham recognized him as a fellow believer and priest of the true God by giving to him one-tenth of his earnings, which was the king's share (see 1 Samuel 8:15, 17).

MELCHIZEDEK

CHRIST

Melchizedek's name means "king of righteousness."	Christ is the Righteous One (Acts 3:14; Jeremiah 23:5-6).
Melchizedek was king of Salem (Jerusalem). The word "salem" means peace (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:2). He was king before David.	He is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and the rightful king of Jerusalem for all time.
Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High (Genesis 14:18) before Aaron and the Levitical priesthood. (Aaron and his sons were ordained as the priestly family for Israel in Leviticus 8.)	Christ's High priesthood precedes and is superior to any other priesthood—that is, the priesthood of Aaron in Leviticus 8 and of Melchizedek in Genesis 14 (see Hebrews 7:4–10).
Old Testament priests offered blessings for God's people (see Numbers 6:22–27).	As High Priest (Hebrews 7:4–10), Christ blesses God's people with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3).
Melchizedek blesses Abraham on God's behalf (Genesis 14:19–20).	Christ blesses us, Abraham's spiritual children (Galatians 3:29).

QUESTIONS

Read Hebrews 8. What does it mean that Christ is high priest?

Ephesians 1:3 says that believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing. List some "spiritual blessings" that you have seen in your life in the past week.



JOSEPH (Genesis 37–50)

Joseph was a son of Jacob and Rachel (Genesis 35:24). After Joseph's jealous brothers threw him into a pit, he was taken to Egypt and sold as a slave. In Egypt, God blessed Joseph, who became second only to the king of Egypt. God used Joseph to bless the nations by wisely storing grain in times of abundance so they were ready for the famine to come.

JOSEPH

CHRIST

Joseph was rejected by his own brothers (Genesis 37:19–20), stripped of his robe, and thrown into a pit (Genesis 37:22–24). Sold into slavery, he eventually landed in a dungeon in Egypt (Genesis 37:28 ; 39:20).	Christ was rejected by his own (John 1:11). He was stripped of his robe, condemned to death and descended to hell (Matthew 27:27-31; John 19:23–24; 1 Peter 3:18–20).
Joseph was an exemplary servant (Genesis 39:1–6). Though he was tempted he did not give in to temptation (Genesis 39:7–12).	Christ came as a servant (Philippians 2:7). He was tempted, but did not sin (Hebrews 4:15).
Joseph was unjustly accused and condemned (Genesis 39:13–20). In prison Joseph interpreted a dream of life to one of his fellow prisoners and death to another (Genesis 40:6–23). He was raised out of the dungeon to sit at Pharaoh's right hand (Genesis 41:14–45).	Christ was unjustly accused and condemned (Matthew 26:57–68; 27:11–25). While on the cross, Jesus' words promise life to one of the thieves condemned with him (Luke 23:39–43). Jesus was raised from the prison of death to sit at the right hand of God the Father (Acts 2:33; 5:31).
Joseph had a meal with his brothers before he revealed himself to them (Genesis 43:16). When he did reveal himself, Joseph saved his brothers' lives (Genesis 45:3–15). Joseph's actions also saved Egypt and many others (Genesis 50:20).	Jesus had a last supper with his disciples (Matthew 26:17–30). After his death and resurrection he revealed himself to them alive, which brought about salvation for them and the world (Luke 24; 1 Corinthians 15:1–11).
In Joseph, God partially fulfilled his promise to Abraham to bless all the nations of the world (Genesis 12:1–3), since Joseph's actions helped the nations of the world survive the terrible famine (Genesis 41:57).	In Christ, God completely fulfilled his promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3), since Christ died for the sins of the world, and Jesus commanded: "go and make disciples of all nations...." (Matthew 28:19).

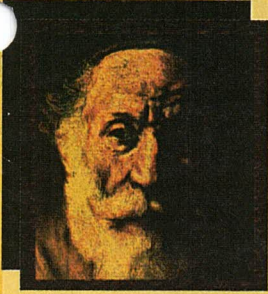
QUESTIONS

Joseph was abused, betrayed, and mistreated, yet he (like Christ) was a blessing even to those who hurt him. How does this apply to your life?

NOAH

ABRAHAM

“ABRAM”



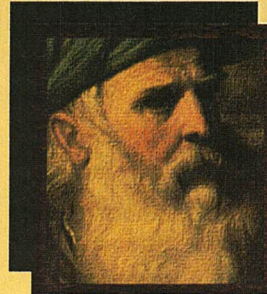
The people in Noah's day were so wicked that God was filled with grief. God decided to destroy the world with a flood. He instructed Noah, a righteous person, to build an ark so he and his family could survive the flood.

Following God's instructions, Noah built an ark with three decks, a door, a roof, and a window. It

took Noah at least 100 years to build the ark. God sent two of every living creature to Noah, and seven of every “clean” animal and bird.

When Noah was 600 years old God shut him, his family, and the animals in the ark. It rained for 40 days and nights and the waters flooded the earth for 150 days. The waters receded, and after being in the ark for over a year, they finally exited the ark on Mt. Ararat.

Noah made a sacrifice to God and God made a covenant with Noah promising to never destroy the world with a flood. God put the rainbow in the clouds as a sign of that covenant. (Genesis 5:32-9:17)



Abraham, originally Abram, was born in Mesopotamia. God promised Abram that he would be the father of a great nation and that Sarai would give birth to a son. God also commanded Abram to leave his home and move to a place God would show him. Abram obeyed. Once in Canaan, God promised the land to Abram's offspring. Later, a famine caused Abram to move to Egypt. Abram feared that the Egyptians would kill him to take his wife, so he told them that Sarai was his sister.

When Abram was 85 years old, and Sarai was 75 years old, they still had no children, so Sarai offered Abram her slave girl Hagar. Not trusting God's promise, Abram married Hagar and she had a son named Ishmael. Years later, God gave Abram the sign of circumcision and changed his name to “Abraham,” and Sarai's name to “Sarah.”

Sarah gave birth to Isaac. When Isaac had grown, God tested Abraham by telling him to sacrifice Isaac. As Abraham prepared to obey, God stopped him and provided a replacement sacrifice. (Genesis 11-12; 16-19; 21:1-7; 22:1-19)

SUMMARY

VERSE

CHARACTER

SYMBOLISM

CHALLENGES

LESSONS

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. —Genesis 6:9

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. —Genesis 15:6

- Righteous and blameless (Genesis 6:9; Hebrews 11:7)
- Obedient (Genesis 6:22)
- Faithful and trusting (Hebrews 11:7)

- Righteous (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3)
- Cowardly (Genesis 12:11-13; 20:2)
- God fearing (Genesis 22:12)
- Faithful (Hebrews 11:8-11, 17)

- Jesus compared the end times to the days of Noah. (Matthew 24:35-39; Luke 17:26-30)
- Peter compared the floodwaters to baptism. At the time of Noah eight people were saved through water. Water baptism celebrates Christ's resurrection, which saves believers from sin. (1 Peter 3:20)

- Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son can be compared to Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. (Genesis 22:1-19; Luke 22:39-53)
- Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son showed that he believed that God could raise someone from the dead. (Hebrews 11:17-19)

- Witnessing the destruction of all living things. (Genesis 6:7)
- Following God's commands to build an ark. (Genesis 6:22)
- Seeing friends and neighbors reject God. (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:1-5)
- Being on board the ark for over a year. (Genesis 7:6-10)
- Being responsible for the lives of his family and all living things. (Genesis 7:6-10)

- Leaving his family behind and moving to a strange unknown land. (Genesis 12:1-5)
- Not having the courage to protect his wife. (Genesis 12:11-13; 20:2)
- Not believing that God could give him a son in his old age. (Genesis 16:1-4; 17:17, 18)
- Witnessing the destruction of his sinful neighbors. (Genesis 18:20-33)
- Willing to give up his most important possession (Isaac) to obey God. (Genesis 22:1-19)

- God is patient with sinners and urges all people to repent of their sins while warning of upcoming judgment. (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:1-5; 3:1-13)
- God offers people the way of salvation. (Genesis 6:18; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:1-5)
- Judgement comes unexpectedly. (Matthew 24:35-39; Luke 17:26-30)

- God keeps his promises, even if it takes longer than we expect.
- Those who believe in God and his promises are considered righteous. (Genesis 15:6)
- All people who believe in Jesus Christ receive the blessing of Abraham, which is to be God's chosen and beloved children. (Romans 4:12-18; Galatians 3:6-16)
- The evidence of true faith is found in our actions. (James 2:20-22)

JACOB

"ISRAEL"



Jacob was the youngest of twins. When they were older, Jacob tricked his brother out of his birthright and his blessing. Escaping his brother Esau's anger, Jacob fled more than 400 miles away, to the city of Haran.

