

The Life of Abraham

Genesis 11:10-25:18

Shem's Descendants 11:10-11:26

Genesis 11:10-26 provides yet another genealogy, continuing its focus on the **family line** from **Adam to Noah**, but now moving down through **Shem** and arriving at Abram the great Patriarch. Notice the **lifespans** of **humanity** are greatly **shortened after the Flood**, whereas **Shem** lived some **600 years**, now **Terah**, Abram's father lives only **205 years**. Whatever the **cause** of this is **debated**, but nevertheless is a **significant** development. The **focus** is now going to **narrow** from **humanity** and its **spread abroad the earth**, to looking specifically at the **family line** of **Abram** and his **descendants**. Moses focuses much more closely at the **lives** of the **characters** in rest of Genesis, and there will be **14 chapters** devoted to life of **Abram** and his sons and grandsons, **Isaac, Jacob** (Israel), and the **12 sons** of **Israel**. We will come to understand the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon Abram and his family, namely the **land**, the **seed**, and the **blessing**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. As the **story** moves **forward**, special attention will be given to see how **God has cared** for and **blessed** this **family** that **He chose** to **call out** of the **Ur** of the **Chaldeans**, and **set them apart** unto **Himself**. It is this **family** that God will call to **walk with Him** in special covenant **relationship**, and also to become the great **channel** of **blessing** to the world, through whom **Jesus** the **Messiah** will come.

Terah's Descendants 11:27-32

Genesis 11:27-32 provides another break in the text to focus on Terah's family. This will establish the **family setting** and **location** for the **life** of **Abram** and his nephew **Lot**.

Genesis 11:29-31 - 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. **30 And Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.** NASB

A few important notes on 11:27-32;

- The **family is called out of a pagan idol worshipping land**, out of the worldly culture of the time. Ur of the Chaldees is near Babel (Babylon).
- **Abram's wife Sarai is barren**, and this is an obstacle to the continuing of Abram's family line
- **The location in Canaan** will set the stage for **Noah's prophecy** to be fulfilled and Canaan to be Shem's servant in **9:25-27**.

Abram's migration to Canaan (12:1-9)

Genesis 12:1-9 is a **significant text** that records the **divine speech** in calling **Abram** out of **Ur**, to become the **object of God's unique Covenant blessings**. This will create the **setting** for **God's Providence** in **establishing Abram** and his **family** as God's own **channel of blessing** to **all the nations of the world**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, **"Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."** NASB

No matter how **hopeless** the **situation** for **humanity** had become, yet **God** in His grace will **keep alive** His **promise of redemption** made to **Eve** (Gen 3:15), to eventually **overcome** the **deception** of the **serpent** and **restore humanity**. The latest news in that saga is **God calling Abraham** to the **Land of Promise**, to establish a **setting** for the **drama** to play out for **thousands** of years in the **future**. God will, through **Abraham** and in **this place**, **faithfully fulfill** His **promise** and **deliver humanity** from the **consequences** of their **sin**, even **sin** and **death**. Another striking thing about this text is the reversal of the **audacious claims** of the **tower builders** in **Babel**. **Abraham** will **receive** the very things for which the people at **Babel** **grasped**. He would have a **great name**, he would **father a great nation**, and he would become a **source of blessing throughout all the earth**. Here also is the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon **Abram** and his family, namely the **land (Canaan)**, the **seed (great nation)**, and the **blessing (to all nations)**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. But these things, even though God will do them, are also **conditioned** upon **Abram's obedient faith**. He must go forth in **obedience** to God's **calling**, at times **without even knowing** what is ahead for him.

Abram will make a **major life change** to **follow God's call**, and then God will show him the next steps. At **75 years of age**, with a **barren wife**, Abram packs up home and family and does what **God calls him to**, in **faith believing His promise**.

Genesis 12:4-9 - 4 **So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.** 5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. **7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.** 8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and **there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.** 9 Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev. NASB

A few important notes on 12:1-9;

- First mention of the **3 main Promises** of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**, **land, seed, and blessing**
- **The life of faith under testing, trial and growth.** God leads Abram often with one calling at a time, then after obedience, another.
- **Abraham obeys God's calling in faith**, worshipping as he goes building altars and calling on the name of the Lord

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** NASB

Abram in Egypt (12:10–20)

Genesis 12:10-20 explains some of the **trials** and **testing** Abram faced. Here **Abram purposely lies** to Pharaoh to try an **protect his life**. Here **Abram** could have been **killed** and **Sarai** could have been **seized** by **Pharaoh permanently**. It is important to see that **God keeps His promise to Abram** in spite of his **sins**, and even under **great threat** to the **preservation** of the **family line**. In spite of his sin, **God blesses Abram** and **protects** both **him** and **Sarai** from harm, but

also sends him back to Canaan with **substantial wealth**, a sort of first **plundering** of the Egyptians.

Genesis 12:16 - 16 Therefore **he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.** NASB

A few important notes on 12:10-20;

- **The life of faith is not always easy** & often includes many tests and trials
- **God promises are sure in certain** in spite of many barriers and obstacles. Often the very threats themselves become the means of God's blessing.
- **Abram has already obtained substantial wealth** out of a severe famine
- **Pharaoh was in severe danger** as God had promised to curse those who cursed Abram and bless those who blessed him **12:3.**

Abram and Lot separate (13:1–18)

Having left Egypt after the **altercation** with **Pharoah**, Abram returns to his former abode in the **hill country** of **Judea** and there **worships** the **Lord**. This location is key to many of the important events of his life. Here the great **wealth** of both **Abram** and **Lot** are emphasized (**13:2,5**), and so much so that they have difficulty **dwelling together** in the same place, **“for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.”** See here God had greatly prospered them, even through a difficult famine. The **kindness** and **faith** of **Abram** is mentioned as he allows **Lot** the **first choice** of the **land**, who chooses the **fertile** Jordan Valley. At this point **God reaffirms** his **land** and **offspring promise** to **Abram**, even as Abram continues in the **worship** of the **Lord**.

Genesis 13:14-18 - 14 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; **15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17 "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."** 18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. NASU

Abram's rescue of Lot (14:1–24)

Genesis 14:1-24 reveals some very interesting information about the **life** and **times** in the **region** of **Canaan**. **Lot**, having split with **Abram** to live in the Jordan Valley, soon finds himself in big trouble, being **caught** in a **battle** and **abducted** with all his **possessions** by a **confederation** of **Eastern kings**. The battle of these Eastern kings overcoming the local Canaanite kings includes much **geographical information**, and also data about **tribute payments** that were paid to the more powerful Eastern kings, for at least 12 years. When Abram hears of **Lot's abduction**, he marshals the **trained men** of his house (318 in number), and overtakes the Eastern kings at night. Abram routes these kings, **powerfully overcoming** the combined force of kings and armies.

Genesis 14:15-16 - 15 And **he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah**, which is north of Damascus. 16 And **he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.** NASB

Abram not only **rescued Lot**, but **all the people** with him and **their possessions**. Upon his **return** with **those rescued** and the **spoil**, he is met by a most intriguing character, **Melchizedek king of Salem**, who is also a "**priest of God Most High.**" He meets Abram with **bread** and **wine** and a **blessing** from **God**, but also as **priest** he came **preaching** of the **power, authority** and **glory** of **God!**

Genesis 14:18-20 - 17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And **Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.** 19 And he blessed him and said, **"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;** 20 **And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."** And he gave him a tenth of all. NASB

Abram's response to this **Priest/King** is to pay him a "**tenth of all,**" is one of **humble** acknowledgment of **God's hand** in his **victory**, but also of **Melchizedek's role** as **Priest of God**. When Abram pays a **tribute tenth** of all to Melchizedek, he **gives** it to **God**, and he acknowledges that **all he owns** came **from God** and is **God's gift** to **him**. Calvin comments; *"Nor is it to be doubted but Abram offered the gift to God, in the person of Melchizedek, in order that, by such first-fruits, he might dedicate all his possessions to God."* **end quote.** See here **Abram's devotion** to **God**. The writer to the **Hebrews** also comments concerning the **exalted nature** of **Melchizedek's Priesthood**.

Hebrews 7:1-3 - 7 For **this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God,** who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, **2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.** 3 Without father, without mother,

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. NASB

What follows is a very **vivid picture** of **Abram's faith** in **God**, and his **trust** in **God's blessings** upon his **life**, his **devotion** to **God**, and his unwillingness to take any **possessions** by use of **power**.

Genesis 14:21-24 - 21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "**I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'**" 24

"I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

Take note here, that **although Abram** is a very **powerful** and **wealthy man**, he is a man of **humble faith** and **dependence** upon **God**, who **trusts God** to **bless** him and **prosper him**, and he does not seek to prosper himself by means of **power** and **control**. He is a **worshipper** of **God** and readily acknowledges his **subordination** to **God** and his **priesthood**.

God's covenant with Abram (15:1-21)

In **Genesis 15:1-21** **God** reaffirms His **promise** to Abram after some of the **trials** and **testing** that have come his way since God's **original calling**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; **2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;** 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** NASB

God has been **refining Abram's faith** and **establishing** His **promises** of **land**, **offspring**, and **blessing** through the ups and downs of **everyday life**. There have

been **several obstacles** it seems to keep God's promises **coming true** such as, **Sarai's barrenness**, having to **leave the land for famine**, and **Sarai's being seized by Pharaoh**. But every one of these **obstacles** are **overcome** by God's good **providence** when things often seem impossible. And in these **tests**, Abram continues to **trust the Lord**, and **worship Him**, **hoping** that indeed God will come through. These are **expressions of Abram's faith**, and here in this narrative is one of the most **important verses** in the **Bible** concerning **faith**, and it is **quoted** in the New Testament **4 times** (Rom. 4:3, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

Genesis 15:6 – 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** NASB

Here Abram asks God for a **divine pledge** and God answers with a **vivid reminder** of His **promises** and cuts a **unilateral covenant** with him.

Genesis 15:1-8 - 15 After these things the **word of the Lord** came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." 2 And Abram said, "**O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?**" 3 And Abram said, "**Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.**" 4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "**Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.**" And He said to him, "**So shall your descendants be.**" 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** 7 And He said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, **to give you this land to possess it.**" 8 And he said, "O Lord God, how may I know that I shall possess it?"

A **unilateral covenant** is one that is **not dependent** on the **other party's** actions to keep its **stipulations**, and in this case **God Himself** passes through the **pieces** (15:17) and **affirms** His own **faithfulness** in bringing the promises of the Covenant to pass. God's conditional promise in **12:2** that **Abram** will become a "**great nation**" is now **guaranteed** by a **covenant**, although the fulfillment will not take place until **several centuries** after **Abram's death**.

Genesis 15:12-18 - 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 And God said to Abram, "**Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.**" 14 But I will also judge the nation whom

they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. **18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates** NASB

Here God has given a **divine pledge** of his **3 fold promise** that Abram would have a **great nation of offspring** that would **possess the land** and be **greatly blessed**.

The birth of Ishmael (16:1–16)

Genesis 16:1-16 records yet another **test of Abram's faith**, one which he **fails**. **Sarai** grows **impatient** in her **barrenness** and seeks to have **Hagar** her maidservant, **bear a child** on her **behalf**. Sadly, **Abram listened** to Sarai and Hagar **conceives a child by Abram**. When Sarai sees that Hagar had conceived, she **despises her** and **treats her harshly**. Hagar **flees** to the **wilderness**, and there is met by the **Lord** with a **blessing** upon **her** and **her child**.

Genesis 16:10-12 - 10 Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, **"I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."** 11 The angel of the Lord said to her further, - "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. **12 "And he will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."** NASB

Here we see the **great mercy of God** upon **Hagar** and **her son**, who will indeed **prosper** and himself have **many descendants**. God had **seen her** in her **affliction** so the place was named, **Beer-lahai-roi** after the **God who sees**. So after **Hagar returns** home, **Ismael** is **born**, **NOT** the **child** of the **promised seed**, but the child of an **unfaithful human** attempt to do **God's work** for Him. The result is a child who will have **many descendants** to be in **opposition** to **Abram's descendants** for **thousands of years** to come.

The covenant of circumcision (17:1–27)

Most of **Genesis 17:1-27** is **divine speech** where **God** is **expanding** His **covenant promises** to **Abram**, and giving a **new covenant stipulation**, that of the **sign of circumcision**. Here God also gives **Abram** a **new name**, **Abraham**, meaning **“5 father of many nations.”** This is something **God** often **does** when ratifying, **renewing** or restating **His promises** to one of His **chosen people**.

Genesis 17:1-8 - 17 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, **"I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."** 3 And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. **5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.** 6 "And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and **kings shall come forth from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."** NASB

Important notes on 17:1-27;

- 17:1 God calls Abram to the **holy conduct of faith**
- 17:2 God reaffirms His promise **to give Abram many descendants**
- 17:5 God gives Abraham a new name **“father of many nations.”**
- 17:6 God promises that **“kings will come forth from Abraham”**
- 17:7 God promises the **covenant to Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:7 God promises **to be the God of Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:8 God promises to give **Abrahams descendants the land of Canaan forever**
- 17:9-14 God **requires circumcision for Abraham and his descendants forever**
- 17:15 God gives Sarai a **new name Sarah** meaning **“princess”**
- 17:15-21 God promises that **Sarah will have Abraham’s son next year** and name him Isaac meaning **“laughter”**
- 17:20 God promises to **bless Ishmael and make him the a great nation**

- 17:24-27 Abraham obeys God and is circumcised along with Ismael and all who are in his household

The destruction of Sodom (18:1–19:29)

Genesis 18:1-19:29 records the **Lord appearing to Abraham at Mamre**, where he expresses a very **hospitable welcome** to the Lord and **two angels** who appear as **men**, (18:1-2 an apparent **Theophany**). Here the **Lord tells Abraham of His plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah** for the **overwhelming wickedness** (13:13, 18:20) of the **people** there. Abraham seeks to **intercede with God** for the **protection of Lot**, who is in fact **rescued** by the **angels** before the cities are destroyed.