On the way, in Bethel, Jacob had a dream of angels ascending and descending a staircase into heaven. In the dream, God promised to be with Jacob.

In Haran, Jacob met a girl named Rachel and offered her father Laban seven years of service for her hand in marriage. After seven years, Laban gave him his daughter Leah instead. Jacob agreed to work another seven years for Rachel's hand.

After 20 years, and having 11 sons and one daughter, Jacob returned to Canaan. The night before making amends with his brother Esau, Jacob wrestled with "a man" at Penuel and Jacob was renamed "Israel," which means "the one who strives with God."

Traveling through Canaan, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin, Jacob's twelfth son. Finally, Jacob reunited with his father and settled in Hebron. (Genesis 25:34; 27:1-30:24; 31:1-33:17)

SUMMARY

VERSE

"Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."
—Genesis 32:28

CHARACTER

- Sly and deceitful (Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-29; 30:25-43)
- Resourceful and assertive (Genesis 30:37-43; 32:22-30)
- Apprehensive (Genesis 32:3-21; 34:30-31; 43:6)
- Faithful (Hebrews 11:21)

SYMBOLISM

- Jacob had a dream of a staircase bridging the gap between heaven and earth. (Genesis 28:10-17)
- Jesus bridges the gap that sin creates between God and people. (Genesis 28:12; John 1:51)

CHALLENGES

- Having trouble being honest. (Genesis 27:5-29; 30:37-43)
- Fear of facing his brother Esau who wanted to kill him. (Genesis 32:3-21)
- Having difficulty trusting God to provide for him and his family without taking things into his own hands. (Genesis 32:3-21; 33:1-3)
- Having problems maintaining control and order in his family. (Genesis 34:1-31; 35:22; 37-38)

LESSONS

- God's plans and promises will prevail, even in the midst of human weakness. (Genesis 28:13-15; 35:9-12)
- We often reap what we sow. Our sin will find us out. (Genesis 29:15-30; 30:25-36; Numbers 32:23)
- Great transformation can occur under the power of God. (Genesis 32:22-32)

JOSEPH

"ZAPHENATH-PANEAH"



Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob. Jacob gave him a special coat. Joseph had two dreams that suggested his family would bow down to him. Jealous of Joseph and angry about his dreams, his brothers sold him as a slave to some traders on their way to Egypt.

In Egypt, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an officer who was captain of the guard. The LORD gave Joseph success, and he was put in charge of the household. Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph. When Joseph resisted her, she falsely accused him, and he was imprisoned. While in prison, Joseph worked hard, took on more responsibility, and remained faithful to God. The LORD gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams.

Joseph interpreted two dreams for Pharaoh predicting seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine. Pleased with Joseph, Pharaoh made him second-in-command of Egypt.

During the famine, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food. After testing their loyalty, Joseph revealed who he was, forgave his brothers, and had his entire family—known as the Israelites—move to Egypt. (Genesis 37:1-28; 39:1-46:33)

"You intended to harm me [Joseph], but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."
—Genesis 50:20

- Spoiled and arrogant as a young man (Genesis 37:2-14)
- Humble and matured (Genesis 39-40)
- Wise and discerning (Genesis 50:19-21; Acts 7:9, 10)
- Faithful (Hebrews 11:22)

- Joseph was betrayed, imprisoned, suffered, and sat at the right hand of the Pharaoh. Joseph suffered in order to save his people. (Genesis 37-50)
- Jesus was betrayed, suffered, was crucified, died, rose, and now sits at God's right hand. Jesus died to save the world from sin. (Hebrews 12:2, 3)

- Dealing with the favoritism of his father, Jacob. (Genesis 37:2-14)
- Being sold into slavery by his brothers. (Genesis 37:18-36)
- Being pursued by the wife of his master, Potiphar, and imprisoned. (Genesis 39:1-18)
- Suffering unjustly in prison. (Genesis 39:19-40-23)
- Handling the responsibility of leading a nation through a terrible famine. (Genesis 47:13-26)

- Being God's servant might mean having to stay strong through adversity and false accusation, as well as resisting sexual temptation, greed, and vengeance. (Genesis 37:18-36; 39-45)
- Repay evil with good and forgive those who wrong you. (Genesis 45:4-15)
- God can take what was intended for evil and use it for good. (Genesis 50:20)

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT

THE BIBLE is full of women who became unexpected heroines and surprising instruments in God's story. Women played many crucial roles in Scripture, though it is easy to miss their significance. Following are brief, illustrated word portraits of eleven women from the Old Testament. Each sketch includes hidden meanings such as names, ironies in the stories, and the culture of the times. What the Bible does not say about someone or something is often as important as what the Bible actually says.

WOMEN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

When reading such ancient texts, it is easy to forget how different things were in Old Testament times. In some ways, the role of a woman depended on her social status: Married women with children were more highly regarded than single or childless ones. In some ways, women were treated as property, to be used as necessary according to the situation. In other ways, they had a powerful influence on those around them. Notable women in the Old Testament navigated life using faith, discernment, and good judgment as their main tools. They were, like we all are, a mixture of strength and weakness, of sin and goodness. Their circumstances, struggles, hopes, and dreams have much to teach about living a life of faith with God.



SARAH AND HAGAR

	Sarai, later known as Sarah	Hagar
BIBLICAL REFERENCES	Genesis 12, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23	Genesis 16 and 21
LOCATION AND DATES	Canaan, around 2100 BC	Canaan, around 2100 BC
MEANING OF NAME	Both forms of the name mean "princess"	Hagar probably means "stranger"
KEY EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barren wife of Abraham • Abraham passed her off as his sister in exchange for safety—twice • Offered her slave, Hagar, to Abraham as concubine • Laughed at God's promise of a son • Bore a son named Isaac (meaning "laughter") at age 90 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah's Egyptian slave • Given to Abraham as surrogate wife • Bore Ishmael (meaning "God hears") • Visited by the Angel of the Lord • Abraham expelled her from the household • Received promises from God
HOW GOD USED HER	Sarah's life showed that God is faithful to his promises. Although her life was in danger and her barrenness made it look impossible for God to fulfill his word, Isaac, the son of the promise, was born.	Although Hagar was considered a piece of property and used for her child-bearing abilities, God blessed her and her child. The birth of Ishmael, "God hears," is an encouragement to all who suffer.

KEY STORY

In her culture, Sarai's barrenness was what defined her. Sarai's lot in life was to be used as a piece of property, subjected to the whims and fears of her husband. While traveling through foreign lands, Abraham gave away his wife to guarantee his own survival and, as it turns out, enrichment. However, if Abraham was quick to give her up, God was not. He protected her and, eventually, restored her back to her husband.

God promised a son, but the years passed by and Abraham and Sarah were still childless. So Sarah decided to follow custom and gave her slave to her husband to have children through her. We can only imagine Sarai's suffering and longing leading to her decision to move aside. Sarah gave Abraham her own slave, Hagar, so he could have children. Hagar was also used as property; her existence was confined to the needs of her master and mistress. She became a surrogate for Sarah. Hagar gave

birth to a son, Ishmael, and her new child and new social standing gave her boldness. Much as Sarah had used her social condition of owner before, Hagar used her new concubine position and her child-bearing ability against her mistress. Sarah severely punished Hagar (Genesis 16:9). Although we do not find out what happened to Hagar after she fled with her son, we do know that God promised to bless her and Ishmael in a special way.

In a miraculous intervention, God fulfilled his promise to Sarah by giving her a son, a future, a new reality. Many years later, Sarah was the first person to be buried in the Promised Land.

LIFE APPLICATION

- ☞ A reminder that even in moments of doubt, suffering, and when facing what seems impossible, there is nothing impossible for God.
- ☞ God keeps his promises in his own time.
- ☞ God protects the weak.

TAMAR



BIBLICAL REFERENCES	Genesis 38; Matthew 1:3
LOCATION AND DATES	Palestine, northern border of Judah, around 1880 BC
MEANING OF NAME	Probably "palm tree"
KEY EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married Judah's first son, Er • Married Judah's second son, Onan, after Er died • Judah sent her away after Onan died • Had twins with Judah • Perez, one of the twins, was an ancestor of King David • She is mentioned in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:3
HOW GOD USED HER	God used Tamar to confront Judah with his sinful ways and convict him to change. Such a change was important for the leadership role that Judah was to have in his family and in the future of God's people (see Genesis 43-45).

KEY STORY

After marrying Tamar, Judah's eldest son, Er, passed away, leaving Tamar widowed and childless. Following biblical law, Onan, Judah's second son, married her but died soon thereafter. Instead of continuing the same practice and giving her to his third child, Judah blamed Tamar for the deaths and sent her away to her family. Tamar went away dejected and robbed of her future. She was a widow, childless, tied to Judah's family and unable to marry again. Although Judah promised to give her to his third child, he had no intention of keeping his promise, "for he feared that he would die like his brothers..." (Genesis 38:11). What is a person with almost no value, power, or influence to do in this unjust situation? Tamar still had her desire for justice. She used it to deal with her deceitful father-in-law.

We know more about Judah than Tamar. We know that he was impulsive, like his brothers, and scheming (Genesis 37:26-27). Moreover, he was a man for whom God seemed to play a secondary role, his own interests being in the place of honor. Tamar knew all of this and kept tabs on Judah's whereabouts and doings (Genesis 38:13). She made a plan that God used to straighten what Judah had twisted. It was a desperate, dangerous plan with little possibility of success, except for the fact that God was still in charge.

Her plan was deceptively simple. She disguised herself as a prostitute and sat by the road at the entrance of Enaim. The Hebrew *petah enaim* means "eye-opener," giving the reader a clue for what is about to happen. It turned out to be an eye-opener for both Judah and the reader! As the story continues, Judah realized he had been trapped. His initial reaction of indignation evaporated when he saw his own seal, cord, and staff. Judah justified Tamar and her actions with the words, "She is more righteous than I..." Judah's words were not only his recognition of his own failing, but they also imply God's declaration that Tamar acted more in the spirit of the law than did Judah. The text continues narrating the birth of yet another set of twins, in which the second, Perez, was to be highly favored. Perez turned out to be David's ancestor and Jesus' own ancestor (Matthew 1:3).



LIFE APPLICATION

- ☞ God blesses people who seek righteousness.
- ☞ God can take what began as evil and turn it into good.

Abraham's Three Cs

The great American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

From the time God called him (Gen. 12:1-4), Abraham faced many challenges and controversies. He assessed himself well when he said, "I . . . am but dust and ashes" (18:27). Yet by God's grace, his life counted for eternity.

A broad, deep, and inerrant biblical perspective of Abraham can be found in Genesis, the first book in the Torah (Pentateuch). It reveals a fundamental truth about this Jewish patriarch: Abraham "believed in the LORD" (15:6). He was a man of deep faith.

Continued on page 21

(Goodsalt.com)

Yet there was much more to his character. The beauty of his life is depicted honestly in the Bible, which reveals his blemishes as well as his blessings. Though imperfect, Abraham's life of faith was marked with courage, compassion, and credibility.

When he followed God's command to leave Ur of the Chaldeans, his family, and his father's house to go to a land God would show him, Abraham became fully vested in his new life and new country.

His Courage

Abraham must have known of the trouble brewing near him in the Valley of Siddim (Gen. 14:3). It was, in fact, the first war recorded in the Bible. Four eastern kings representing city-states (nations) formed an alliance to rebel against five Jordan Valley kings and their city-states (vv. 1-5). The conflict was not Abraham's business until the four kings took Lot (v. 12), Abraham's nephew.

Without hesitation, Abraham organized a surprise attack, assembled 318 of his servants, overtook the army, rescued Lot, and brought him back with all the goods that had been taken (vv. 13-16). Abraham displayed great courage by doing the right thing at the right time, completely disregarding his own welfare.

Most believers won't fight in a physical war like Abraham. But when they face overwhelming circumstances, they can display the courage that comes from a life yielded to Christ, who empowers them.

His Compassion

While Abraham's relationship with God was growing, Sodom's evil population was rebelling against Him. Punishment was coming because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah was great and the cities' sins were extremely grave (18:20).

The Lord Himself appeared to Abraham to deliver His message of judgment (v. 1), soon to be carried out by two angels who had accompanied Him (v. 2).

God did not withhold His plan because He wanted Abraham's household to "keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice" (v. 19). Abraham knew Lot lived in Sodom. He also knew God was justified in destroying the sinful city and that he was "but dust and ashes" compared to God (v. 27).

Yet, motivated by compassion, Abraham boldly intervened. He asked the Lord two major questions: "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (v. 23) and "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (v. 25).

Abraham had compassion for Lot and his family, as well as for other righteous people who may have lived in Sodom. In true Middle Eastern form, he demonstrated *chutzpah*

(Yiddish for "audacity") by negotiating with God. He started the bargaining by asking Him to spare Sodom if there were 50 righteous souls in the city. God agreed.

He continued to barter, asking on behalf of 45, 40, 30, 20, and finally 10 righteous souls (vv. 24-32). God agreed to spare Sodom if it had 10 righteous souls. But there was only one: Lot. God was willing to spare Lot's entire family; but in the end, only Lot and his two daughters survived.

Abraham was not blind to God's righteousness and holiness. Yet he displayed great boldness by pleading with the Lord. Believers should stand boldly before the Lord in prayer and plead to Him on behalf of others. Like Abraham, we should have compassion for people and act on it.

His Credibility

Though Abraham was a "foreigner and a visitor" among the Canaanites, a pilgrim in the Promised Land to which God called him (23:4), his neighbors recognized his strong character and credibility. He had left behind his comfortable life in Ur to follow the Lord many years earlier. There was no better way to show that Canaan had become his home than by burying his dead there.

When his wife, Sarah, died in Hebron, Abraham had to find a place to bury her (v. 2). His neighbors were not believers in the one true God. Yet they recognized Abraham's leadership and integrity, calling him "mighty prince" (literally, "a prince with God") and offered him "the choicest" of their burial places (v. 6).

Abraham wanted a cave at Machpelah, owned by Ephron the Hittite, and was willing to pay full price for it (v. 9). Ephron was interested in selling but wanted Abraham to buy the whole field. Again, in true Middle Eastern form, bargaining ensued. Transactions like this were accomplished at the city gate (v. 10), allowing the public to hear and observe the specifics of the deal.

Abraham maintained his testimony, which was put on full review, purchasing the field and the cave for 400 silver shekels. Sarah was buried there and later, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah (49:29-31).

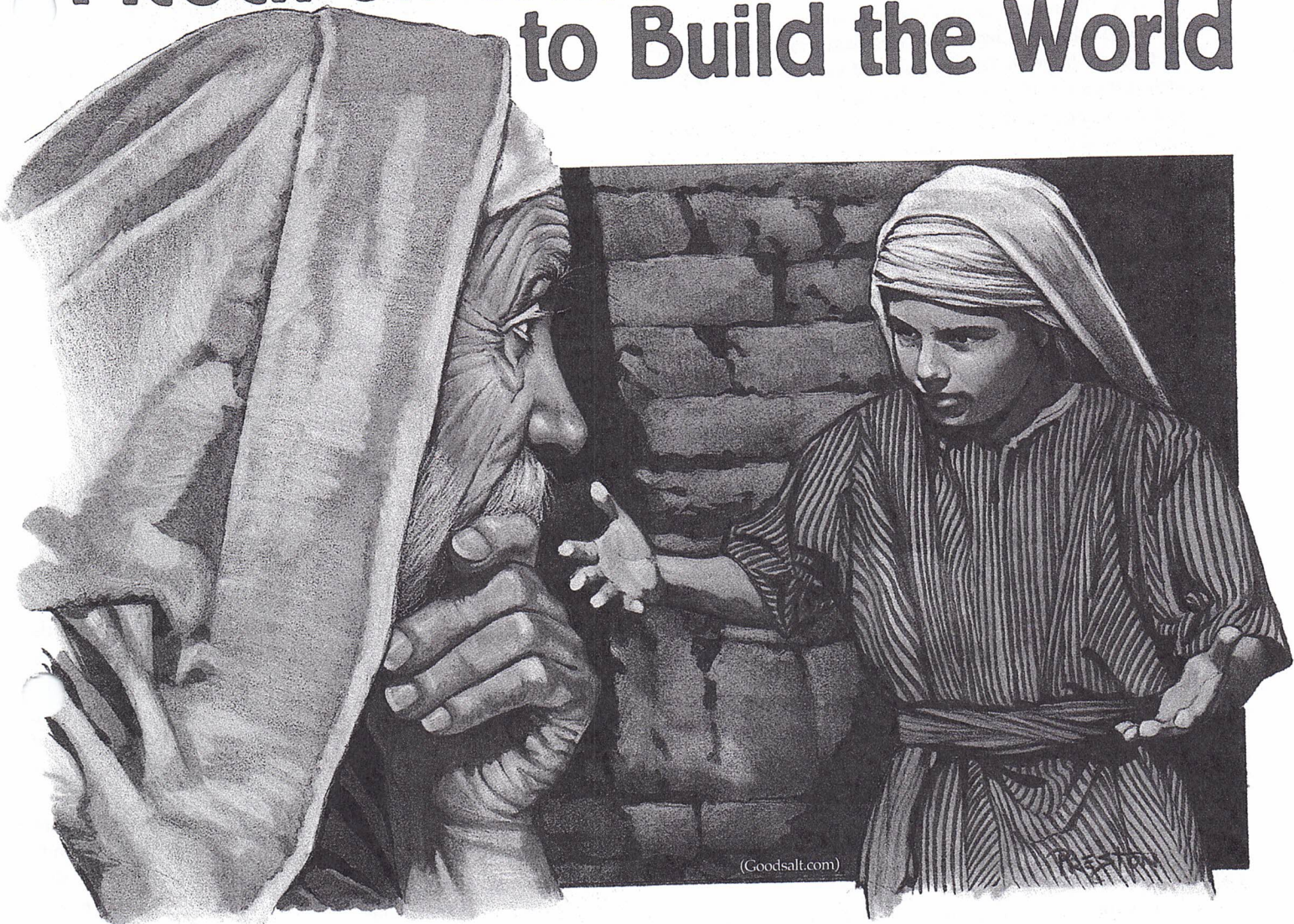
Abraham knew people were watching him, and he consistently demonstrated his upright character. As believers, we should do likewise.