Important notes on 18:1–19:29;

- 18:1-2 the Lord and two angels appeared to him as 3 men, an apparent **Theophany**
- 18:9-15 God promises that **Sarah will have a son next year**, both Sarah 18:12 and **Abraham** 17:17 have **laughed** at this prophecy, and **Issac's** name means "laughter"
- 18:19 The **life of faith** is seen as **synergistic between God's choosing and Abraham's doing**. Faith is both **trust in God's promise** and **responsibility to do His will**. **19 "For I have chosen him**, in order that he may command his children and his household after him **to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.**"
- 18:22-33 **Abraham successfully intercedes for Lot's protection** from God's wrath in a lengthy Hebrew bartering session LOL
- 19:2-11 **Lot's hospitality toward the two angelic visitors** is much like the hospitality of Abraham. Lot seeks to protect the two visitors from being sexually molested by the men of Sodom who are exceedingly wicked
- 19:12-15 **Lot's sons in law perish at Sodom** as they laughed at Lot's warning
- 19:16-26 **Lot hesitates in his complacency**, so the angels seize them and put them out of the city and allow them to flee to a nearby city, but **Lot's wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt**, Jesus warns that it will be just like this on the Day He is revealed (see Luke 17:30-33)
- **Peter refers to the destruction of Sodom** as an example to the ungodly and also of God's rescue of the righteous... be careful to speak poorly of Lot.

2 Peter 2:6-10 - 6 and **if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter**; 7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment NASB

Lot's relationship with his daughters (19:30–38)

The **last scene** of **Lot's life** is a rather repugnant one. Here the text **records** how **Lot became the father** of the **Moabites** and **Ammonites**, famed **enemies** of **Israel** in later years. Lot somehow became **fearful** of **living** in **Zoar** and moves to the mountains and **lives** in a **cave**. There his **two daughters**, fearing they will have **no progeny**, devise a plan whereby they will **manipulate** their **father** and cause him to **get drunk**, and do the unthinkable. Although the **whole episode** happens on **consecutive nights**, Lot has **no knowledge** of this taking place. So far we have to occasions of drunkenness in the Bible, and both have ended in tragic consequences. As Paul later writes in Ephesians 5:18 that drunkenness is debauchery.

Abimelech takes Sarah into his harem (20:1–18)

History seems to **repeat itself** here as **Abimelech king** of **Gerar** take **Sarah** into his **harem**, closely resembling the **earlier taking** of **Sarah** by **Pharaoh** (12:10–20). This places the **fulfilment** of **God's promise** for Sarah to **bear Abraham a son** into **jeopardy**. Tom Schreiner comments, *"Indeed, the promise of children was threatened when Sarah was included in the harems of Pharaoh and Abimelech. Abraham could not have children if his wife no longer belonged to him! The narrative does not focus upon Abraham's cowardice and fear, and lying about his wife, but certainly he failed to do what God commanded in these instances. Instead, it emphasizes God's dramatic intervention, for Abrahams sake, showing that nothing will prevent the Lord from fulfilling his promise. God brought a plague upon Pharaoh's house until Pharaoh realized that he had Abraham's wife and returned her to Abraham. Similarly, God threatened in a dream to kill Abimelech, because he had taken Sarah, and as a result Abimelech returned her to Abraham. Nothing can thwart God's fulfillment of his promises, neither Abrahams*

failures of faith, nor the opposition of unbelieving kings. **End quote.** God by His meticulous providence protected Sarah, and His covenant promise.

Genesis 20:6 - 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, **and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.** NASB

Not only did God **protect Sarah** and **Abraham** a **second time**, but they were also **enriched** in the whole **episode** a **second time**.

Genesis 20:14-18 - "**14 Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him.** 15 And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." **16 And to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver;** behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared." **17 And Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children. 18 For the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.** NASB

Remember, God's earlier promise...

Genesis 12:3 - 3 And **I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.** NASB

The birth of Isaac (21:1–21)

Right on time, **God's promise** to give the **old couple** a **son** comes to **fulfilment**.

Genesis 21:1-7 - 21 Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. **2 So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.** 3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. **4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."** 7 And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." NASB

The **New Testament** commends both **Abraham** and **Sarah** for believing God's promise concerning the **birth** of **Isaac**.

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he lived as an

alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; 12 therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as

good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. NASB

When **Ishmael** is seen **mocking** by Sarah, she asks **Abraham** to **send Hagar and Ishmael away**. Although deeply **troubled**, Abraham sends them away after the **Lord reaffirms** to him that **Isaac** is going to be the **son of promise**.

Genesis 21:12 - 12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, **for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.** NASB

While **Isaac takes priority** over **Ishmael**, God does not abandon Hagar and her son. Rather, he finds them in the **wilderness** and **cares for them** until the boy grows old. God **reaffirms** his promise to her that **Ishmael** will become a **great nation**.

Genesis 21:17-21 - 17 And God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand; for I will make a great nation of him.**" 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw

a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. **20 And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness, and became an archer.** 21 And he lived in the wilderness

of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. NASB

Abimelech makes a treaty with Abraham (21:22–34)

Genesis 21:22-34 records a **treaty** between **Abraham** and **Abimelech**. Surely Abimelech **realizes** Abraham is a **powerful man**, so he seeks terms of lasting **peace** with him, which Abraham is glad to do. This treaty is intended to protect both parties.

The testing of Abraham (22:1–19)

Genesis 22:1-19 records without doubt the greatest test that Abraham faced. This surely is the climactic point in his life and relationship with God.

Genesis 22:1-2 - 1 Now it came about after these things, that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 And He said, **"Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."** NASB

Put to the test by God, Abraham shows steadfast faith in God, even when it appears all that God has promised is at stake. He obeys without flinching.

Genesis 22:3-6 - 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and **arose and went to the place of which God had told him.** 4 **On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.** 5 **And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."** 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. NASB

Somehow Abraham had to **reason** within himself that **God was able** to fulfill His promises no matter what He may call Abraham to do. God's testing **appeared to contradict** His **promises to Abraham**, and in this way it becomes the **ultimate test of faith**. Will you **believe that God** will give you **everything** when it appears you are about to **lose everything**? The Hebrews writer comments.

Hebrews 11:17-19 - 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;** 18 it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." **19 He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead;** from which he also received him back as a type. NASB

Up to this point Abraham had **many tests of faith**, and **each time** God came through to **continue to establish** His **covenant** and **promises**. So now even in the face of a **devastating test**, Abraham shows **remarkable trust** in **God's promise**. The scene must have been one of **intense emotional stress** between father and son (**22:7-13**), yet **Abraham's faith** is **unwavering in obedience to God**. This must have also been a **massive lesson in faith** to **Isaac**, who will soon be carrying on the

family line and covenant promise. The **climactic moment** arrives as Abraham raises the knife to slay his only son.

Genesis 22:10-13 - 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **12 And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. NASB

Here as **God suddenly prevents** Abraham from the unthinkable, the divine answer sheds light on **God's test** of Abraham's faith. **"12 now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** Is Abraham's **full trust and obedience in God** even when the thing **he loves the most** is at stake? Does Abraham have **any other Gods** in a higher and **more devoted** place than **the Lord**? Here we see where **Abraham** has **passed the test**, and His **faith** (believing in God and His promises) is shown to be **genuine** by his **works** (offering up his only son).

James 2:21-23 - 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, **when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?** **22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;** **23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,"** and he was called the friend of God. NASB

Now there are many **types** and **shadows coloring** this story of **faith**, sacrifice and **substitutionary atonement**, and even a portrait of **God the Father** sacrificing **His only Son**, on the exact place of the **Temple Mount at Jerusalem (Mt Moriah)**. Clearly, the ultimate **picture** here is the **Gospel** of our **Lord Jesus**, being the **Lamb of God** who takes away the **sin** of the **world**, and **right here** on the **mount of the Lord** where **God will provide** a **lamb** for the **sacrifice**. Here again **God confirms His oath** and promise that **all nations** will be **blessed** from **Abraham's offspring** and **blessing**.

Genesis 22:14-18 - 14 And **Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide**, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." 15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, **"By Myself I have sworn,**

declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

The story now begins to transition from a focus on Abraham's life to Isaac and his family.

Nahor's children (22:20–24)

Here Abraham's relatives are mentioned as they will play an important role in upcoming chapters when Abraham seeks a bride for his son Isaac.

Genesis 22:20-24 - 20 Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, "**Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor:** 21 Uz his first-born and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram 22 and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel." **23 And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah: these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.** 24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.

The death and burial of Sarah (23:1–20)

Here we see the story of Abraham drawing to a conclusion with a great loss in the death of his wife Sarah. The setting is when Abraham seeks to buy some land for a burial plot for Sarah in Hebron. *ESV Study Bible* notes; "By acquiring this plot of land, Abraham not only establishes future rights to it for his family but puts down a marker that his descendants are to be associated with the land of Canaan, as God had already promised." Up until this point, Abraham was only **sojourning**, and had **not** actually **owned** any of the **land** that God had promised to him and his descendants. This **official transaction** that was held, after an **exorbitant deal** with Ephron the Hittite, results in the land being **officially deeded** to Abraham in the presence of the all who sat in the gate of the city.

Genesis 23:14-20 - 14 Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15 "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead." 16 And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard. **17 So Ephron's field,**

which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over 18 to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20 So the field, and the cave that is in it, were deeded over to Abraham for a burial site by the sons of Heth. NASB

This of course will play an **important role** in story later when **Abraham** (25:9), **Isaac** and **Rebekah**, and **Jacob** and **Leah** are **buried here** (49:29-31; 50:13).

A wife for Isaac (24:1–67)

Genesis 24:1-67 records one of the longest episodes in the Book of Genesis. In it the awesome **providence of God** is on display as Abraham seeks a bride for his son from his relatives in Haran, approximately 550 miles away. After the long journey Abraham's servant is guided directly to Rebekah. There, meeting Abraham's family, the **servant petitions** them for **Rebekah's hand** in marriage. Rebekah must **leave her family** and country in **an act of faith** in order to return to Canaan and marry Isaac, whom she has never met. The story is one of divine intervention for sure, as the servant is steadfast to accomplish his task, and Rebekah responds positively to the invitation. God's amazing providence is seen in several unlikely events.

Important notes on 24:1-67;

24:2 **Abraham chooses his chief servant**, the oldest of his household, who **had charge of all** that he owned

24:4 Abraham is very concerned that Isaac **not marry a Canaanite**

24:5-9 **Abraham is very confident** they will find a wife as God promised **"7 To your descendants I will give this land, ' He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there"**

24:14 the **servants prayer exactly answered** – **"14 now may it be that the girl to whom I say, ' Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, ' Drink, and I will water your camels also'; — may she be the one whom Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac"**

24:17-27 the **servant is guided by God** directly to Abraham's family and Rebekah **"27 the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers"**

24:28-51 Remarkably **Rebekah's father answers** immediately with a **positive** answer in faith - **"50 The matter comes from the Lord; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."**

24:53 the **servant gives costly gifts from Abraham to Rebekah** and her family – **"53 And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother"**

24:58 **Rebekah willing goes with the servant to marry Isaac** having never met him – **"58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."**

24:60 the **family's blessing parallels God's covenant promise to Isaac** – **"60 May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your descendants possess The gate of those who hate them."**

The **whole story** is indeed one of the **great love stories** in the **Bible**. The final scene is one of **fairy tale** endings.

Genesis 24:65-67 - 65 And she said to the servant, **"Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant said, "He is my master." Then she took her veil and covered herself.** 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. **67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her;** thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. NASB

This story holds some profound **types** and **shadows** of the **doctrine** of the **Application of Redemption**. The **chief servant** of the Father (Holy Spirit), goes to a **foreign land** (Gentiles) to get a **bride** (the Church) for the **Son** (Jesus). In an amazing set of **divine circumstances** (effectual calling), the exact bride **chosen by God**, Rebekah (Divine election) is **led right to the servant** and **willingly** leaves all she has to **marry** the Son (Irresistible grace). The **servant gives gifts** (spiritual gifts) to the **bride** while **she waits to see the Son**, and consummate the **marriage** (Second Coming).

The death of Abraham (25:1–11)

Here Moses closes the story of the life of Abraham the Patriarch. Here there is some information about another wife that Abraham had after Sarah, and some sons that he had that he sent away from Isaac to the east.

Genesis 25:7-8 - 7 And these are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. **8 And Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life;** and he was gathered to his people. NASB

Abraham was buried in the burial cave he bought in Hebron. The story continues with God's blessing upon Isaac.

Genesis 25:11 - 11 And it came about after the death of Abraham, **that God blessed his son Isaac;** and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi. NASB

One important note is that our **Lord Jesus** make comment about **Abraham** that he is **not dead**, but **living**. This is indeed the **heritage** of the **servants** of the **Lord**. For those that have **genuine faith** in **God**, even though they **die** (physically), yet shall they **live** (spiritually) **forever** with **God** on His **green earth**.

Matthew 22:31 - 31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? **He is not the God of the dead but of the living.** " NASB

The Hebrews writer shows the exceeding great hope that the faithful have even after this life ends.

Hebrews 11:13-16 - **13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.** NASB

The genealogy of Ishmael (25:12–18)

Here in **Genesis 25:12-18** a short section is devoted to a **genealogy** of **Ishmael**. His sons became **chiefs** of tribes in **Arabia**. See here **God's Word** from 17:20 is fulfilled.

Genesis 25:16-17 - 16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes. **17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.** NASB

The Life of Abraham

Genesis 11:10-25:18

Shem's Descendants 11:10-11:26

Genesis 11:10-26 provides yet another genealogy, continuing its focus on the **family line** from **Adam to Noah**, but now moving down through **Shem** and arriving at Abram the great Patriarch. Notice the **lifespans** of **humanity** are greatly **shortened after the Flood**, whereas **Shem** lived some **600 years**, now **Terah**, Abram's father lives only **205 years**. Whatever the **cause** of this is **debated**, but nevertheless is a **significant** development. The **focus** is now going to **narrow** from **humanity** and its **spread abroad the earth**, to looking specifically at the **family line** of **Abram** and his **descendants**. Moses focuses much more closely at the **lives** of the **characters** in rest of Genesis, and there will be **14 chapters** devoted to life of **Abram** and his sons and grandsons, **Isaac, Jacob** (Israel), and the **12 sons** of **Israel**. We will come to understand the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon Abram and his family, namely the **land**, the **seed**, and the **blessing**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. As the **story** moves **forward**, special attention will be given to see how **God has cared** for and **blessed** this **family** that **He chose** to **call out** of the **Ur** of the **Chaldeans**, and **set them apart** unto **Himself**. It is this **family** that God will call to **walk with Him** in special covenant **relationship**, and also to become the great **channel** of **blessing** to the world, through whom **Jesus the Messiah** will come.

Terah's Descendants 11:27-32

Genesis 11:27-32 provides another break in the text to focus on Terah's family. This will establish the **family setting** and **location** for the **life** of **Abram** and his nephew **Lot**.

Genesis 11:29-31 - 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. **30 And Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.** NASB

A few important notes on 11:27-32;

- The **family is called out of a pagan idol worshipping land**, out of the worldly culture of the time. Ur of the Chaldees is near Babel (Babylon).
- **Abram's wife Sarai is barren**, and this is an obstacle to the continuing of Abram's family line
- **The location in Canaan** will set the stage for **Noah's prophecy** to be fulfilled and Canaan to be Shem's servant in **9:25-27**.

Abram's migration to Canaan (12:1-9)

Genesis 12:1-9 is a **significant text** that records the **divine speech** in calling **Abram** out of **Ur**, to become the **object of God's unique Covenant blessings**. This will create the **setting** for **God's Providence** in **establishing Abram** and his **family** as God's own **channel of blessing** to **all the nations of the world**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, **"Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."** NASB

No matter how **hopeless** the **situation** for **humanity** had become, yet **God** in His grace will **keep alive** His **promise of redemption** made to **Eve** (Gen 3:15), to eventually **overcome** the **deception** of the **serpent** and **restore humanity**. The latest news in that saga is **God calling Abraham** to the **Land of Promise**, to establish a **setting** for the **drama** to play out for **thousands** of years in the **future**. God will, through **Abraham** and in **this place**, **faithfully fulfill** His **promise** and **deliver humanity** from the **consequences** of their **sin**, even **sin** and **death**. Another striking thing about this text is the reversal of the **audacious claims** of the **tower builders** in **Babel**. **Abraham** will **receive** the very things for which the people at **Babel** **grasped**. He would have a **great name**, he would **father a great nation**, and he would become a **source of blessing throughout all the earth**. Here also is the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon **Abram** and his family, namely the **land (Canaan)**, the **seed (great nation)**, and the **blessing (to all nations)**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. But these things, even though God will do them, are also **conditioned** upon **Abram's obedient faith**. He must go forth in **obedience** to God's **calling**, at times **without even knowing** what is ahead for him.

Abram will make a **major life change** to **follow God's call**, and then God will show him the next steps. At **75 years of age**, with a **barren wife**, Abram packs up home and family and does what **God calls him to**, in **faith believing His promise**.

Genesis 12:4-9 - 4 **So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.** 5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. **7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.** 8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and **there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.** 9 Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev. NASB

A few important notes on 12:1-9;

- First mention of the **3 main Promises** of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**, **land, seed, and blessing**
- **The life of faith under testing, trial and growth.** God leads Abram often with one calling at a time, then after obedience, another.
- **Abraham obeys God's calling in faith**, worshipping as he goes building altars and calling on the name of the Lord

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** NASB

Abram in Egypt (12:10–20)

Genesis 12:10-20 explains some of the **trials** and **testing** Abram faced. Here **Abram purposely lies** to Pharaoh to try and **protect his life**. Here **Abram** could have been **killed** and **Sarai** could have been **seized** by **Pharaoh permanently**. It is important to see that **God keeps His promise to Abram** in spite of his **sins**, and even under **great threat** to the **preservation** of the **family line**. In spite of his sin, **God blesses Abram** and **protects** both **him** and **Sarai** from harm, but

also sends him back to Canaan with **substantial wealth**, a sort of first **plundering** of the Egyptians.

Genesis 12:16 - 16 Therefore **he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.** NASB

A few important notes on 12:10-20;

- **The life of faith is not always easy** & often includes many tests and trials
- **God promises are sure in certain** in spite of many barriers and obstacles. Often the very threats themselves become the means of God's blessing.
- **Abram has already obtained substantial wealth** out of a severe famine
- **Pharaoh was in severe danger** as God had promised to curse those who cursed Abram and bless those who blessed him **12:3.**

Abram and Lot separate (13:1–18)

Having left Egypt after the **altercation** with **Pharaoh**, Abram returns to his former abode in the **hill country** of **Judea** and there **worships** the **Lord**. This location is key to many of the important events of his life. Here the great **wealth** of both **Abram** and **Lot** are emphasized (**13:2,5**), and so much so that they have difficulty **dwelling together** in the same place, **“for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.”** See here God had greatly prospered them, even through a difficult famine. The **kindness** and **faith** of **Abram** is mentioned as he allows **Lot** the **first choice** of the **land**, who chooses the **fertile** Jordan Valley. At this point **God reaffirms** his **land** and **offspring promise** to **Abram**, even as Abram continues in the **worship** of the **Lord**.

Genesis 13:14-18 - 14 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; **15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17 "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."** 18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. NASU

Abram's rescue of Lot (14:1–24)

Genesis 14:1-24 reveals some very interesting information about the **life** and **times** in the **region** of **Canaan**. **Lot**, having split with **Abram** to live in the Jordan Valley, soon finds himself in big trouble, being **caught** in a **battle** and **abducted** with all his **possessions** by a **confederation** of **Eastern kings**. The battle of these Eastern kings overcoming the local Canaanite kings includes much **geographical information**, and also data about **tribute payments** that were paid to the more powerful Eastern kings, for at least 12 years. When Abram hears of **Lot's abduction**, he marshals the **trained men** of his house (318 in number), and overtakes the Eastern kings at night. Abram routes these kings, **powerfully overcoming** the combined force of kings and armies.

Genesis 14:15-16 - 15 And **he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah**, which is north of Damascus. 16 And **he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.** NASB

Abram not only **rescued Lot**, but **all the people** with him and **their possessions**. Upon his **return** with **those rescued** and the **spoil**, he is met by a most intriguing character, **Melchizedek king of Salem**, who is also a "**priest of God Most High.**" He meets Abram with **bread** and **wine** and a **blessing** from **God**, but also as **priest** he came **preaching** of the **power, authority** and **glory** of **God!**

Genesis 14:18-20 - 17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And **Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.** 19 And he blessed him and said, **"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;** 20 **And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."** And he gave him a tenth of all. NASB

Abram's response to this **Priest/King** is to pay him a "**tenth of all,**" is one of **humble** acknowledgment of **God's hand** in his **victory**, but also of **Melchizedek's role** as **Priest of God**. When Abram pays a **tribute tenth** of all to Melchizedek, he **gives** it to **God**, and he acknowledges that **all he owns** came **from God** and is **God's gift** to **him**. Calvin comments; *"Nor is it to be doubted but Abram offered the gift to God, in the person of Melchizedek, in order that, by such first-fruits, he might dedicate all his possessions to God."* **end quote.** See here **Abram's devotion** to **God**. The writer to the **Hebrews** also comments concerning the **exalted nature** of **Melchizedek's Priesthood**.

Hebrews 7:1-3 - 7 For **this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God,** who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, **2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.** 3 Without father, without mother,

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. NASB

What follows is a very **vivid picture** of **Abram's faith** in **God**, and his **trust** in **God's blessings** upon his **life**, his **devotion** to **God**, and his unwillingness to take any **possessions** by use of **power**.

Genesis 14:21-24 - 21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "**I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'**" 24

"I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

Take note here, that **although Abram** is a very **powerful** and **wealthy man**, he is a man of **humble faith** and **dependence** upon **God**, who **trusts God** to **bless** him and **prosper him**, and he does not seek to prosper himself by means of **power** and **control**. He is a **worshipper** of **God** and readily acknowledges his **subordination** to **God** and his **priesthood**.

God's covenant with Abram (15:1-21)

In **Genesis 15:1-21** **God** reaffirms His **promise** to Abram after some of the **trials** and **testing** that have come his way since God's **original calling**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; **2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;** 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** NASB

God has been **refining Abram's faith** and **establishing** His **promises** of **land**, **offspring**, and **blessing** through the ups and downs of **everyday life**. There have

been **several obstacles** it seems to keep God's promises **coming true** such as, **Sarai's barrenness**, having to **leave the land for famine**, and **Sarai's being seized by Pharaoh**. But every one of these **obstacles** are **overcome** by God's good **providence** when things often seem impossible. And in these **tests**, Abram continues to **trust the Lord**, and **worship Him**, **hoping** that indeed God will come through. These are **expressions of Abram's faith**, and here in this narrative is one of the most **important verses** in the **Bible** concerning **faith**, and it is **quoted** in the New Testament **4 times** (Rom. 4:3, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

Genesis 15:6 – 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** NASB

Here Abram asks God for a **divine pledge** and God answers with a **vivid reminder** of His **promises** and cuts a **unilateral covenant** with him.

Genesis 15:1-8 - 15 After these things the **word of the Lord** came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." 2 And Abram said, "**O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?**" 3 And Abram said, "**Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.**" 4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "**Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.**" And He said to him, "**So shall your descendants be.**" 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** 7 And He said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, **to give you this land to possess it.**" 8 And he said, "O Lord God, how may I know that I shall possess it?"

A **unilateral covenant** is one that is **not dependent** on the **other party's** actions to keep its **stipulations**, and in this case **God Himself** passes through the **pieces** (15:17) and **affirms** His own **faithfulness** in bringing the promises of the Covenant to pass. God's conditional promise in **12:2** that **Abram** will become a "**great nation**" is now **guaranteed** by a **covenant**, although the fulfillment will not take place until **several centuries** after **Abram's death**.

Genesis 15:12-18 - 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 And God said to Abram, "**Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.** 14 But I will also judge the nation whom

they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. **18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates** NASB

Here God has given a **divine pledge** of his **3 fold promise** that Abram would have a **great nation of offspring** that would **possess the land** and be **greatly blessed**.

The birth of Ishmael (16:1–16)

Genesis 16:1-16 records yet another **test of Abram's faith**, one which he **fails**. **Sarai** grows **impatient** in her **barrenness** and seeks to have **Hagar** her maidservant, **bear a child** on her **behalf**. Sadly, **Abram listened** to Sarai and Hagar **conceives a child by Abram**. When Sarai sees that Hagar had conceived, she **despises her** and **treats her harshly**. Hagar **flees** to the **wilderness**, and there is met by the **Lord** with a **blessing** upon **her** and **her child**.

Genesis 16:10-12 - 10 Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, **"I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."** 11 The angel of the Lord said to her further, - "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. **12 "And he will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."** NASB

Here we see the **great mercy of God** upon **Hagar** and **her son**, who will indeed **prosper** and himself have **many descendants**. God had **seen her** in her **affliction** so the place was named, **Beer-lahai-roi** after the **God who sees**. So after **Hagar returns** home, **Ismael** is **born**, **NOT** the **child** of the **promised seed**, but the child of an **unfaithful human** attempt to do **God's work** for Him. The result is a child who will have **many descendants** to be in **opposition** to **Abram's descendants** for **thousands of years** to come.

The covenant of circumcision (17:1–27)

Most of **Genesis 17:1-27** is **divine speech** where **God** is **expanding** His **covenant promises** to **Abram**, and giving a **new covenant stipulation**, that of the **sign of circumcision**. Here God also gives **Abram** a **new name**, **Abraham**, meaning **“5 father of many nations.”** This is something **God** often **does** when ratifying, **renewing** or restating **His promises** to one of His **chosen people**.

Genesis 17:1-8 - 17 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, **"I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."** 3 And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. **5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.** 6 "And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and **kings shall come forth from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."** NASB

Important notes on 17:1-27;

- 17:1 God calls Abram to the **holy conduct of faith**
- 17:2 God reaffirms His promise **to give Abram many descendants**
- 17:5 God gives Abraham a new name **“father of many nations.”**
- 17:6 God promises that **“kings will come forth from Abraham”**
- 17:7 God promises the **covenant to Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:7 God promises **to be the God of Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:8 God promises to give **Abrahams descendants the land of Canaan forever**
- 17:9-14 God **requires circumcision for Abraham and his descendants forever**
- 17:15 God gives Sarai a **new name Sarah** meaning **“princess”**
- 17:15-21 God promises that **Sarah will have Abraham’s son next year** and name him Isaac meaning **“laughter”**
- 17:20 God promises to **bless Ishmael and make him the a great nation**

- 17:24-27 Abraham obeys God and is circumcised along with Ismael and all who are in his household

The destruction of Sodom (18:1–19:29)

Genesis 18:1-19:29 records the **Lord appearing to Abraham at Mamre**, where he expresses a very **hospitable welcome** to the Lord and **two angels** who appear as **men**, (18:1-2 an apparent **Theophany**). Here the **Lord tells Abraham of His plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah** for the **overwhelming wickedness** (13:13, 18:20) of the **people** there. Abraham seeks to **intercede with God** for the **protection of Lot**, who is in fact **rescued** by the **angels** before the cities are destroyed.