Abraham lived out Martin Luther King Jr.'s words long before Dr. King articulated them. In times of challenge and controversy, his courage, compassion, and credibility ruled the day.

Steve Herzig is the director of North American Ministries and a Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel.



A Rock on Which to Build the World



(Goodsalt.com)

Thomas Cahill, an American scholar and writer, wrote in his book *The Gifts of the Jews* about the call of Abraham:

If we had lived in the second millennium BC, the millennium of Abraham, and could have canvassed all the nations of the earth, what would they have said of Abraham's journey? In most of Africa and Europe, they would have laughed at Abraham's madness and pointed to the heavens, where the life of earth had been plotted from all eternity . . . a man cannot escape his fate. The Egyptians would have shaken their heads in disbelief. The early Greeks might have told Abraham the story of Prometheus. . . . Do not overreach, they would advise; come to resignation. In India, he would be told that time is black, irrational and merciless. Do not set yourself the task of accomplishing something in time, which is only the dominion of suffering. On every continent, in every society, Abraham would have been given the same advice . . . do not journey but sit; compose yourself by the river of life, meditate on its ceaseless and meaningless flow.¹

Abraham is the only person in the Old Testament called the "friend" of God (Isa. 41:8; Jas. 2:23). In the New Testament, he is listed as an

ancestor of Jesus Christ (Mt. 1:1) and the spiritual father of all who receive the free gift of salvation through faith (Gal. 3:6–7).

While information on Abraham's early life is scant, the Bible does show how his life of obedience and faith was a work in progress. Rabbis have also created many fables to try to fill in Abraham's forgotten early years.

His Forgotten Years

Abraham probably was born in the city of Ur in Southern Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq). His father was Terah, and his brothers were Nahor and Haran. Abraham's wife was his barren half-sister Sarai, later called Sarah.

Haran died in Ur, leaving behind three children: Lot, Milcah, and Iscah (Gen. 11:27–29). The family then moved to Haran (v. 31).

When Abraham was 75, he left his 145-year-old father behind in Haran and set out for Canaan in obedience to God (12:1–4). Terah lived 60 years longer and died in Haran (11:32).

Abraham's journey to the Promised Land included a personal journey to know the true God, since Terah's family apparently was polytheistic:

“Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods’” (Josh. 24:2).

Folklore. During the Jewish dispersion after A.D. 70, rabbis developed a large folklore collection for Abraham’s early, forgotten years. These tales are called in Yiddish *Bubba Mischehs*, meaning exaggerated “grandma stories” (old wives’ tales) that have dubious origins.

One classic tale regarding Abraham’s early life makes Terah a builder and seller of idols. One day Terah leaves young Abram (later called Abraham) in charge of the store. A man walks in, wanting to buy an idol. Abram asks him how old he is. The man replies, “Fifty years.”

Abram then says, “You are fifty years old and would worship a day-old statue!” The man leaves the shop ashamed.

Later, a woman walks in to make an offering of flour to the idols. So Abram takes a stick, smashes the idols, and places the stick in the hand of the largest idol. When Terah returns, he asks Abram what happened to all the idols.

Abram tells him a woman came in to make an offering, but the idols began to argue over which one should eat the offering first. Then the large idol took the stick and smashed the other idols.

Terah is furious and tells Abram the idols are merely statues, having no life or power. Abram responds by illustrating the foolishness of worshiping idols: “Have they then any knowledge? Should not your ears listen to what your mouth is saying? You deny their life and power, yet you make and worship them!” (Midrash Rabba, Genesis 38.13).

His Fruitless Years

A long time elapsed between God’s call of Abraham to leave his father’s house and Abraham’s actual journey. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, alluded to this fact in his defense before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court: “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you’” (Acts 7:2–3).

Stephen clearly said Abraham received God’s call *before* he journeyed. Therefore, Abraham’s settling in Haran with his family indicates he failed to obey God’s command fully.

The Bible does not say why they stayed at Haran. But a popular medieval French rabbi named Rashi (1040–1105) wishfully proposed that Abraham must have been developing a circle of disciples in the worship of the one true God.

Perhaps Terah was the cause of Abraham’s fruitless years in Haran. His father’s name in Hebrew means “to delay.” Conceivably, Terah’s company delayed Abraham from following God’s call.

If so, Terah typifies obstacles that delay one from fulfilling the Lord’s will.

His Faithful Years

The writer of Hebrews wrote the following about Abraham’s faith and obedience to God:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And

he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense (Heb. 11:8–10, 17–19).

During his faithful years, Abraham willingly obeyed God’s call. He left Haran and his old way of life. Though the only land he owned in Canaan was his wife’s grave site (Gen. 23:17–20), he was a faithful sojourner who believed in God’s promises.

Abraham’s complete trust in God’s sovereign word is also evident in the *Akedah*, Hebrew for the “binding” of Isaac. When God told Abraham to offer his only son, he was willing to obey (chap. 22). This passage is solemnly read each morning in some synagogues and on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. Since God had promised Abraham that through Isaac he would father a great nation, Abraham believed that even if Isaac died, the sovereign God who keeps His word would be “able to raise him up, even from the dead” (Heb. 11:17–19).

Abraham finally saw the Lord’s promise fulfilled. During the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), a triumphant celebration of anticipation of the Messianic King and Kingdom, Jesus responded to critics: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad” (Jn. 8:56). Perhaps Abraham saw the culmination of the promised seed through Isaac—Christ the King on His throne in Jerusalem!

A Talmudic passage on Isaiah 51:1 once opined, “When the Holy One contemplated the generations of Enosh and the Flood, He said, How can I build a world with such wicked material? But when he envisioned Abraham, He said, I have found a rock [*petra*] on which to build the world!”²

Imagine, when God told Abraham, “*Lekh lekha*” (Hebrew for “Go forth,” Gen. 12:1), He set in motion the creation of Israel, from which the Savior of the world would come—Jesus, the Son of Abraham.

ENDNOTES

¹ Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels*, cited in SimpleToRemember.com <tinyurl.com/okpuzr>.

² Joseph Baron ed., *A Treasury of Jewish Quotations* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1956), 1.

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The story of Job.
Job 1-42

Abram's father moves his family from Ur to Harran.
Gen. 11

2100 BC

James mentions Job's story as an example of perseverance and of God's compassion in restoring Job.
James 5:11

Abrahamic Covenant: God calls Abram to move to Canaan. Abram obeys.
Gen. 12:1-9

2091 BC

Through Abraham's descendants all nations would be blessed. Through Jesus Christ, a descendant of Abraham, all nations are blessed.
Gen. 12:3; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 28:28

In Egypt, Abram tells Pharaoh that Sarai is his sister. God intervenes and rescues Sarai.
Gen. 12:10-20

Abram rescues his nephew Lot from captivity.
Gen. 13-14

Abram gives a tithe (a tenth) to the king and priest Melchizedek.
Gen. 14-15

Sarai gives her slave Hagar to Abram. Hagar bears a son Ishmael.
Gen. 16

God renames Abram and Sarai ("prince of many") as Abraham and Sarah ("princess of many").
Gen. 17

The book of Hebrews explains how Jesus is the High Priest for eternity in the order of Melchizedek.
Heb. 5-7

Though the book of Hebrews mentions both Abraham and Sarah, it is the faith of Abraham that God calls us to fulfill.