Important notes on 18:1–19:29;

- 18:1-2 the Lord and two angels appeared to him as 3 men, an apparent **Theophany**
- 18:9-15 God promises that **Sarah will have a son next year**, both Sarah 18:12 and **Abraham** 17:17 have **laughed** at this prophecy, and **Issac's** name means "laughter"
- 18:19 The **life of faith** is seen as **synergistic between God's choosing and Abraham's doing**. Faith is both **trust in God's promise** and **responsibility to do His will**. **19 "For I have chosen him**, in order that he may command his children and his household after him **to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.**"
- 18:22-33 **Abraham successfully intercedes for Lot's protection** from God's wrath in a lengthy Hebrew bartering session LOL
- 19:2-11 **Lot's hospitality toward the two angelic visitors** is much like the hospitality of Abraham. Lot seeks to protect the two visitors from being sexually molested by the men of Sodom who are exceedingly wicked
- 19:12-15 **Lot's sons in law perish at Sodom** as they laughed at Lot's warning
- 19:16-26 **Lot hesitates in his complacency**, so the angels seize them and put them out of the city and allow them to flee to a nearby city, but **Lot's wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt**, Jesus warns that it will be just like this on the Day He is revealed (see Luke 17:30-33)
- **Peter refers to the destruction of Sodom** as an example to the ungodly and also of God's rescue of the righteous... be careful to speak poorly of Lot.

2 Peter 2:6-10 - 6 and **if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter**; 7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment NASB

Lot's relationship with his daughters (19:30–38)

The **last scene** of **Lot's life** is a rather repugnant one. Here the text **records** how **Lot became the father** of the **Moabites** and **Ammonites**, famed **enemies** of **Israel** in later years. Lot somehow became **fearful** of **living** in **Zoar** and moves to the mountains and **lives** in a **cave**. There his **two daughters**, fearing they will have **no progeny**, devise a plan whereby they will **manipulate** their **father** and cause him to **get drunk**, and do the unthinkable. Although the **whole episode** happens on **consecutive nights**, Lot has **no knowledge** of this taking place. So far we have to occasions of drunkenness in the Bible, and both have ended in tragic consequences. As Paul later writes in Ephesians 5:18 that drunkenness is debauchery.

Abimelech takes Sarah into his harem (20:1–18)

History seems to **repeat itself** here as **Abimelech king** of **Gerar** take **Sarah** into his **harem**, closely resembling the **earlier taking** of **Sarah** by **Pharaoh** (12:10–20). This places the **fulfilment** of **God's promise** for Sarah to **bear Abraham a son** into **jeopardy**. Tom Schreiner comments, *"Indeed, the promise of children was threatened when Sarah was included in the harems of Pharaoh and Abimelech. Abraham could not have children if his wife no longer belonged to him! The narrative does not focus upon Abraham's cowardice and fear, and lying about his wife, but certainly he failed to do what God commanded in these instances. Instead, it emphasizes God's dramatic intervention, for Abrahams sake, showing that nothing will prevent the Lord from fulfilling his promise. God brought a plague upon Pharaoh's house until Pharaoh realized that he had Abraham's wife and returned her to Abraham. Similarly, God threatened in a dream to kill Abimelech, because he had taken Sarah, and as a result Abimelech returned her to Abraham. Nothing can thwart God's fulfillment of his promises, neither Abrahams*

failures of faith, nor the opposition of unbelieving kings. **End quote.** God by His meticulous providence protected Sarah, and His covenant promise.

Genesis 20:6 - 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, **and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.** NASB

Not only did God **protect Sarah** and **Abraham** a **second time**, but they were also **enriched** in the whole **episode** a **second time**.

Genesis 20:14-18 - "**14 Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him.** 15 And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." **16 And to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver;** behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared." **17 And Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children. 18 For the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.** NASB

Remember, God's earlier promise...

Genesis 12:3 - 3 And **I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.** NASB

The birth of Isaac (21:1–21)

Right on time, **God's promise** to give the **old couple** a **son** comes to **fulfilment**.

Genesis 21:1-7 - 21 Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. **2 So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.** 3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. **4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."** 7 And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." NASB

The **New Testament** commends both **Abraham** and **Sarah** for believing God's promise concerning the **birth** of **Isaac**.

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he lived as an

alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; 12 therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as

good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. NASB

When **Ishmael** is seen **mocking** by Sarah, she asks **Abraham** to **send Hagar and Ishmael away**. Although deeply **troubled**, Abraham sends them away after the **Lord reaffirms** to him that **Isaac** is going to be the **son of promise**.

Genesis 21:12 - 12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, **for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.** NASB

While **Isaac takes priority** over **Ishmael**, God does not abandon Hagar and her son. Rather, he finds them in the **wilderness** and **cares for them** until the boy grows old. God **reaffirms** his promise to her that **Ishmael** will become a **great nation**.

Genesis 21:17-21 - 17 And God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand; for I will make a great nation of him.**" 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw

a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. **20 And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness, and became an archer.** 21 And he lived in the wilderness

of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. NASB

Abimelech makes a treaty with Abraham (21:22–34)

Genesis 21:22-34 records a **treaty** between **Abraham** and **Abimelech**. Surely Abimelech **realizes** Abraham is a **powerful man**, so he seeks terms of lasting **peace** with him, which Abraham is glad to do. This treaty is intended to protect both parties.

The testing of Abraham (22:1–19)

Genesis 22:1-19 records without doubt the greatest test that Abraham faced. This surely is the climactic point in his life and relationship with God.

Genesis 22:1-2 - 1 Now it came about after these things, that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 And He said, **"Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."** NASB

Put to the test by God, Abraham shows steadfast faith in God, even when it appears all that God has promised is at stake. He obeys without flinching.

Genesis 22:3-6 - 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and **arose and went to the place of which God had told him.** 4 **On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.** 5 **And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."** 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. NASB

Somehow Abraham had to **reason** within himself that **God was able** to fulfill His promises no matter what He may call Abraham to do. God's testing **appeared to contradict** His **promises to Abraham**, and in this way it becomes the **ultimate test of faith**. Will you **believe that God** will give you **everything** when it appears you are about to **lose everything**? The Hebrews writer comments.

Hebrews 11:17-19 - 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;** 18 it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." **19 He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead;** from which he also received him back as a type. NASB

Up to this point Abraham had **many tests of faith**, and **each time** God came through to **continue to establish** His **covenant** and **promises**. So now even in the face of a **devastating test**, Abraham shows **remarkable trust** in **God's promise**. The scene must have been one of **intense emotional stress** between father and son (**22:7-13**), yet **Abraham's faith is unwavering in obedience to God**. This must have also been a **massive lesson in faith to Isaac**, who will soon be carrying on the

family line and covenant promise. The **climactic moment** arrives as Abraham raises the knife to slay his only son.

Genesis 22:10-13 - 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **12 And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. NASB

Here as **God suddenly prevents** Abraham from the unthinkable, the divine answer sheds light on **God's test** of Abraham's faith. **"12 now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** Is Abraham's **full trust and obedience in God** even when the thing **he loves the most** is at stake? Does Abraham have **any other Gods** in a higher and **more devoted** place than **the Lord**? Here we see where **Abraham** has **passed the test**, and His **faith** (believing in God and His promises) is shown to be **genuine** by his **works** (offering up his only son).

James 2:21-23 - 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, **when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?** **22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;** **23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,"** and he was called the friend of God. NASB

Now there are many **types** and **shadows coloring** this story of **faith**, sacrifice and **substitutionary atonement**, and even a portrait of **God the Father** sacrificing **His only Son**, on the exact place of the **Temple Mount at Jerusalem (Mt Moriah)**. Clearly, the ultimate **picture** here is the **Gospel** of our **Lord Jesus**, being the **Lamb of God** who takes away the **sin** of the **world**, and **right here** on the **mount of the Lord** where **God will provide** a **lamb** for the **sacrifice**. Here again **God confirms His oath** and promise that **all nations** will be **blessed** from **Abraham's offspring** and **blessing**.

Genesis 22:14-18 - 14 And **Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide**, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." 15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, **"By Myself I have sworn,**

declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

The story now begins to transition from a focus on Abraham's life to Isaac and his family.

Nahor's children (22:20–24)

Here Abraham's relatives are mentioned as they will play an important role in upcoming chapters when Abraham seeks a bride for his son Isaac.

Genesis 22:20-24 - 20 Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, "**Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor:** 21 Uz his first-born and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram 22 and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel." **23 And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah: these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.** 24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.

The death and burial of Sarah (23:1–20)

Here we see the story of Abraham drawing to a conclusion with a great loss in the death of his wife Sarah. The setting is when Abraham seeks to buy some land for a burial plot for Sarah in Hebron. *ESV Study Bible* notes; "By acquiring this plot of land, Abraham not only establishes future rights to it for his family but puts down a marker that his descendants are to be associated with the land of Canaan, as God had already promised." Up until this point, Abraham was only **sojourning**, and had **not** actually **owned** any of the **land** that God had promised to him and his descendants. This **official transaction** that was held, after an **exorbitant deal** with Ephron the Hittite, results in the land being **officially deeded** to Abraham in the presence of the all who sat in the gate of the city.

Genesis 23:14-20 - 14 Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15 "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead." 16 And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard. **17 So Ephron's field,**

which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over 18 to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20 So the field, and the cave that is in it, were deeded over to Abraham for a burial site by the sons of Heth. NASB

This of course will play an **important role** in story later when **Abraham** (25:9), **Isaac** and **Rebekah**, and **Jacob** and **Leah** are **buried here** (49:29-31; 50:13).

A wife for Isaac (24:1–67)

Genesis 24:1-67 records one of the longest episodes in the Book of Genesis. In it the awesome **providence of God** is on display as Abraham seeks a bride for his son from his relatives in Haran, approximately 550 miles away. After the long journey Abraham's servant is guided directly to Rebekah. There, meeting Abraham's family, the **servant petitions** them for **Rebekah's hand** in marriage. Rebekah must **leave her family** and country in **an act of faith** in order to return to Canaan and marry Isaac, whom she has never met. The story is one of divine intervention for sure, as the servant is steadfast to accomplish his task, and Rebekah responds positively to the invitation. God's amazing providence is seen in several unlikely events.

Important notes on 24:1-67;

24:2 **Abraham chooses his chief servant**, the oldest of his household, who **had charge of all** that he owned

24:4 Abraham is very concerned that Isaac **not marry a Canaanite**

24:5-9 **Abraham is very confident** they will find a wife as God promised **"7 To your descendants I will give this land, ' He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there"**

24:14 the **servants prayer exactly answered** – **"14 now may it be that the girl to whom I say, ' Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, ' Drink, and I will water your camels also'; — may she be the one whom Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac"**

24:17-27 the **servant is guided by God** directly to Abraham's family and Rebekah **"27 the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers"**

24:28-51 Remarkably **Rebekah's father answers** immediately with a **positive** answer in faith - **"50 The matter comes from the Lord; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."**

24:53 the **servant gives costly gifts from Abraham to Rebekah** and her family – **"53 And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother"**

24:58 **Rebekah willing goes with the servant to marry Isaac** having never met him – **"58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."**

24:60 the **family's blessing parallels God's covenant promise to Isaac** – **"60 May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your descendants possess The gate of those who hate them."**

The **whole story** is indeed one of the **great love stories** in the **Bible**. The final scene is one of **fairy tale** endings.

Genesis 24:65-67 - 65 And she said to the servant, **"Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant said, "He is my master." Then she took her veil and covered herself.** 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. **67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her;** thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. NASB

This story holds some profound **types** and **shadows** of the **doctrine** of the **Application of Redemption**. The **chief servant** of the Father (Holy Spirit), goes to a **foreign land** (Gentiles) to get a **bride** (the Church) for the **Son** (Jesus). In an amazing set of **divine circumstances** (effectual calling), the exact bride **chosen by God**, Rebekah (Divine election) is **led right to the servant** and **willingly** leaves all she has to **marry** the Son (Irresistible grace). The **servant gives gifts** (spiritual gifts) to the **bride** while **she waits to see the Son**, and consummate the **marriage** (Second Coming).

The death of Abraham (25:1–11)

Here Moses closes the story of the life of Abraham the Patriarch. Here there is some information about another wife that Abraham had after Sarah, and some sons that he had that he sent away from Isaac to the east.

Genesis 25:7-8 - 7 And these are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. **8 And Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life;** and he was gathered to his people. NASB

Abraham was buried in the burial cave he bought in Hebron. The story continues with God's blessing upon Isaac.

Genesis 25:11 - 11 And it came about after the death of Abraham, **that God blessed his son Isaac;** and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi. NASB

One important note is that our **Lord Jesus** make comment about **Abraham** that he is **not dead**, but **living**. This is indeed the **heritage** of the **servants** of the **Lord**. For those that have **genuine faith** in **God**, even though they **die** (physically), yet shall they **live** (spiritually) **forever** with **God** on His **green earth**.

Matthew 22:31 - 31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? **He is not the God of the dead but of the living.** " NASB

The Hebrews writer shows the exceeding great hope that the faithful have even after this life ends.

Hebrews 11:13-16 - **13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.** NASB

The genealogy of Ishmael (25:12–18)

Here in **Genesis 25:12-18** a short section is devoted to a **genealogy** of **Ishmael**. His sons became **chiefs** of tribes in **Arabia**. See here **God's Word** from 17:20 is fulfilled.

Genesis 25:16-17 - 16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes. **17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.** NASB

The Life of Abraham

Genesis 11:10-25:18

Shem's Descendants 11:10-11:26

Genesis 11:10-26 provides yet another genealogy, continuing its focus on the **family line** from **Adam to Noah**, but now moving down through **Shem** and arriving at Abram the great Patriarch. Notice the **lifespans** of **humanity** are greatly **shortened after the Flood**, whereas **Shem** lived some **600 years**, now **Terah**, Abram's father lives only **205 years**. Whatever the **cause** of this is **debated**, but nevertheless is a **significant** development. The **focus** is now going to **narrow** from **humanity** and its **spread abroad the earth**, to looking specifically at the **family line** of **Abram** and his **descendants**. Moses focuses much more closely at the **lives** of the **characters** in rest of Genesis, and there will be **14 chapters** devoted to life of **Abram** and his sons and grandsons, **Isaac, Jacob** (Israel), and the **12 sons** of **Israel**. We will come to understand the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon Abram and his family, namely the **land**, the **seed**, and the **blessing**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. As the **story** moves **forward**, special attention will be given to see how **God has cared** for and **blessed** this **family** that **He chose** to **call out** of the **Ur** of the **Chaldeans**, and **set them apart** unto **Himself**. It is this **family** that God will call to **walk with Him** in special covenant **relationship**, and also to become the great **channel** of **blessing** to the world, through whom **Jesus** the **Messiah** will come.

Terah's Descendants 11:27-32

Genesis 11:27-32 provides another break in the text to focus on Terah's family. This will establish the **family setting** and **location** for the **life** of **Abram** and his nephew **Lot**.

Genesis 11:29-31 - 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. **30 And Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.** NASB

A few important notes on 11:27-32;

- The **family is called out of a pagan idol worshipping land**, out of the worldly culture of the time. Ur of the Chaldees is near Babel (Babylon).
- **Abram's wife Sarai is barren**, and this is an obstacle to the continuing of Abram's family line
- **The location in Canaan** will set the stage for **Noah's prophecy** to be fulfilled and Canaan to be Shem's servant in **9:25-27**.

Abram's migration to Canaan (12:1-9)

Genesis 12:1-9 is a **significant text** that records the **divine speech** in calling **Abram** out of **Ur**, to become the **object of God's unique Covenant blessings**. This will create the **setting** for **God's Providence** in **establishing Abram** and his **family** as God's own **channel of blessing** to **all the nations of the world**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, **"Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."** NASB

No matter how **hopeless** the **situation** for **humanity** had become, yet **God** in His grace will **keep alive** His **promise of redemption** made to **Eve** (Gen 3:15), to eventually **overcome** the **deception** of the **serpent** and **restore humanity**. The latest news in that saga is **God calling Abraham** to the **Land of Promise**, to establish a **setting** for the **drama** to play out for **thousands** of years in the **future**. God will, through **Abraham** and in **this place**, **faithfully fulfill** His **promise** and **deliver humanity** from the **consequences** of their **sin**, even **sin** and **death**. Another striking thing about this text is the reversal of the **audacious claims** of the **tower builders** in **Babel**. **Abraham** will **receive** the very things for which the people at **Babel** **grasped**. He would have a **great name**, he would **father a great nation**, and he would become a **source of blessing throughout all the earth**. Here also is the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon **Abram** and his family, namely the **land (Canaan)**, the **seed (great nation)**, and the **blessing (to all nations)**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. But these things, even though God will do them, are also **conditioned** upon **Abram's obedient faith**. He must go forth in **obedience** to God's **calling**, at times **without even knowing** what is ahead for him.

Abram will make a **major life change** to **follow God's call**, and then God will show him the next steps. At **75 years of age**, with a **barren wife**, Abram packs up home and family and does what **God calls him to**, in **faith believing His promise**.

Genesis 12:4-9 - 4 **So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.** 5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. **7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.** 8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and **there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.** 9 Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev. NASB

A few important notes on 12:1-9;

- First mention of the **3 main Promises** of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**, **land, seed, and blessing**
- **The life of faith under testing, trial and growth.** God leads Abram often with one calling at a time, then after obedience, another.
- **Abraham obeys God's calling in faith**, worshipping as he goes building altars and calling on the name of the Lord

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** NASB

Abram in Egypt (12:10–20)

Genesis 12:10-20 explains some of the **trials** and **testing** Abram faced. Here **Abram purposely lies** to Pharaoh to try to **protect his life**. Here **Abram** could have been **killed** and **Sarai** could have been **seized** by **Pharaoh permanently**. It is important to see that **God keeps His promise to Abram** in spite of his **sins**, and even under **great threat** to the **preservation** of the **family line**. In spite of his sin, **God blesses Abram** and **protects** both **him** and **Sarai** from harm, but

also sends him back to Canaan with **substantial wealth**, a sort of first **plundering** of the Egyptians.

Genesis 12:16 - 16 Therefore **he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.** NASB

A few important notes on 12:10-20;

- **The life of faith is not always easy** & often includes many tests and trials
- **God promises are sure in certain** in spite of many barriers and obstacles. Often the very threats themselves become the means of God's blessing.
- **Abram has already obtained substantial wealth** out of a severe famine
- **Pharaoh was in severe danger** as God had promised to curse those who cursed Abram and bless those who blessed him **12:3.**

Abram and Lot separate (13:1–18)

Having left Egypt after the **altercation** with **Pharoah**, Abram returns to his former abode in the **hill country** of **Judea** and there **worships** the **Lord**. This location is key to many of the important events of his life. Here the great **wealth** of both **Abram** and **Lot** are emphasized (**13:2,5**), and so much so that they have difficulty **dwelling together** in the same place, **“for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.”** See here God had greatly prospered them, even through a difficult famine. The **kindness** and **faith** of **Abram** is mentioned as he allows **Lot** the **first choice** of the **land**, who chooses the **fertile** Jordan Valley. At this point **God reaffirms** his **land** and **offspring promise** to **Abram**, even as Abram continues in the **worship** of the **Lord**.

Genesis 13:14-18 - 14 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; **15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17 "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."** 18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. NASU

Abram's rescue of Lot (14:1–24)

Genesis 14:1-24 reveals some very interesting information about the **life** and **times** in the **region** of **Canaan**. **Lot**, having split with **Abram** to live in the Jordan Valley, soon finds himself in big trouble, being **caught** in a **battle** and **abducted** with all his **possessions** by a **confederation** of **Eastern kings**. The battle of these Eastern kings overcoming the local Canaanite kings includes much **geographical information**, and also data about **tribute payments** that were paid to the more powerful Eastern kings, for at least 12 years. When Abram hears of **Lot's abduction**, he marshals the **trained men** of his house (318 in number), and overtakes the Eastern kings at night. Abram routes these kings, **powerfully overcoming** the combined force of kings and armies.

Genesis 14:15-16 - 15 And **he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah**, which is north of Damascus. 16 And **he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.** NASB

Abram not only **rescued Lot**, but **all the people** with him and **their possessions**. Upon his **return** with **those rescued** and the **spoil**, he is met by a most intriguing character, **Melchizedek king of Salem**, who is also a "**priest of God Most High.**" He meets Abram with **bread** and **wine** and a **blessing** from **God**, but also as **priest** he came **preaching** of the **power, authority** and **glory** of **God!**

Genesis 14:18-20 - 17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And **Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.** 19 And he blessed him and said, **"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;** 20 **And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."** And he gave him a tenth of all. NASB

Abram's response to this **Priest/King** is to pay him a "**tenth of all,**" is one of **humble** acknowledgment of **God's hand** in his **victory**, but also of **Melchizedek's role** as **Priest of God**. When Abram pays a **tribute tenth** of all to Melchizedek, he **gives** it to **God**, and he acknowledges that **all he owns** came **from God** and is **God's gift** to **him**. Calvin comments; *"Nor is it to be doubted but Abram offered the gift to God, in the person of Melchizedek, in order that, by such first-fruits, he might dedicate all his possessions to God."* **end quote.** See here **Abram's devotion** to **God**. The writer to the **Hebrews** also comments concerning the **exalted nature** of **Melchizedek's Priesthood**.

Hebrews 7:1-3 - 7 For **this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God,** who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, **2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.** 3 Without father, without mother,

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. NASB

What follows is a very **vivid picture** of **Abram's faith** in **God**, and his **trust** in **God's blessings** upon his **life**, his **devotion** to **God**, and his unwillingness to take any **possessions** by use of **power**.

Genesis 14:21-24 - 21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "**I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'**" 24

"I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

Take note here, that **although Abram** is a very **powerful** and **wealthy man**, he is a man of **humble faith** and **dependence** upon **God**, who **trusts God** to **bless** him and **prosper him**, and he does not seek to prosper himself by means of **power** and **control**. He is a **worshipper** of **God** and readily acknowledges his **subordination** to **God** and his **priesthood**.

God's covenant with Abram (15:1-21)

In **Genesis 15:1-21** **God** reaffirms His **promise** to Abram after some of the **trials** and **testing** that have come his way since God's **original calling**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; **2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;** 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** NASB

God has been **refining Abram's faith** and **establishing** His **promises** of **land**, **offspring**, and **blessing** through the ups and downs of **everyday life**. There have

been **several obstacles** it seems to keep God's promises **coming true** such as, **Sarai's barrenness**, having to **leave the land for famine**, and **Sarai's being seized by Pharaoh**. But every one of these **obstacles** are **overcome** by God's good **providence** when things often seem impossible. And in these **tests**, Abram continues to **trust the Lord**, and **worship Him**, **hoping** that indeed God will come through. These are **expressions of Abram's faith**, and here in this narrative is one of the most **important verses** in the **Bible** concerning **faith**, and it is **quoted** in the New Testament **4 times** (Rom. 4:3, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

Genesis 15:6 – 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** NASB

Here Abram asks God for a **divine pledge** and God answers with a **vivid reminder** of His **promises** and cuts a **unilateral covenant** with him.

Genesis 15:1-8 - 15 After these things the **word of the Lord** came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." 2 And Abram said, "**O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?**" 3 And Abram said, "**Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.**" 4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "**Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.**" And He said to him, "**So shall your descendants be.**" 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** 7 And He said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, **to give you this land to possess it.**" 8 And he said, "O Lord God, how may I know that I shall possess it?"

A **unilateral covenant** is one that is **not dependent** on the **other party's** actions to keep its **stipulations**, and in this case **God Himself** passes through the **pieces** (15:17) and **affirms** His own **faithfulness** in bringing the promises of the Covenant to pass. God's conditional promise in **12:2** that **Abram** will become a "**great nation**" is now **guaranteed** by a **covenant**, although the fulfillment will not take place until **several centuries** after **Abram's death**.

Genesis 15:12-18 - 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 And God said to Abram, "**Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.**" 14 But I will also judge the nation whom

they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. **18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates** NASB

Here God has given a **divine pledge** of his **3 fold promise** that Abram would have a **great nation of offspring** that would **possess the land** and be **greatly blessed**.

The birth of Ishmael (16:1–16)

Genesis 16:1-16 records yet another **test of Abram's faith**, one which he **fails**. **Sarai** grows **impatient** in her **barrenness** and seeks to have **Hagar** her maidservant, **bear a child** on her **behalf**. Sadly, **Abram listened** to Sarai and Hagar **conceives a child by Abram**. When Sarai sees that Hagar had conceived, she **despises her** and **treats her harshly**. Hagar **flees** to the **wilderness**, and there is met by the **Lord** with a **blessing** upon **her** and **her child**.

Genesis 16:10-12 - 10 Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, **"I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."** 11 The angel of the Lord said to her further, - "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. **12 "And he will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."** NASB

Here we see the **great mercy of God** upon **Hagar** and **her son**, who will indeed **prosper** and himself have **many descendants**. God had **seen her** in her **affliction** so the place was named, **Beer-lahai-roi** after the **God who sees**. So after **Hagar returns** home, **Ismael** is **born**, **NOT** the **child** of the **promised seed**, but the child of an **unfaithful human** attempt to do **God's work** for Him. The result is a child who will have **many descendants** to be in **opposition** to **Abram's descendants** for **thousands of years** to come.

The covenant of circumcision (17:1–27)

Most of **Genesis 17:1-27** is **divine speech** where **God** is **expanding** His **covenant promises** to **Abram**, and giving a **new covenant stipulation**, that of the **sign of circumcision**. Here God also gives **Abram** a **new name**, **Abraham**, meaning **“5 father of many nations.”** This is something **God** often **does** when ratifying, **renewing** or restating **His promises** to one of His **chosen people**.

Genesis 17:1-8 - 17 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, **"I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."** 3 And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. **5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.** 6 "And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and **kings shall come forth from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."** NASB

Important notes on 17:1-27;

- 17:1 God calls Abram to the **holy conduct of faith**
- 17:2 God reaffirms His promise **to give Abram many descendants**
- 17:5 God gives Abraham a new name **“father of many nations.”**
- 17:6 God promises that **“kings will come forth from Abraham”**
- 17:7 God promises the **covenant to Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:7 God promises **to be the God of Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:8 God promises to give **Abrahams descendants the land of Canaan forever**
- 17:9-14 God **requires circumcision for Abraham and his descendants forever**
- 17:15 God gives Sarai a **new name Sarah** meaning **“princess”**
- 17:15-21 God promises that **Sarah will have Abraham’s son next year** and name him Isaac meaning **“laughter”**
- 17:20 God promises to **bless Ishmael and make him the a great nation**

- 17:24-27 Abraham obeys God and is circumcised along with Ismael and all who are in his household

The destruction of Sodom (18:1–19:29)

Genesis 18:1-19:29 records the **Lord appearing to Abraham at Mamre**, where he expresses a very **hospitable welcome** to the Lord and **two angels** who appear as **men**, (18:1-2 an apparent **Theophany**). Here the **Lord tells Abraham of His plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah** for the **overwhelming wickedness** (13:13, 18:20) of the **people** there. Abraham seeks to **intercede with God** for the **protection of Lot**, who is in fact **rescued** by the **angels** before the cities are destroyed.