Abraham tells Abimelek that Sarah is his sister. God intervenes and rescues Sarah.
Gen. 20

Isaac is miraculously born to Abraham and Sarah.
Gen. 21

2066 BC

Isaac is listed in Jesus' genealogy.
Matt. 1:2; Luke 3:34

Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away, but God provides for them.
Gen. 21

2050 BC

God tests Abraham by telling him to sacrifice Isaac. God provides a ram as the sacrifice instead.
Gen. 22

Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac took place on Mount Moriah near Jerusalem. God substituted a ram in place of Isaac. Jesus was crucified on the outskirts of Jerusalem as the sacrifice who substituted himself for us.
Gen. 22:2; 2 Chron. 3:1; John 19:17-18

Sarah dies at age 127.
Gen. 23

Abraham's servant finds a wife for Isaac: Rebekah.
Gen. 24

Rebekah bears twin sons: Esau and Jacob.
Gen. 25:19-26

2005 BC

Jacob is listed in Jesus' genealogy.
Matt. 1:2; Luke 3:34

Abraham dies at age 175.
Gen. 25:1-18

1991 BC

Jealous for their husband's affection, Leah and Rachel compete by having sons. Gen. 30-31

On his way back to Canaan, Jacob wrestles with the angel of the Lord and is renamed Israel ("struggles with God"). Gen. 32

After 20 years of estrangement, Jacob and Esau reconcile. Gen. 33

Dinah is assaulted by a local city ruler's son. Her brothers take revenge on the city. Gen. 34

Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin. Gen. 35

Isaac dies at age 180. Gen. 35

Joseph's jealous brothers sell him to slave traders who take him to Egypt. Gen. 37

Jesus was a descendant of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob born to Leah. Matt. 1:2; Luke 3:33

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, retold the story of Joseph as he built the case that Jesus is truly the Messiah. Acts 7:9-16

1900 BC

1876 BC

1805 BC

1800 BC

Joseph interprets dreams in prison. Gen. 40

Joseph is made a top official when he interprets Pharaoh's dream. Gen. 41

Joseph's brothers travel to Egypt to buy grain during a famine. Gen. 42-43

Joseph tests his brothers, reveals his identity, and forgives them. Gen. 44-45

Jacob's family settles in Egypt. Gen. 46

Joseph supplies food for the masses during a 7-year famine. Gen. 47

Jacob blesses his sons before his death. Gen. 48-49

Joseph dies in Egypt at age 110. Gen. 50

God worked through Joseph's hardships to save many lives. In Jesus, God offers salvation to all people through Jesus' death on the cross "for the sins of the whole world." Gen. 50:20; 1 John 2:2

The book of Hebrews lists Jacob as an example of faith for blessing his descendants. Heb. 11:20-21

Jacob's blessing to Judah was that "the scepter will not depart from Judah," indicating an everlasting kingship. Gen. 49:10; Luke 1:33

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

So Abraham went as the LORD told him.
Genesis 12:4

(The Rescuer is foreshadowed again)

ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."
Genesis 12:1

START

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. Hebrews 11:8

why? Abraham and Sarah knew God would be faithful because he "had made the promise."
Hebrews 11:11

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram said, "Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless...?" [God] took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
Genesis 15:1–2, 5–6

LIEVED
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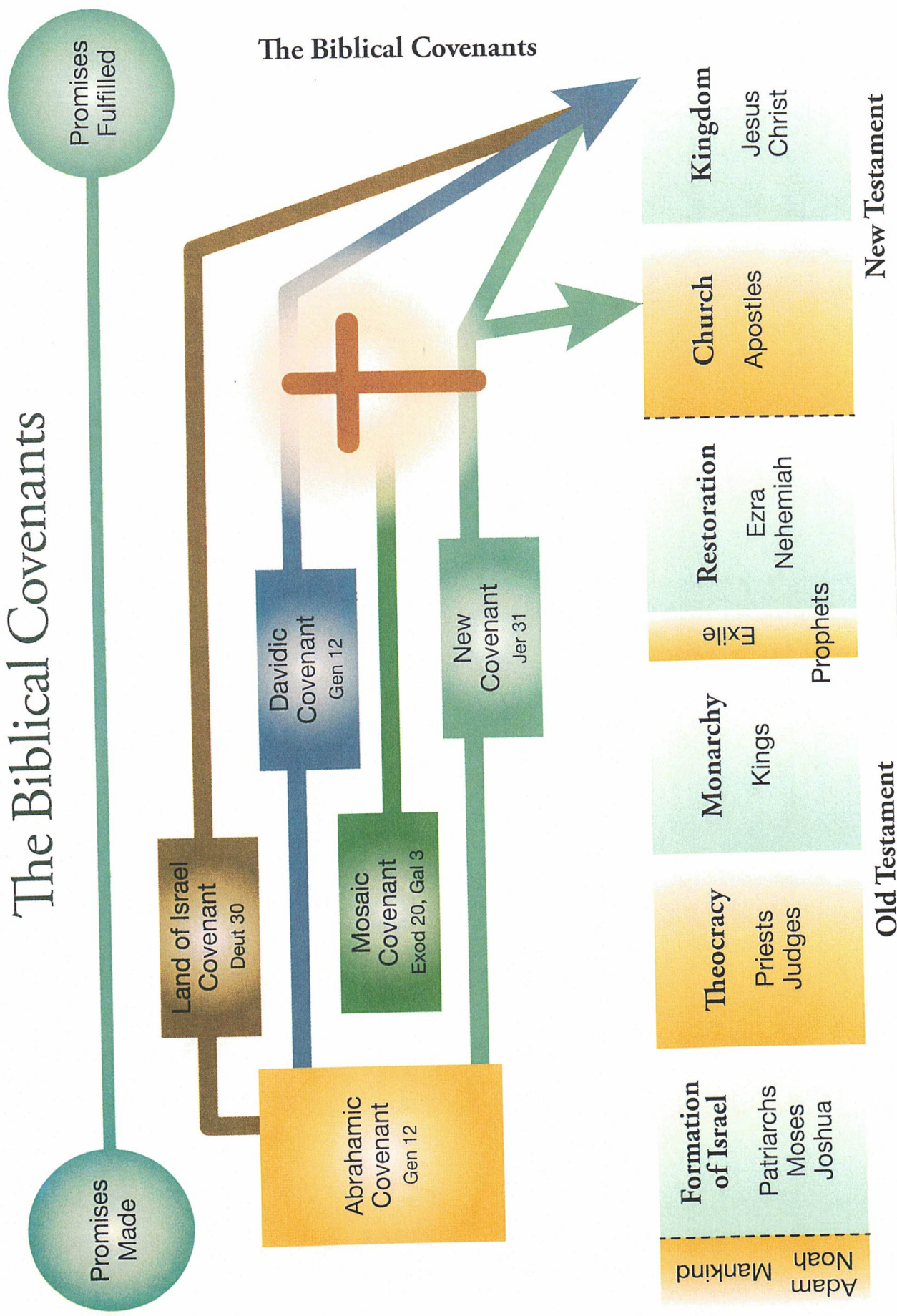
CREDITED
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RIGHTEOUSNESS
Holy, clean, pure, to have a relationship with God