Important notes on 18:1–19:29;

- 18:1-2 the Lord and two angels appeared to him as 3 men, an apparent **Theophany**
- 18:9-15 God promises that **Sarah will have a son next year**, both Sarah 18:12 and **Abraham** 17:17 have **laughed** at this prophecy, and **Issac's** name means "laughter"
- 18:19 The **life of faith** is seen as **synergistic between God's choosing and Abraham's doing**. Faith is both **trust in God's promise** and **responsibility to do His will**. **19 "For I have chosen him**, in order that he may command his children and his household after him **to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.**"
- 18:22-33 **Abraham successfully intercedes for Lot's protection** from God's wrath in a lengthy Hebrew bartering session LOL
- 19:2-11 **Lot's hospitality toward the two angelic visitors** is much like the hospitality of Abraham. Lot seeks to protect the two visitors from being sexually molested by the men of Sodom who are exceedingly wicked
- 19:12-15 **Lot's sons in law perish at Sodom** as they laughed at Lot's warning
- 19:16-26 **Lot hesitates in his complacency**, so the angels seize them and put them out of the city and allow them to flee to a nearby city, but **Lot's wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt**, Jesus warns that it will be just like this on the Day He is revealed (see Luke 17:30-33)
- **Peter refers to the destruction of Sodom** as an example to the ungodly and also of God's rescue of the righteous... be careful to speak poorly of Lot.

2 Peter 2:6-10 - 6 and **if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter**; 7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment NASB

Lot's relationship with his daughters (19:30–38)

The **last scene** of **Lot's life** is a rather repugnant one. Here the text **records** how **Lot became the father** of the **Moabites** and **Ammonites**, famed **enemies** of **Israel** in later years. Lot somehow became **fearful** of **living** in **Zoar** and moves to the mountains and **lives** in a **cave**. There his **two daughters**, fearing they will have **no progeny**, devise a plan whereby they will **manipulate** their **father** and cause him to **get drunk**, and do the unthinkable. Although the **whole episode** happens on **consecutive nights**, Lot has **no knowledge** of this taking place. So far we have to occasions of drunkenness in the Bible, and both have ended in tragic consequences. As Paul later writes in Ephesians 5:18 that drunkenness is debauchery.

Abimelech takes Sarah into his harem (20:1–18)

History seems to **repeat itself** here as **Abimelech king** of **Gerar** take **Sarah** into his **harem**, closely resembling the **earlier taking** of **Sarah** by **Pharaoh** (12:10–20). This places the **fulfilment** of **God's promise** for Sarah to **bear Abraham a son** into **jeopardy**. Tom Schreiner comments, *"Indeed, the promise of children was threatened when Sarah was included in the harems of Pharaoh and Abimelech. Abraham could not have children if his wife no longer belonged to him! The narrative does not focus upon Abraham's cowardice and fear, and lying about his wife, but certainly he failed to do what God commanded in these instances. Instead, it emphasizes God's dramatic intervention, for Abrahams sake, showing that nothing will prevent the Lord from fulfilling his promise. God brought a plague upon Pharaoh's house until Pharaoh realized that he had Abraham's wife and returned her to Abraham. Similarly, God threatened in a dream to kill Abimelech, because he had taken Sarah, and as a result Abimelech returned her to Abraham. Nothing can thwart God's fulfillment of his promises, neither Abrahams*

failures of faith, nor the opposition of unbelieving kings. **End quote.** God by His meticulous providence protected Sarah, and His covenant promise.

Genesis 20:6 - 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, **and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.** NASB

Not only did God **protect Sarah** and **Abraham** a **second time**, but they were also **enriched** in the whole **episode** a **second time**.

Genesis 20:14-18 - "**14 Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him.** 15 And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." **16 And to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver;** behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared." **17 And Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children. 18 For the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.** NASB

Remember, God's earlier promise...

Genesis 12:3 - 3 And **I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.** NASB

The birth of Isaac (21:1–21)

Right on time, **God's promise** to give the **old couple** a **son** comes to **fulfilment**.

Genesis 21:1-7 - 21 Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. **2 So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.** 3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. **4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."** 7 And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." NASB

The **New Testament** commends both **Abraham** and **Sarah** for believing God's promise concerning the **birth** of **Isaac**.

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he lived as an

alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; 12 therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as

good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. NASB

When **Ishmael** is seen **mocking** by Sarah, she asks **Abraham** to **send Hagar and Ishmael away**. Although deeply **troubled**, Abraham sends them away after the **Lord reaffirms** to him that **Isaac** is going to be the **son of promise**.

Genesis 21:12 - 12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, **for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.** NASB

While **Isaac takes priority** over **Ishmael**, God does not abandon Hagar and her son. Rather, he finds them in the **wilderness** and **cares for them** until the boy grows old. God **reaffirms** his promise to her that **Ishmael** will become a **great nation**.

Genesis 21:17-21 - 17 And God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand; for I will make a great nation of him.**" 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw

a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. **20 And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness, and became an archer.** 21 And he lived in the wilderness

of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. NASB

Abimelech makes a treaty with Abraham (21:22–34)

Genesis 21:22-34 records a **treaty** between **Abraham** and **Abimelech**. Surely Abimelech **realizes** Abraham is a **powerful man**, so he seeks terms of lasting **peace** with him, which Abraham is glad to do. This treaty is intended to protect both parties.

The testing of Abraham (22:1–19)

Genesis 22:1-19 records without doubt the greatest test that Abraham faced. This surely is the climactic point in his life and relationship with God.

Genesis 22:1-2 - 1 Now it came about after these things, that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 And He said, **"Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."** NASB

Put to the test by God, Abraham shows steadfast faith in God, even when it appears all that God has promised is at stake. He obeys without flinching.

Genesis 22:3-6 - 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and **arose and went to the place of which God had told him.** 4 **On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.** 5 **And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."** 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. NASB

Somehow Abraham had to **reason** within himself that **God was able** to fulfill His promises no matter what He may call Abraham to do. God's testing **appeared to contradict** His **promises to Abraham**, and in this way it becomes the **ultimate test of faith**. Will you **believe that God** will give you **everything** when it appears you are about to **lose everything**? The Hebrews writer comments.

Hebrews 11:17-19 - 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;** 18 it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." **19 He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead;** from which he also received him back as a type. NASB

Up to this point Abraham had **many tests of faith**, and **each time** God came through to **continue to establish** His **covenant** and **promises**. So now even in the face of a **devastating test**, Abraham shows **remarkable trust** in **God's promise**. The scene must have been one of **intense emotional stress** between father and son (**22:7-13**), yet **Abraham's faith** is **unwavering in obedience to God**. This must have also been a **massive lesson in faith** to **Isaac**, who will soon be carrying on the

family line and covenant promise. The **climactic moment** arrives as Abraham raises the knife to slay his only son.

Genesis 22:10-13 - 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **12 And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. NASB

Here as **God suddenly prevents** Abraham from the unthinkable, the divine answer sheds light on **God's test** of Abraham's faith. **"12 now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** Is Abraham's **full trust and obedience in God** even when the thing **he loves the most** is at stake? Does Abraham have **any other Gods** in a higher and **more devoted** place than **the Lord**? Here we see where **Abraham** has **passed the test**, and His **faith** (believing in God and His promises) is shown to be **genuine** by his **works** (offering up his only son).

James 2:21-23 - 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, **when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?** **22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;** **23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,"** and he was called the friend of God. NASB

Now there are many **types** and **shadows coloring** this story of **faith**, sacrifice and **substitutionary atonement**, and even a portrait of **God the Father** sacrificing **His only Son**, on the exact place of the **Temple Mount at Jerusalem (Mt Moriah)**. Clearly, the ultimate **picture** here is the **Gospel** of our **Lord Jesus**, being the **Lamb of God** who takes away the **sin** of the **world**, and **right here** on the **mount of the Lord** where **God will provide** a **lamb** for the **sacrifice**. Here again **God confirms His oath** and promise that **all nations** will be **blessed** from **Abraham's offspring** and **blessing**.

Genesis 22:14-18 - 14 And **Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide**, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." 15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, **"By Myself I have sworn,**

declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

The story now begins to transition from a focus on Abraham's life to Isaac and his family.

Nahor's children (22:20–24)

Here Abraham's relatives are mentioned as they will play an important role in upcoming chapters when Abraham seeks a bride for his son Isaac.

Genesis 22:20-24 - 20 Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, "**Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor:** 21 Uz his first-born and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram 22 and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel." **23 And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah: these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.** 24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.

The death and burial of Sarah (23:1–20)

Here we see the story of Abraham drawing to a conclusion with a great loss in the death of his wife Sarah. The setting is when Abraham seeks to buy some land for a burial plot for Sarah in Hebron. *ESV Study Bible* notes; "By acquiring this plot of land, Abraham not only establishes future rights to it for his family but puts down a marker that his descendants are to be associated with the land of Canaan, as God had already promised." Up until this point, Abraham was only **sojourning**, and had **not** actually **owned** any of the **land** that God had promised to him and his descendants. This **official transaction** that was held, after an **exorbitant deal** with Ephron the Hittite, results in the land being **officially deeded** to Abraham in the presence of the all who sat in the gate of the city.

Genesis 23:14-20 - 14 Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15 "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead." 16 And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard. **17 So Ephron's field,**

which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20 So the field, and the cave that is in it, were deeded over to Abraham for a burial site by the sons of Heth. NASB

This of course will play an **important role** in story later when **Abraham** (25:9), **Isaac** and **Rebekah**, and **Jacob** and **Leah** are **buried here** (49:29-31; 50:13).

A wife for Isaac (24:1–67)

Genesis 24:1-67 records one of the longest episodes in the Book of Genesis. In it the awesome **providence of God** is on display as Abraham seeks a bride for his son from his relatives in Haran, approximately 550 miles away. After the long journey Abraham's servant is guided directly to Rebekah. There, meeting Abraham's family, the **servant petitions** them for **Rebekah's hand** in marriage. Rebekah must **leave her family** and country in **an act of faith** in order to return to Canaan and marry Isaac, whom she has never met. The story is one of divine intervention for sure, as the servant is steadfast to accomplish his task, and Rebekah responds positively to the invitation. God's amazing providence is seen in several unlikely events.

Important notes on 24:1-67;

24:2 **Abraham chooses his chief servant**, the oldest of his household, who **had charge of all** that he owned

24:4 Abraham is very concerned that Isaac **not marry a Canaanite**

24:5-9 **Abraham is very confident** they will find a wife as God promised **"7 To your descendants I will give this land, ' He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there"**

24:14 the **servants prayer exactly answered** – **"14 now may it be that the girl to whom I say, ' Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, ' Drink, and I will water your camels also'; — may she be the one whom Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac"**

24:17-27 the **servant is guided by God** directly to Abraham's family and Rebekah **"27 the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers"**

24:28-51 Remarkably **Rebekah's father answers** immediately with a **positive** answer in faith - **"50 The matter comes from the Lord; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."**

24:53 the **servant gives costly gifts from Abraham to Rebekah** and her family – **"53 And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother"**

24:58 **Rebekah willing goes with the servant to marry Isaac** having never met him – **"58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."**

24:60 the **family's blessing parallels God's covenant promise to Isaac** – **"60 May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your descendants possess The gate of those who hate them."**

The **whole story** is indeed one of the **great love stories** in the **Bible**. The final scene is one of **fairy tale** endings.

Genesis 24:65-67 - 65 And she said to the servant, **"Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant said, "He is my master." Then she took her veil and covered herself.** 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. **67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her;** thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. NASB

This story holds some profound **types** and **shadows** of the **doctrine** of the **Application of Redemption**. The **chief servant** of the Father (Holy Spirit), goes to a **foreign land** (Gentiles) to get a **bride** (the Church) for the **Son** (Jesus). In an amazing set of **divine circumstances** (effectual calling), the exact bride **chosen by God**, Rebekah (Divine election) is **led right to the servant** and **willingly** leaves all she has to **marry** the Son (Irresistible grace). The **servant gives gifts** (spiritual gifts) to the **bride** while **she waits to see the Son**, and consummate the **marriage** (Second Coming).

The death of Abraham (25:1–11)

Here Moses closes the story of the life of Abraham the Patriarch. Here there is some information about another wife that Abraham had after Sarah, and some sons that he had that he sent away from Isaac to the east.

Genesis 25:7-8 - 7 And these are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. **8 And Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life;** and he was gathered to his people. NASB

Abraham was buried in the burial cave he bought in Hebron. The story continues with God's blessing upon Isaac.

Genesis 25:11 - 11 And it came about after the death of Abraham, **that God blessed his son Isaac;** and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi. NASB

One important note is that our **Lord Jesus** make comment about **Abraham** that he is **not dead**, but **living**. This is indeed the **heritage** of the **servants** of the **Lord**. For those that have **genuine faith** in **God**, even though they **die** (physically), yet shall they **live** (spiritually) **forever** with **God** on His **green earth**.

Matthew 22:31 - 31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? **He is not the God of the dead but of the living.** " NASB

The Hebrews writer shows the exceeding great hope that the faithful have even after this life ends.

Hebrews 11:13-16 - **13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.** NASB

The genealogy of Ishmael (25:12–18)

Here in **Genesis 25:12-18** a short section is devoted to a **genealogy** of **Ishmael**. His sons became **chiefs** of tribes in **Arabia**. See here **God's Word** from 17:20 is fulfilled.

Genesis 25:16-17 - 16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes. **17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.** NASB

The Life of Abraham

Genesis 11:10-25:18

Shem's Descendants 11:10-11:26

Genesis 11:10-26 provides yet another genealogy, continuing its focus on the **family line** from **Adam to Noah**, but now moving down through **Shem** and arriving at Abram the great Patriarch. Notice the **lifespans** of **humanity** are greatly **shortened after the Flood**, whereas **Shem** lived some **600 years**, now **Terah**, Abram's father lives only **205 years**. Whatever the **cause** of this is **debated**, but nevertheless is a **significant** development. The **focus** is now going to **narrow** from **humanity** and its **spread abroad the earth**, to looking specifically at the **family line** of **Abram** and his **descendants**. Moses focuses much more closely at the **lives** of the **characters** in rest of Genesis, and there will be **14 chapters** devoted to life of **Abram** and his sons and grandsons, **Isaac, Jacob** (Israel), and the **12 sons** of **Israel**. We will come to understand the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon Abram and his family, namely the **land**, the **seed**, and the **blessing**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. As the **story** moves **forward**, special attention will be given to see how **God has cared** for and **blessed** this **family** that **He chose** to **call out** of the **Ur** of the **Chaldeans**, and **set them apart** unto **Himself**. It is this **family** that God will call to **walk with Him** in special covenant **relationship**, and also to become the great **channel** of **blessing** to the world, through whom **Jesus the Messiah** will come.

Terah's Descendants 11:27-32

Genesis 11:27-32 provides another break in the text to focus on Terah's family. This will establish the **family setting** and **location** for the **life** of **Abram** and his nephew **Lot**.

Genesis 11:29-31 - 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. **30 And Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.** NASB

A few important notes on 11:27-32;

- The **family is called out of a pagan idol worshipping land**, out of the worldly culture of the time. Ur of the Chaldees is near Babel (Babylon).
- **Abram's wife Sarai is barren**, and this is an obstacle to the continuing of Abram's family line
- **The location in Canaan** will set the stage for **Noah's prophecy** to be fulfilled and Canaan to be Shem's servant in **9:25-27**.

Abram's migration to Canaan (12:1-9)

Genesis 12:1-9 is a **significant text** that records the **divine speech** in calling **Abram** out of **Ur**, to become the **object of God's unique Covenant blessings**. This will create the **setting** for **God's Providence** in **establishing Abram** and his **family** as God's own **channel of blessing** to **all the nations of the world**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, **"Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."** NASB

No matter how **hopeless** the **situation** for **humanity** had become, yet **God** in His grace will **keep alive** His **promise of redemption** made to **Eve** (Gen 3:15), to eventually **overcome** the **deception** of the **serpent** and **restore humanity**. The latest news in that saga is **God calling Abraham** to the **Land of Promise**, to establish a **setting** for the **drama** to play out for **thousands** of years in the **future**. God will, through **Abraham** and in **this place**, **faithfully fulfill** His **promise** and **deliver humanity** from the **consequences** of their **sin**, even **sin** and **death**. Another striking thing about this text is the reversal of the **audacious claims** of the **tower builders** in **Babel**. **Abraham** will **receive** the very things for which the people at **Babel** **grasped**. He would have a **great name**, he would **father a great nation**, and he would become a **source of blessing throughout all the earth**. Here also is the **threefold blessing** of **God** upon **Abram** and his family, namely the **land (Canaan)**, the **seed (great nation)**, and the **blessing (to all nations)**. These are the 3 main **features** (Promises) of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**. But these things, even though God will do them, are also **conditioned** upon **Abram's obedient faith**. He must go forth in **obedience** to God's **calling**, at times **without even knowing** what is ahead for him.

Abram will make a **major life change** to **follow God's call**, and then God will show him the next steps. At **75 years of age**, with a **barren wife**, Abram packs up home and family and does what **God calls him to**, in **faith believing His promise**.

Genesis 12:4-9 - 4 **So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.** 5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. **7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.** 8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and **there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.** 9 Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev. NASB

A few important notes on 12:1-9;

- First mention of the **3 main Promises** of **God's Covenant** with **Abraham**, **land, seed, and blessing**
- **The life of faith under testing, trial and growth.** God leads Abram often with one calling at a time, then after obedience, another.
- **Abraham obeys God's calling in faith**, worshipping as he goes building altars and calling on the name of the Lord

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** NASB

Abram in Egypt (12:10–20)

Genesis 12:10-20 explains some of the **trials** and **testing** Abram faced. Here **Abram purposely lies** to Pharaoh to try and **protect his life**. Here **Abram** could have been **killed** and **Sarai** could have been **seized** by **Pharaoh permanently**. It is important to see that **God keeps His promise to Abram** in spite of his **sins**, and even under **great threat** to the **preservation** of the **family line**. In spite of his sin, **God blesses Abram** and **protects** both **him** and **Sarai** from harm, but

also sends him back to Canaan with **substantial wealth**, a sort of first **plundering** of the Egyptians.

Genesis 12:16 - 16 Therefore **he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.** NASB

A few important notes on 12:10-20;

- **The life of faith is not always easy** & often includes many tests and trials
- **God promises are sure in certain** in spite of many barriers and obstacles. Often the very threats themselves become the means of God's blessing.
- **Abram has already obtained substantial wealth** out of a severe famine
- **Pharaoh was in severe danger** as God had promised to curse those who cursed Abram and bless those who blessed him **12:3.**

Abram and Lot separate (13:1–18)

Having left Egypt after the **altercation** with **Pharaoh**, Abram returns to his former abode in the **hill country** of **Judea** and there **worships** the **Lord**. This location is key to many of the important events of his life. Here the great **wealth** of both **Abram** and **Lot** are emphasized (**13:2,5**), and so much so that they have difficulty **dwelling together** in the same place, **“for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.”** See here God had greatly prospered them, even through a difficult famine. The **kindness** and **faith** of **Abram** is mentioned as he allows **Lot** the **first choice** of the **land**, who chooses the **fertile** Jordan Valley. At this point **God reaffirms** his **land** and **offspring promise** to **Abram**, even as Abram continues in the **worship** of the **Lord**.

Genesis 13:14-18 - 14 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; **15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17 "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."** 18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. NASU

Abram's rescue of Lot (14:1–24)

Genesis 14:1-24 reveals some very interesting information about the **life** and **times** in the **region** of **Canaan**. **Lot**, having split with **Abram** to live in the Jordan Valley, soon finds himself in big trouble, being **caught** in a **battle** and **abducted** with all his **possessions** by a **confederation** of **Eastern kings**. The battle of these Eastern kings overcoming the local Canaanite kings includes much **geographical information**, and also data about **tribute payments** that were paid to the more powerful Eastern kings, for at least 12 years. When Abram hears of **Lot's abduction**, he marshals the **trained men** of his house (318 in number), and overtakes the Eastern kings at night. Abram routes these kings, **powerfully overcoming** the combined force of kings and armies.

Genesis 14:15-16 - 15 And **he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah**, which is north of Damascus. 16 And **he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.** NASB

Abram not only **rescued Lot**, but **all the people** with him and **their possessions**. Upon his **return** with **those rescued** and the **spoil**, he is met by a most intriguing character, **Melchizedek king of Salem**, who is also a "**priest of God Most High.**" He meets Abram with **bread** and **wine** and a **blessing** from **God**, but also as **priest** he came **preaching** of the **power, authority** and **glory** of **God!**

Genesis 14:18-20 - 17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And **Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.** 19 And he blessed him and said, **"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;** 20 **And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."** And he gave him a tenth of all. NASB

Abram's response to this **Priest/King** is to pay him a "**tenth of all,**" is one of **humble** acknowledgment of **God's hand** in his **victory**, but also of **Melchizedek's role** as **Priest of God**. When Abram pays a **tribute tenth** of all to Melchizedek, he **gives** it to **God**, and he acknowledges that **all he owns** came **from** God and is **God's gift** to **him**. Calvin comments; *"Nor is it to be doubted but Abram offered the gift to God, in the person of Melchizedek, in order that, by such first-fruits, he might dedicate all his possessions to God."* **end quote.** See here **Abram's devotion** to **God**. The writer to the **Hebrews** also comments concerning the **exalted nature** of **Melchizedek's Priesthood**.

Hebrews 7:1-3 - 7 For **this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God,** who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, **2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.** 3 Without father, without mother,

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. NASB

What follows is a very **vivid picture** of **Abram's faith** in **God**, and his **trust** in **God's blessings** upon his **life**, his **devotion** to **God**, and his unwillingness to take any **possessions** by use of **power**.

Genesis 14:21-24 - 21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "**I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'**" 24

"I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

Take note here, that **although Abram** is a very **powerful** and **wealthy man**, he is a man of **humble faith** and **dependence** upon **God**, who **trusts God** to **bless** him and **prosper him**, and he does not seek to prosper himself by means of **power** and **control**. He is a **worshipper** of **God** and readily acknowledges his **subordination** to **God** and his **priesthood**.

God's covenant with Abram (15:1-21)

In **Genesis 15:1-21** **God** reaffirms His **promise** to Abram after some of the **trials** and **testing** that have come his way since God's **original calling**.

Genesis 12:1-3 - 12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; **2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;** 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** NASB

God has been **refining Abram's faith** and **establishing** His **promises** of **land**, **offspring**, and **blessing** through the ups and downs of **everyday life**. There have

been **several obstacles** it seems to keep God's promises **coming true** such as, **Sarai's barrenness**, having to **leave the land for famine**, and **Sarai's being seized by Pharaoh**. But every one of these **obstacles** are **overcome** by God's good **providence** when things often seem impossible. And in these **tests**, Abram continues to **trust the Lord**, and **worship Him**, **hoping** that indeed God will come through. These are **expressions of Abram's faith**, and here in this narrative is one of the most **important verses** in the **Bible** concerning **faith**, and it is **quoted** in the New Testament **4 times** (Rom. 4:3, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

Genesis 15:6 – 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** NASB

Here Abram asks God for a **divine pledge** and God answers with a **vivid reminder** of His **promises** and cuts a **unilateral covenant** with him.

Genesis 15:1-8 - 15 After these things the **word of the Lord** came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." 2 And Abram said, "**O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?**" 3 And Abram said, "**Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.**" 4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "**Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.**" And He said to him, "**So shall your descendants be.**" 6 Then **he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.** 7 And He said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, **to give you this land to possess it.**" 8 And he said, "O Lord God, how may I know that I shall possess it?"

A **unilateral covenant** is one that is **not dependent** on the **other party's** actions to keep its **stipulations**, and in this case **God Himself** passes through the **pieces** (15:17) and **affirms** His own **faithfulness** in bringing the promises of the Covenant to pass. God's conditional promise in **12:2** that **Abram** will become a "**great nation**" is now **guaranteed** by a **covenant**, although the fulfillment will not take place until **several centuries** after **Abram's death**.

Genesis 15:12-18 - 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 And God said to Abram, "**Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.** 14 But I will also judge the nation whom

they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. **18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates** NASB

Here God has given a **divine pledge** of his **3 fold promise** that Abram would have a **great nation of offspring** that would **possess the land** and be **greatly blessed**.

The birth of Ishmael (16:1–16)

Genesis 16:1-16 records yet another **test of Abram's faith**, one which he **fails**. **Sarai** grows **impatient** in her **barrenness** and seeks to have **Hagar** her maidservant, **bear a child** on her **behalf**. Sadly, **Abram listened** to Sarai and Hagar **conceives a child by Abram**. When Sarai sees that Hagar had conceived, she **despises her** and **treats her harshly**. Hagar **flees** to the **wilderness**, and there is met by the **Lord** with a **blessing** upon **her** and **her child**.

Genesis 16:10-12 - 10 Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, **"I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."** 11 The angel of the Lord said to her further, - "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. **12 "And he will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."** NASB

Here we see the **great mercy of God** upon **Hagar** and **her son**, who will indeed **prosper** and himself have **many descendants**. God had **seen her** in her **affliction** so the place was named, **Beer-lahai-roi** after the **God who sees**. So after **Hagar returns** home, **Ismael** is **born**, **NOT** the **child** of the **promised seed**, but the child of an **unfaithful human** attempt to do **God's work** for Him. The result is a child who will have **many descendants** to be in **opposition** to **Abram's descendants** for **thousands of years** to come.

The covenant of circumcision (17:1–27)

Most of **Genesis 17:1-27** is **divine speech** where **God** is **expanding** His **covenant promises** to **Abram**, and giving a **new covenant stipulation**, that of the **sign of circumcision**. Here God also gives **Abram** a **new name**, **Abraham**, meaning **“5 father of many nations.”** This is something **God** often **does** when ratifying, **renewing** or restating **His promises** to one of His **chosen people**.

Genesis 17:1-8 - 17 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, **"I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."** 3 And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. **5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.** 6 "And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and **kings shall come forth from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."** NASB

Important notes on 17:1-27;

- 17:1 God calls Abram to the **holy conduct of faith**
- 17:2 God reaffirms His promise **to give Abram many descendants**
- 17:5 God gives Abraham a new name **“father of many nations.”**
- 17:6 God promises that **“kings will come forth from Abraham”**
- 17:7 God promises the **covenant to Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:7 God promises **to be the God of Abraham’s descendants forever**
- 17:8 God promises to give **Abrahams descendants the land of Canaan forever**
- 17:9-14 God **requires circumcision for Abraham and his descendants forever**
- 17:15 God gives Sarai a **new name Sarah** meaning **“princess”**
- 17:15-21 God promises that **Sarah will have Abraham’s son next year** and name him Isaac meaning **“laughter”**
- 17:20 God promises to **bless Ishmael and make him the a great nation**

- 17:24-27 Abraham obeys God and is circumcised along with Ismael and all who are in his household

The destruction of Sodom (18:1–19:29)

Genesis 18:1-19:29 records the **Lord appearing to Abraham at Mamre**, where he expresses a very **hospitable welcome** to the Lord and **two angels** who appear as **men**, (18:1-2 an apparent **Theophany**). Here the **Lord tells Abraham of His plan to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah** for the **overwhelming wickedness** (13:13, 18:20) of the **people** there. Abraham seeks to **intercede with God** for the **protection of Lot**, who is in fact **rescued** by the **angels** before the cities are destroyed.