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The Biblical Covenants



The Biblical Covenants

Promises Fulfilled

Promises Made

Land of Israel Covenant
Deut 30

Davidic Covenant
Gen 12

Mosaic Covenant
Exod 20, Gal 3

New Covenant
Jer 31

Abrahamic Covenant
Gen 12

Formation of Israel
Patriarchs
Adam
Noah
Moses
Joshua

Theocracy
Priests
Judges

Monarchy
Kings

Restoration
Ezra
Nehemiah

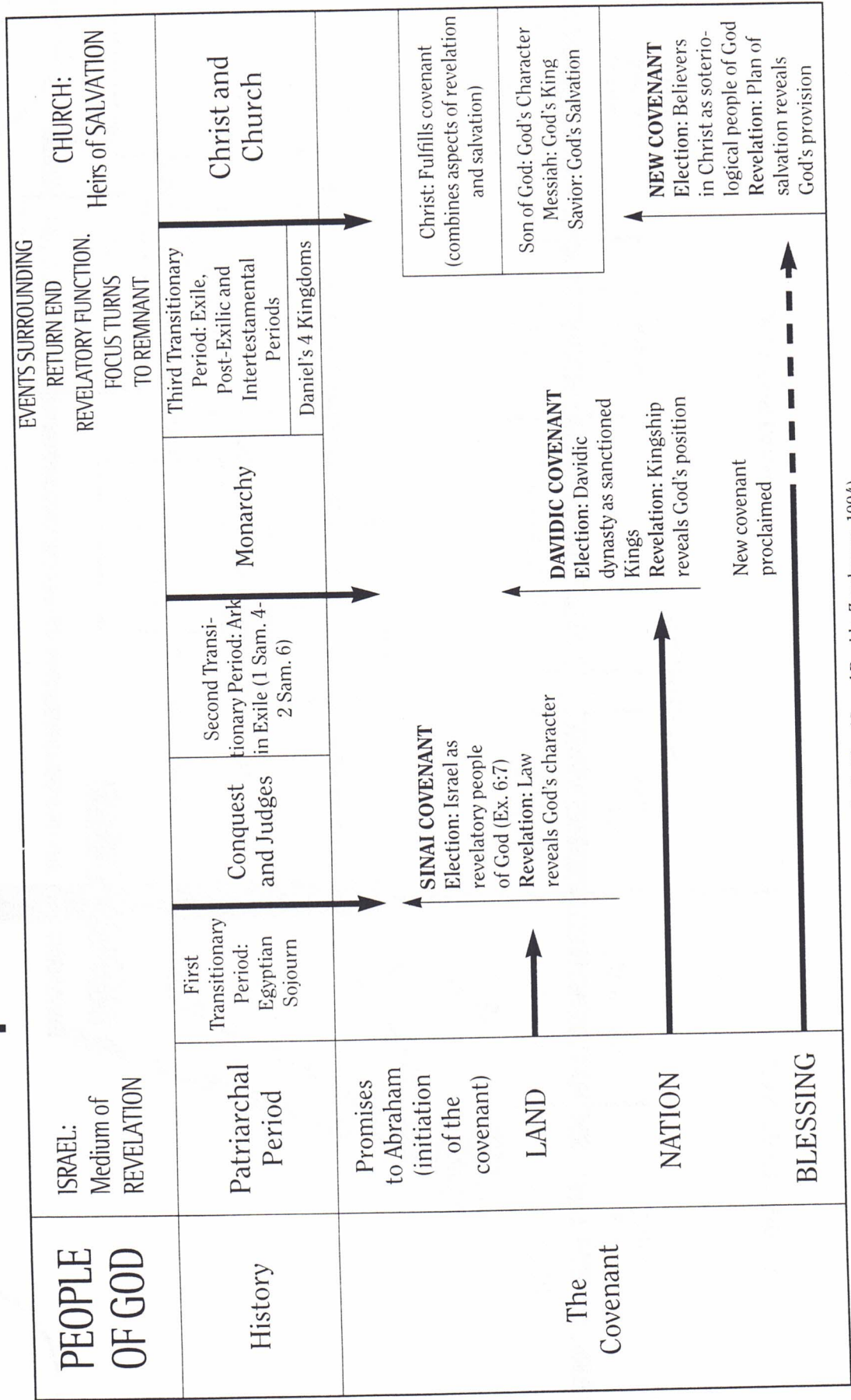
Church
Apostles

Kingdom
Jesus
Christ

Old Testament

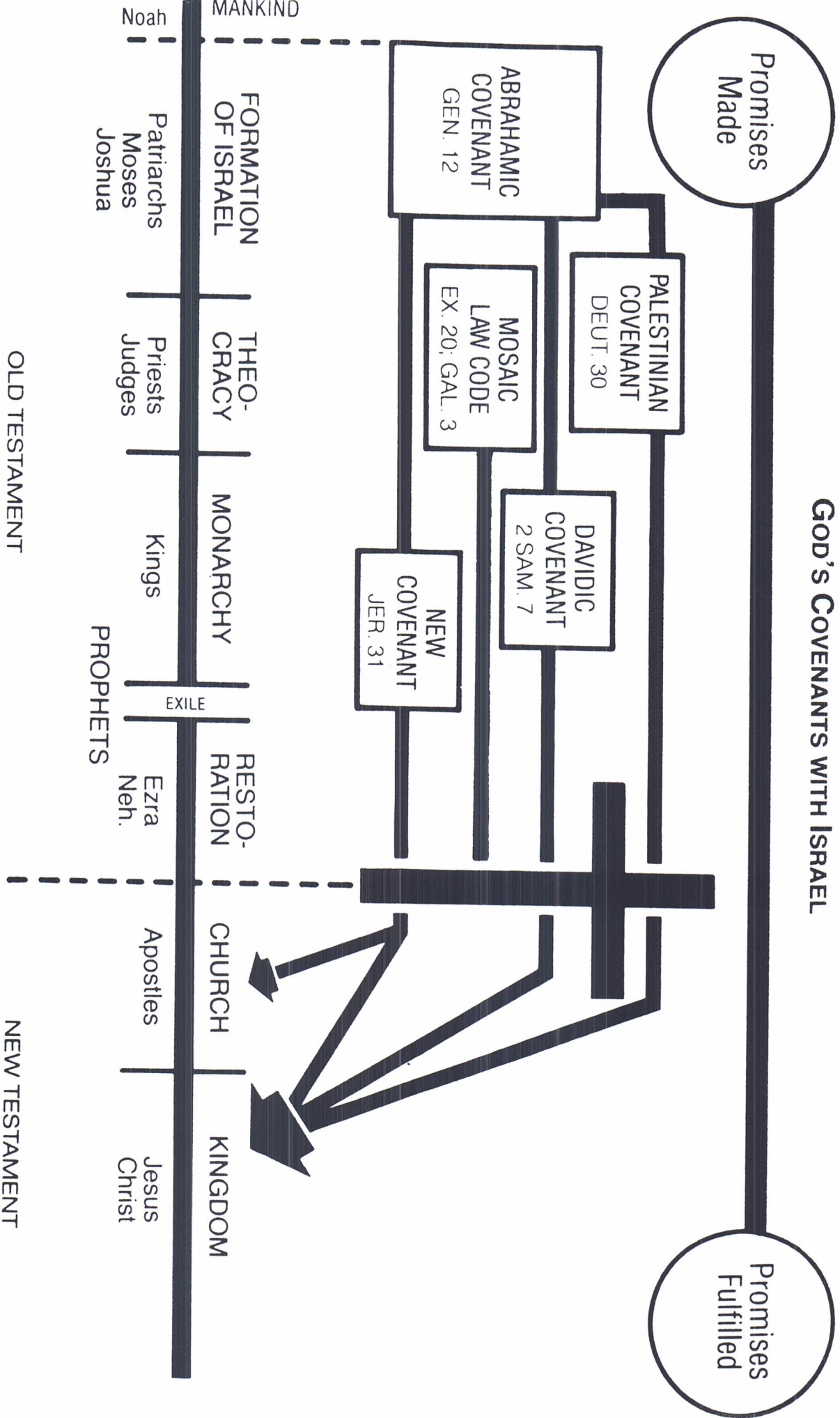
New Testament

The People of God and the Covenant



Note: for full discussion see John H. Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994)

GOD'S COVENANTS WITH ISRAEL



10. Contrasts between the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants

Distinguishing these covenants provides a foundation for interpreting the OT and NT, especially for interpreting the prophets who look back on and refer to the Abrahamic covenants (e.g., Eze 36-37; OTS, 508) and Mosaic covenants (e.g., La 1:3; OTS, 496). Knowing the conditional and temporal nature of the law prevents misapplying obsolete commands to the church today (e.g., Sabbath, charging interest to believers, tithing). Also, God's faithfulness to sinners is clear because of the example of Abraham.