Important notes on 18:1–19:29;

- 18:1-2 the Lord and two angels appeared to him as 3 men, an apparent **Theophany**
- 18:9-15 God promises that **Sarah will have a son next year**, both Sarah 18:12 and **Abraham** 17:17 have **laughed** at this prophecy, and **Issac's** name means "laughter"
- 18:19 The **life of faith** is seen as **synergistic between God's choosing and Abraham's doing**. Faith is both **trust in God's promise** and **responsibility to do His will**. **19 "For I have chosen him**, in order that he may command his children and his household after him **to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.**"
- 18:22-33 **Abraham successfully intercedes for Lot's protection** from God's wrath in a lengthy Hebrew bartering session LOL
- 19:2-11 **Lot's hospitality toward the two angelic visitors** is much like the hospitality of Abraham. Lot seeks to protect the two visitors from being sexually molested by the men of Sodom who are exceedingly wicked
- 19:12-15 **Lot's sons in law perish at Sodom** as they laughed at Lot's warning
- 19:16-26 **Lot hesitates in his complacency**, so the angels seize them and put them out of the city and allow them to flee to a nearby city, but **Lot's wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt**, Jesus warns that it will be just like this on the Day He is revealed (see Luke 17:30-33)
- **Peter refers to the destruction of Sodom** as an example to the ungodly and also of God's rescue of the righteous... be careful to speak poorly of Lot.

2 Peter 2:6-10 - 6 and **if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter**; 7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment NASB

Lot's relationship with his daughters (19:30–38)

The **last scene** of **Lot's life** is a rather repugnant one. Here the text **records** how **Lot became the father** of the **Moabites** and **Ammonites**, famed **enemies** of **Israel** in later years. Lot somehow became **fearful** of **living** in **Zoar** and moves to the mountains and **lives** in a **cave**. There his **two daughters**, fearing they will have **no progeny**, devise a plan whereby they will **manipulate** their **father** and cause him to **get drunk**, and do the unthinkable. Although the **whole episode** happens on **consecutive nights**, Lot has **no knowledge** of this taking place. So far we have to occasions of drunkenness in the Bible, and both have ended in tragic consequences. As Paul later writes in Ephesians 5:18 that drunkenness is debauchery.

Abimelech takes Sarah into his harem (20:1–18)

History seems to **repeat itself** here as **Abimelech king** of **Gerar** take **Sarah** into his **harem**, closely resembling the **earlier taking** of **Sarah** by **Pharaoh** (12:10–20). This places the **fulfilment** of **God's promise** for Sarah to **bear Abraham a son** into **jeopardy**. Tom Schreiner comments, *"Indeed, the promise of children was threatened when Sarah was included in the harems of Pharaoh and Abimelech. Abraham could not have children if his wife no longer belonged to him! The narrative does not focus upon Abraham's cowardice and fear, and lying about his wife, but certainly he failed to do what God commanded in these instances. Instead, it emphasizes God's dramatic intervention, for Abrahams sake, showing that nothing will prevent the Lord from fulfilling his promise. God brought a plague upon Pharaoh's house until Pharaoh realized that he had Abraham's wife and returned her to Abraham. Similarly, God threatened in a dream to kill Abimelech, because he had taken Sarah, and as a result Abimelech returned her to Abraham. Nothing can thwart God's fulfillment of his promises, neither Abrahams*

failures of faith, nor the opposition of unbelieving kings. **End quote.** God by His meticulous providence protected Sarah, and His covenant promise.

Genesis 20:6 - 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, **and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.** NASB

Not only did God **protect Sarah** and **Abraham** a **second time**, but they were also **enriched** in the whole **episode** a **second time**.

Genesis 20:14-18 - "**14 Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him.** 15 And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." **16 And to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver;** behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared." **17 And Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children. 18 For the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.** NASB

Remember, God's earlier promise...

Genesis 12:3 - 3 And **I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.** NASB

The birth of Isaac (21:1–21)

Right on time, **God's promise** to give the **old couple** a **son** comes to **fulfilment**.

Genesis 21:1-7 - 21 Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. **2 So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.** 3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. **4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."** 7 And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." NASB

The **New Testament** commends both **Abraham** and **Sarah** for believing God's promise concerning the **birth** of **Isaac**.

Hebrews 11:8-12 - 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, **obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he lived as an

alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; 12 therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as

good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. NASB

When **Ishmael** is seen **mocking** by Sarah, she asks **Abraham** to **send Hagar and Ishmael away**. Although deeply **troubled**, Abraham sends them away after the **Lord reaffirms** to him that **Isaac** is going to be the **son of promise**.

Genesis 21:12 - 12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, **for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.** NASB

While **Isaac takes priority** over **Ishmael**, God does not abandon Hagar and her son. Rather, he finds them in the **wilderness** and **cares for them** until the boy grows old. God **reaffirms** his promise to her that **Ishmael** will become a **great nation**.

Genesis 21:17-21 - 17 And God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand; for I will make a great nation of him.**" 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. **20 And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness, and became an archer.** 21 And he lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. NASB

Abimelech makes a treaty with Abraham (21:22–34)

Genesis 21:22-34 records a **treaty** between **Abraham** and **Abimelech**. Surely Abimelech **realizes** Abraham is a **powerful man**, so he seeks terms of lasting **peace** with him, which Abraham is glad to do. This treaty is intended to protect both parties.

The testing of Abraham (22:1–19)

Genesis 22:1-19 records without doubt the greatest test that Abraham faced. This surely is the climactic point in his life and relationship with God.

Genesis 22:1-2 - 1 Now it came about after these things, that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 And He said, **"Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."** NASB

Put to the test by God, Abraham shows steadfast faith in God, even when it appears all that God has promised is at stake. He obeys without flinching.

Genesis 22:3-6 - 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and **arose and went to the place of which God had told him.** 4 **On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.** 5 **And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."** 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. NASB

Somehow Abraham had to **reason** within himself that **God was able** to fulfill His promises no matter what He may call Abraham to do. God's testing **appeared to contradict** His **promises to Abraham**, and in this way it becomes the **ultimate test of faith**. Will you **believe that God** will give you **everything** when it appears you are about to **lose everything**? The Hebrews writer comments.

Hebrews 11:17-19 - 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;** 18 it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." **19 He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead;** from which he also received him back as a type. NASB

Up to this point Abraham had **many tests of faith**, and **each time** God came through to **continue to establish** His **covenant** and **promises**. So now even in the face of a **devastating test**, Abraham shows **remarkable trust** in **God's promise**. The scene must have been one of **intense emotional stress** between father and son (**22:7-13**), yet **Abraham's faith** is **unwavering in obedience to God**. This must have also been a **massive lesson in faith** to **Isaac**, who will soon be carrying on the

family line and covenant promise. The **climactic moment** arrives as Abraham raises the knife to slay his only son.

Genesis 22:10-13 - 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **12 And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. NASB

Here as **God suddenly prevents** Abraham from the unthinkable, the divine answer sheds light on **God's test** of Abraham's faith. **"12 now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** Is Abraham's **full trust and obedience in God** even when the thing **he loves the most** is at stake? Does Abraham have **any other Gods** in a higher and **more devoted** place than **the Lord**? Here we see where **Abraham** has **passed the test**, and His **faith** (believing in God and His promises) is shown to be **genuine** by his **works** (offering up his only son).

James 2:21-23 - 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, **when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?** **22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;** **23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,"** and he was called the friend of God. NASB

Now there are many **types** and **shadows coloring** this story of **faith**, sacrifice and **substitutionary atonement**, and even a portrait of **God the Father** sacrificing **His only Son**, on the exact place of the **Temple Mount at Jerusalem (Mt Moriah)**. Clearly, the ultimate **picture** here is the **Gospel** of our **Lord Jesus**, being the **Lamb of God** who takes away the **sin** of the **world**, and **right here** on the **mount of the Lord** where **God will provide** a **lamb** for the **sacrifice**. Here again **God confirms His oath** and promise that **all nations** will be **blessed** from **Abraham's offspring** and **blessing**.

Genesis 22:14-18 - 14 And **Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide**, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." 15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, **"By Myself I have sworn,**

declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

The story now begins to transition from a focus on Abraham's life to Isaac and his family.

Nahor's children (22:20–24)

Here Abraham's relatives are mentioned as they will play an important role in upcoming chapters when Abraham seeks a bride for his son Isaac.

Genesis 22:20-24 - 20 Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, "**Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor:** 21 Uz his first-born and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram 22 and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel." **23 And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah: these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.** 24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.

The death and burial of Sarah (23:1–20)

Here we see the story of Abraham drawing to a conclusion with a great loss in the death of his wife Sarah. The setting is when Abraham seeks to buy some land for a burial plot for Sarah in Hebron. *ESV Study Bible* notes; "By acquiring this plot of land, Abraham not only establishes future rights to it for his family but puts down a marker that his descendants are to be associated with the land of Canaan, as God had already promised." Up until this point, Abraham was only **sojourning**, and had **not** actually **owned** any of the **land** that God had promised to him and his descendants. This **official transaction** that was held, after an **exorbitant deal** with Ephron the Hittite, results in the land being **officially deeded** to Abraham in the presence of the all who sat in the gate of the city.

Genesis 23:14-20 - 14 Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15 "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead." 16 And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard. **17 So Ephron's field,**

which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over 18 to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20 So the field, and the cave that is in it, were deeded over to Abraham for a burial site by the sons of Heth. NASB

This of course will play an **important role** in story later when **Abraham** (25:9), **Isaac** and **Rebekah**, and **Jacob** and **Leah** are **buried here** (49:29-31; 50:13).

A wife for Isaac (24:1–67)

Genesis 24:1-67 records one of the longest episodes in the Book of Genesis. In it the awesome **providence of God** is on display as Abraham seeks a bride for his son from his relatives in Haran, approximately 550 miles away. After the long journey Abraham's servant is guided directly to Rebekah. There, meeting Abraham's family, the **servant petitions** them for **Rebekah's hand** in marriage. Rebekah must **leave her family** and country in **an act of faith** in order to return to Canaan and marry Isaac, whom she has never met. The story is one of divine intervention for sure, as the servant is steadfast to accomplish his task, and Rebekah responds positively to the invitation. God's amazing providence is seen in several unlikely events.

Important notes on 24:1-67;

24:2 **Abraham chooses his chief servant**, the oldest of his household, who **had charge of all** that he owned

24:4 Abraham is very concerned that Isaac **not marry a Canaanite**

24:5-9 **Abraham is very confident** they will find a wife as God promised **"7 To your descendants I will give this land, ' He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there"**

24:14 the **servants prayer exactly answered** – **"14 now may it be that the girl to whom I say, ' Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, ' Drink, and I will water your camels also'; — may she be the one whom Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac"**

24:17-27 the **servant is guided by God** directly to Abraham's family and Rebekah **"27 the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers"**

24:28-51 Remarkably **Rebekah's father answers** immediately with a **positive** answer in faith - **"50 The matter comes from the Lord; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."**

24:53 the **servant gives costly gifts from Abraham to Rebekah** and her family – **"53 And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother"**

24:58 **Rebekah willing goes with the servant to marry Isaac** having never met him – **"58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."**

24:60 the **family's blessing parallels God's covenant promise to Isaac** – **"60 May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your descendants possess The gate of those who hate them."**

The **whole story** is indeed one of the **great love stories** in the **Bible**. The final scene is one of **fairy tale** endings.

Genesis 24:65-67 - 65 And she said to the servant, **"Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant said, "He is my master." Then she took her veil and covered herself.** 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. **67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her;** thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. NASB

This story holds some profound **types** and **shadows** of the **doctrine** of the **Application of Redemption**. The **chief servant** of the Father (Holy Spirit), goes to a **foreign land** (Gentiles) to get a **bride** (the Church) for the **Son** (Jesus). In an amazing set of **divine circumstances** (effectual calling), the exact bride **chosen by God**, Rebekah (Divine election) is **led right to the servant** and **willingly** leaves all she has to **marry** the Son (Irresistible grace). The **servant gives gifts** (spiritual gifts) to the **bride** while **she waits to see the Son**, and consummate the **marriage** (Second Coming).

The death of Abraham (25:1–11)

Here Moses closes the story of the life of Abraham the Patriarch. Here there is some information about another wife that Abraham had after Sarah, and some sons that he had that he sent away from Isaac to the east.

Genesis 25:7-8 - 7 And these are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. **8 And Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life;** and he was gathered to his people. NASB

Abraham was buried in the burial cave he bought in Hebron. The story continues with God's blessing upon Isaac.

Genesis 25:11 - 11 And it came about after the death of Abraham, **that God blessed his son Isaac;** and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi. NASB

One important note is that our **Lord Jesus** make comment about **Abraham** that he is **not dead**, but **living**. This is indeed the **heritage** of the **servants** of the **Lord**. For those that have **genuine faith** in **God**, even though they **die** (physically), yet shall they **live** (spiritually) **forever** with **God** on His **green earth**.

Matthew 22:31 - 31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? **He is not the God of the dead but of the living.** " NASB

The Hebrews writer shows the exceeding great hope that the faithful have even after this life ends.

Hebrews 11:13-16 - **13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.** NASB

The genealogy of Ishmael (25:12–18)

Here in **Genesis 25:12-18** a short section is devoted to a **genealogy** of **Ishmael**. His sons became **chiefs** of tribes in **Arabia**. See here **God's Word** from 17:20 is fulfilled.

Genesis 25:16-17 - 16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes. **17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.** NASB