	ABRAHAMIC COVENANT	MOSAIC COVENANT
Recipient, Date, and Place	Abraham as mediator for all nations 2060 B.C., Ur of the Chaldeans	Moses as mediator for Israel 1445 B.C., Mount Sinai
Scripture	Ge 12:1-3 (but formalized into a covenant in Ge 15)	Ex 20-31 is the heart of the covenant
Between God and:	A person (for a future nation)	A nation
Scope	Universal ("through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed")	Only Israel received the Law (Dt 4:8; Ps 147:20)
Character and Significance	Grace (promises) Primary (what God will do)	Works (laws) Secondary (how God will do it)
Promises	Land, seed, and blessing (time of fulfillment unstated)	Blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience (Lev 26; Dt 28)
Conditions	Unconditional: "I will ..."	Conditional: "If you will ... then I will ..."
Participation	Abraham asleep (Ge 15:17)	Israel agreed to obey (Ex 19:8)
Analogy	Father to son (royal grant)	Suzerain (superior king) to vassal (servant nation)
Purpose	Clarified Israel's blessings in general terms to motivate the nation toward righteousness by faith in God's provision of a wonderful future (Ge 12:1; 15:1, 6)	Clarified how Israel could be blessed in the Abrahamic covenant as soon and as fully as possible; didn't restate or expand the Abrahamic covenant, but revealed sin (Ro 5:20; Gal 3:19, 24)
Form	Oral (no written stipulations)	Written on tablets of stone and in Pentateuch
Emphasis	Blessing over discipline/judgment (five "blessings" in Ge 12:1-3)	Judgment/discipline over blessing (contrast Dt 28:1-14 with Dt 28:15-68)
Christology	Ultimate seed (Ge 12:3)	Typified in tabernacle (Heb 8-10)
Sign	Circumcision (Ge 17:11)	Sabbath (Ex 31:13, 17)
End	Never terminated (deemed an eternal covenant in Ge 17:8)	Ended at Christ's death (Ro 7:6; 10:4; 2Co 3:7-11; Gal 5:1; Heb 7:11-12)

Adapted from Griffith, *Eschatology*, 25a, which in turn is partly based on Thomas L. Constable, "A Theology of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," in *A Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 100-101. Used by permission.

11. Signs of the Covenants

God has made several covenants with man throughout the ages. With several of them he has attached a sign or memorial on an ongoing basis. These function as reminders of his and/or our responsibilities to keep these covenants.

COVENANT	DEFINITION	PROMISE	FULFILLMENT	SIGN
Noahic	Unconditional promise not to flood the earth again	Ge 9:12-17	No more sea (Rev 21:1)	Rainbow (Ge 9:12-17)
Abrahamic	Promise to provide Israel a land, rule, and spiritual blessing	Ge 12:1-3; 15:13-18	Continues at present (Gal 3:17), but Israel still has a future in the new covenant (see Ro 11:25-27)	Circumcision (Ge 17:11)
Mosaic	Conditional stipulations for blessing on Israel	Ex 19-31; Dt 28	Death of Christ (Ro 7:4-6)	Sabbath (Ex 31:13)
Palestinian	Promise of <i>physical</i> land from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River	Dt 30:1-10	Land blessed (Am 9:13-15) No sign (that I know of)	
Davidic	Promise of eternal, <i>political</i> rule of a descendant of David	2Sa 7:12-17	Rule renewed (Am 9:11-12)	Christ seated at the Father's right hand (Ac 2:34-36)
New	Promise of <i>spiritual</i> indwelling of the Spirit (law written on hearts), forgiveness, and total evangelization of Israel	Jer 31:31-34	Paul and the apostles (2Co 3-4) All Israel saved (Ro 11:26-27)	Cup of the Lord's Supper (Lk 21:20; 1Co 11:25)

Adapted from Griffith, *Eschatology*, 25c. Used by permission.

The Far-Reaching Abrahamic Covenants

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Land - Canaan (Dt. 28—29)

Blessing - Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 19—20) New Covenant (Jer. 31)

Seed - Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7)

Imagine, if you can, an "appearance" by the God of glory to an idol worshiper named Abram living in Mesopotamia. He gave Abram a command and an extraordinary promise, commonly referred to as the Abrahamic Covenant:

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Fundamental

The Abrahamic Covenant is fundamental to understanding God's revelation to mankind. Genesis consists of two main sections. According to God's "calendar,"¹ chapters 1 through 11 cover approximately 2,000 years. Genesis 12 through 50 focus on the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The Old Testament story of Israel concludes with the book of Malachi in approximately 400 B.C. Therefore, Old Testament history is divided into two 2,000-year periods: (1) creation to Abraham and (2) Abraham to the birth of Jesus.

During the first 2,000 years, God deals with the entire human race in broad brushstrokes (and sketchy details), as seen in the list of godly men in Genesis 5.

During the second 2,000 years, God deals primarily with the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The rest of the nations (Hebrew, *goyim*) are included only as they intersect and interact with God's Chosen People. God's relationship with Abraham is fundamental, then, to a proper understanding of the bulk of the Hebrew Scriptures (38 and one half books). Major themes like election, grace, faith, accountability, and judgment are all presented, expounded on, and/or clarified, as one comprehends the origin, scope, and design of this completely unsolicited covenant with Abraham. God's redemption of Israel from Egypt, His expectation of Israel's holiness, and His blessings and chastenings are all rooted in this initial covenant.

This covenant establishes Israel's centrality in God's redemptive and eschatological programs, extending beyond the pages of the Old Testament. The universality of the future ministry of Israel's Messiah is also clearly rooted in this promise from God to His chosen subject. Indeed, all of God's subsequent relationships with humanity would be governed by the Abrahamic Covenant.

Foundational

It follows then, that this covenant is foundational to understanding God's relationship with Israel. It provides the groundwork for the various aspects of God's program for His people, beginning with God blessing Abraham and concluding with the Messiah's redeeming and ruling work. The three major components of the covenant—land, seed, and blessing—embody the heart and soul of what God proposes to do through the selection of this people for Himself.

LAND. The promise of the land ("to a land that I will show you") is repeated and expanded numerous times in the Hebrew Scriptures, beginning in Genesis 13:14-17:

And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

This chapter provides the first major expansion of the original covenant. God's reiteration of the land promise makes it

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forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16).

BLESSING. The promise of blessing is the third component of the Abrahamic Covenant. God told Abraham, "I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:2-3).

The blessing is material to be sure, as indicated by God's generous treatment of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even when they were disobedient. But the spiritual nature of the blessing is indicated by the extent of the promise. God wanted to bless Abraham and his descendants through their obedience to Him and also bless the rest of mankind through them.

His plan was to grant them redemption, draw them to Himself in holiness, and (through them) lead the nations of the earth into knowledge of Him. Their blessing would make them a light to the nations. To that end, God worked to develop His relationship with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's descendants. They were to reflect the glory of the Most High God to the nations around them.

An amplified form of the blessing came with the Mosaic Covenant, instituted at Mount Sinai. In Exodus 19, God told Moses,

Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above

all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel (vv. 3-6).

The Mosaic Covenant was intended as the vehicle through which the Jewish people would experience the riches of God's blessing. Never intended to be the means of their salvation, it was designed to be the guide for their stewardship as children and subjects of the Most High God, so that He might bless them.

Psalms 1 and 19, for example, extol the blessings of keeping the Law. The godly couple Zacharias and Elizabeth (Lk. 1:6) are examples of what God expected. Instead, the Israelites stumbled over the Law, either rejecting it and living according to their own desires, or attempting to use it to produce their own righteousness (cf. Rom. 9:30-33).

The prophet Jeremiah announced that this covenant would be replaced by a new one that would produce the blessing because it would be written on the hearts of God's people, rather than on stone tablets (Jer. 31:31-34). God then promised that Israel will always be a nation before Him (vv. 35-37).

Graciously, the Messiah instituted this New Covenant by His death (Mt. 26:28); and it will be the basis of God's blessing of Israel (and the nations) forever.

Forever

In addition to being fundamental to God's revelation and foundational to God's program of history, the Abrahamic Covenant is forever. Its unconditional nature argues that it is eternally binding.

Abraham neither sought the covenant nor had an active role in ratifying it. God instituted His covenant with an unsuspecting, pagan idol-worshiper from Mesopotamia, as a work of His grace alone. Genesis 15:6 states that Abraham was declared righteous when He believed God would fulfill His promises.

God states numerous times that the features of this covenant are eternal:

- Israel is promised the land forever (13:15).
- David is promised a son on his throne forever (2 Sam. 7:16).
- God promises the blessings of the New Covenant forever (Jer. 31:35-37).

Even after the fall of the southern, Davidic kingdom of Judah, God promised the prophet Daniel, "The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (Dan. 7:18). Israel (as a nation) has not yet entered into the fullness of these promises.

The day will come when, in conjunction with its reception of the New Covenant that has been provided by its Messiah, Israel will begin to experience the abundant provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant. The apostle Paul wrote,

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will

turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Rom. 11:25-29).

Until that day, individual Jewish people can accept God's provision of those blessings through the church, which the Messiah is building. They can become part of the remnant to which Paul referred in Romans 11:1-10 and share in those provisions with the Gentiles, whom God had planned to include all along (9:24-29).

Meanwhile, it behooves Gentile believers to maintain a humble gratitude to God and to the Jewish people. Paul cautioned us,

And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you (11:17-18).

END NOTE

* Adding the numbers in Genesis 5 and 11 reveals Abraham was born approximately 1,948 years after creation and entered Canaan at age 75, approximately 2,023 years after creation. Comparing these numbers with the rest of the Old Testament dates creation at approximately 4000 B.C.



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Friends of Israel Leaders Speak on Genesis

Interviews with Dr. Jim Showers, executive director of The Friends of Israel, and the Rev. Bill Sutter, former FOI executive director, are included in a new, non-Christian documentary, *Roadmap Genesis*, released in January.

Produced by Nolan Lebovitz, a filmmaker and rabbi-in-training, the film draws from Judaism and a broad spectrum of Christian denominations to make the case that the book of Genesis is a roadmap on how to live a productive, fruitful life that will benefit society.

Other evangelicals interviewed include Mike Huckabee, popular television host and former governor of Arkansas, and Ken Ham, president and CEO of Answers in Genesis.

To learn more, go to RoadmapGenesis.com or facebook.com/roadmapgenesis.

GOD'S PROMISE TO THE NATIONS

God's seed
will be
blessed
through
the
nations
and
the
earth



God judged the disobedience of Adam and Eve. You shall return to dust. Genesis 3:1-9

JUDGMENT OF NATIONS

Man's disobedience did not end at Babel. Since then, God has continued to judge the wickedness of nations, often raising up other nations to humble them. Prophecy after prophecy has been fulfilled. God always keeps His word.



God judged the wickedness of Noah's generation. I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh. Genesis 6:17



God judged mankind's rebellion at Babel. The Lord did confuse the languages of all the earth. Genesis 11:4



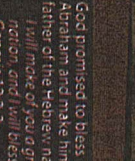
FIRST FAMILY — NOAH'S WORLD — BABEL — EGYPT



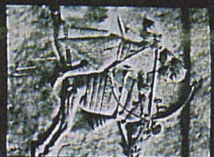
God sent Joseph from Egypt to save the famine. The famine was in all lands. But in Egypt there was bread. Genesis 41:54



God assured Noah and His sons that He would never again destroy the earth in a worldwide flood. Never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. Genesis 9:11



God promised to bless Abraham and make him the father of the Hebrew nation. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you. Genesis 12:2-3



God judged Pharaoh for refusing to free the Hebrew people. I will send all my plagues upon your people, so that you may know that there is none like me on the earth. Exodus 9:14



God used Assyria to judge other nations. Have you not heard how I brought it to pass, that you should lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps? 2 Kings 19:25

ASSYRIA — BABYLON — PERSIA — GREECE



God used Babylon to judge other nations. I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and all nations shall serve him. Jeremiah 27:6

God prophesied would judge earth. The Lord says to Cyrus, whose name is called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 45:1



God sent Jonah to save Assyria's capital city from coming destruction. So the people of Nineveh believed God ... and God saw that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he said that he would do to them. Jonah 3:5-10



God used Queen Esther to save the Hebrews from a plot to wipe them out. There was great fasting ... Then Mordecai answered Esther, Deliverance shall arise to the Jews. Esther 4:3, 14



God used three brave Hebrews to convince King Nebuchadnezzar to grant religious freedom to all Hebrews. The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. Daniel 3:28

GOD'S SEED PROMISED TO THE NATIONS

Adam

Noah

Abraham

David

Throughout history, God has preserved the Seed promised to Adam and Eve. God's prophets also revealed more and more details about the Seed. They said this child, or "Seed," would be a deliverer, a uniquely born son, a prophet, an eternal priest, and an everlasting king. But he would be cut off.

God promised to preserve the Seed through Noah. With you and your seed will I establish my covenant ... and you shall come into the ark. Genesis 6:18 & 9:9

God promised that the Seed would be a prophet. God will raise up a prophet among your brothers, like you. Deuteronomy 18:18

God promised Eve a Seed that would crush the serpent's head. Her seed shall bruise your head. Genesis 3:15

God promised to preserve the Seed through Abraham's only son. Take your only son ... and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Genesis 22:2, 18

God promised that the Seed would be a king and priest. The throne of David shall be established forever. I Kings 2:4-5 You are a priest forever. Psalm 110:4

God promised that the Seed would be the mighty God. For a child is born to us, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

God promised that the Seed would be killed. After sixty and two weeks the Messiah shall be cut off. Daniel 9:26

Abraham

EVENT	DETAILS	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
1. CONVERSION AT UR	SEVENFOLD PROMISE 1. I will make of thee a great nation. 2. I will bless thee. 3. I will make thy name great. 4. Thou shalt be a blessing. 5. I will bless them that bless thee. 6. I will curse him that curseth thee. 7. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.	Acts 7:2 Gen. 11:31 Gen. 12:1-4 Josh. 24:3
2. AT HARAN	PARTIAL OBEDIENCE: He takes his father and settles in Haran	Gen. 11:31, 32
3. ARRIVAL IN CANAAN	He builds an altar and is promised the land	Gen. 12:4-9
4. TRIP TO EGYPT	REASON: A famine in Canaan SIN: Doubt (concerning God) and deceit (concerning Sarai) TYPE: Egypt is a type of the world RESULTS: 7 tragic consequences: 1. He grieved God 2. He weakened his own faith 3. He weakened the faith of Sarai 4. He became a poor testimony to his nephew Lot 5. He caused the Pharaoh to be afflicted 6. He picked up Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid 7. He provided a bad example for his son, Isaac	Gen. 12:10-20
5. MEETS MELCHIZEDEK	BACKGROUND: Abram had won a war and rescued his nephew IDENTITY OF MELCHIZEDEK: Christ? Shem? Unknown priest? IMPORTANCE OF MEETING: Four firsts recorded: 1. FIRST COMMUNION (bread and wine) 2. First mention of HOLY CITY (Salem) 3. First mention of PRIEST 4. First example of TITHING	Gen. 13, 14
6. RATIFICATION OF HIS COVENANT	BACKGROUND: This covenant was: 1. Announced in Genesis 12:1-4 2. Confirmed in Genesis 13:14-17; 15:1-7 3. Ratified in Genesis 15:8-18 METHOD EMPLOYED: A blood agreement FEATURES: A land (Palestine) and a people (Israel) TERMS: Unconditional, no strings attached LANGUAGE: Three key words: BELIEVED, COUNTED, RIGHTEOUSNESS PROPHECY INVOLVED: The 400-year Egyptian captivity and deliverance of Israel	Gen. 15
7. MARRIAGE TO HAGAR	The PLAN of Sarai The PLIGHT of Hagar The AID of an angel The BIRTH of Ishmael	Gen. 16
8. ABRAM AT 99	SOME NEW NAMES 1. Abram changed to Abraham (father of nations) 2. Sarai changed to Sarah (a princess) 3. God introduced as <i>El Shaddai</i> (the fruitful one) A NEW SEAL: circumcision now becomes the sign of God's covenant	Gen. 17
9. GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS	ABRAHAM is visited by the Lord and two angels The GOOD news: His long-promised heir would be born the next spring The BAD news: God planned to destroy Sodom, Lot's home city SODOM is destroyed. Only Lot and his two daughters survive	Gen. 18, 19
10. ABRAHAM IN PHILISTIA	During a famine he again leaves Canaan and lies about Sarah	Gen. 20
11. THE HEIR OF THE COVENANT	Isaac is born Hagar and Ishmael are sent away	Gen. 21
12. FORESHADOWS OF CALVARY	The TYPE: 1. Sacrifice of Isaac 2. Substitute for Isaac The LOCATION: Mt. Moriah, thought to be Golgotha The REVELATION: A new name for God, Jehovah-Jireh ("the Lord will provide")	Gen. 22
13. DEATH OF SARAH	Sarah dies at 127 and is buried in the cave of Machpelah	Gen. 23
14. COMMANDING HIS SERVANT	ABRAHAM'S COMMAND: To fetch a bride for Isaac THE SERVANT'S PRAYER: Show me the right girl THE LORD'S ANSWER: Rebekah is the one THE SCRIPTURAL TYPES: This is the most type-filled chapter in the Bible	Gen. 24

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