

LESSON 1 Genesis 1 – 2

Fellowship Question: In what ways are you *creative* and what impact/results does your creativity have on yourself or others?

If you are quick to say, “I am not creative,” keep in mind that creativity is shown in a plethora of ways – perhaps you make wonderful meals, decorate, garden, organize, paint, sculpt, sew, knit, write, play a musical instrument, sing, teach, engage children in imaginative play, research, develop marketing strategies, improve on a workplace process or procedure, build spreadsheets, design widgets, brainstorm solutions to someone’s problems, or offer thoughtful encouragement to someone!

We are embarking on a journey to explore the life of Abraham, a man God called His *friend*. In order to understand what God is accomplishing through the life of Abraham and why Abraham does some of the things he does, it is beneficial to take a look at the first three chapters of Genesis. These are very familiar stories, but for so much of the Bible (and even for life in general!) they are key to everything.

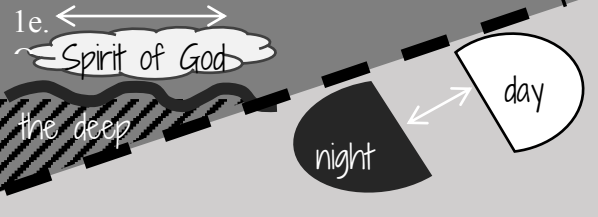
Always begin your study time with prayer! Ask your Creator to give you eyes to see the familiar passages anew. Ask Him to grant you understanding by His Spirit. Finally, ask Him to use His truth to transform your thinking.

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Read Genesis 1.

Questions 1 to 7: On the next two pages is a table in which you may record observations about Genesis 1. (Some boxes may remain blank.)

	a. What God does/creates:	b. Declarations God makes about His creation:	c. God's instruction(s) to His creation:
DAY ONE 1:1-5	1a. (Heavens + Earth) Separates light (day) fm darkness (night)	1b. Light = Good	1c. (none)
DAY TWO 1:6-8	2a.	2b.	2c.
DAY THREE 1:9-13	3a.	3b.	3c.
DAY FOUR 1:14-19	4a.	4b.	4c.
DAY FIVE 1:20-23	5a.	5b.	5c.
DAY SIX 1:24-31	6a.	6b.	6c.
DAY SEVEN 2:1-3	7a.	7b.	7c.

d. Additional observations/questions:	e. Sketch to visualize: (OPTIONAL!)	
1d. - How can there be an evening + a morning without the sun? - Only 4 verses into Scripture → light + darkness are distinct and separated!	1e. 	DAY ONE 1:1-5
2d.	2e.	DAY TWO 1:6-8
3d.	3e.	DAY THREE 1:9-13
4d.	4e.	DAY FOUR 1:14-19
5d.	5e.	DAY FIVE 1:20-23
6d.	6e.	DAY SIX 1:24-31
7d.	7e.	DAY SEVEN 2:1-3

Read Genesis 2.

8. Add any new details you discover in Genesis 2 to the table on pages 1-2 and 1-3.

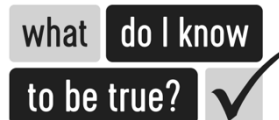
INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

9. Based on the observations you made in questions 1-8, you may have noticed that mankind has some different characteristics and responsibilities than the rest of creation. What differences do you see and what are the implications of those differences?

10. The Hebrew word for image in Genesis 1:26 is *tselem* (Strong's H6754, /tseh-lem/). Elsewhere in the Bible the word is frequently used to describe idols (e.g. graven images) which were to function as *representatives* of whatever deity they epitomized. In the New Testament, the Greek word for *image* is *eikon* (Strong's G1504 /i-kone'/) *Eikon* denotes the ideas of representation and manifestation. Read the following cross-references (available in Appendix B) and note what you learn with respect to being made in the image of God: Genesis 5:3, 9:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:15, and 3:10.

11. Reflecting on Genesis 1-2:

- a. What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



- b. What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

12. What does it mean for your life that you (along with other people!) have been created in God's image and have the responsibilities outlined in Genesis 1 and 2? If you are a Christian and have the Spirit of the ultimate Image Bearer (Colossians 1:15) residing within you, what is the additional impact?
13. People often remake God into their own image; this is a slippery slope! For example, have you ever prayed for God's will to be done, but then outlined to Him exactly what that should entail? How can you safeguard against a human tendency to remake God into your image?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Consider the benevolence of God. He creates an amazing world and places mankind (created in His image!) in it to *rule*. The most powerful Being in the universe shares His image and some of His dominion with lesser beings – what does this tell you about God? How does this differ from human tendencies?
- II) Imagine what life would be like if the narrative had stayed in the Garden of Eden and mankind had never succumbed to the temptation to decide what is good and evil for themselves.
- III) An evening and a morning are not mentioned concerning the seventh day of creation. Was the Sabbath meant (pre-fall) to be an eternal state? Why or why not?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Image of God from The Bible Project: thebibleproject.com/explore/image_god

REFERENCES

Blue Letter Bible, www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H6754&t=KJV.

Blue Letter Bible, www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G6754&t=KJV.

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 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

LESSON 2
Genesis 3

Fellowship Question: When faced with a choice, how do we humans deceive ourselves of the better option, whether it is good for us or not? Can you think of an example from your own life?



OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

In the Scripture we will study this lesson, there is about to be serious trouble in Paradise, setting the course of human history! In this lesson we will look at the fall of mankind.

Review Genesis 2:4-25.

1. Before we dive into Genesis 3, let's capture a few key points from Genesis 1 and 2 that will factor into your discoveries in Genesis 3:
 - a. What is mankind's purpose in the garden (and on the Earth.) (The Hebrew word *Adam* means *mankind*.) The chart you constructed in Lesson 1 may help.

 - b. What is specified about the trees in the garden of Eden (in general) and then, what is stated about the two trees that are singled out? (Be sure to capture any instructions God gives.)

All trees in the garden...	
	
name: _____	name: _____
Observations: -	Observations: -

- c. This is an easy one, but is good to have in mind for what is coming in Genesis 3. Using your Bible or the text of Genesis 1 and 2 in Appendix A, highlight or underline every sentence or phrase that has this structure: "God saw...was good". You may wish to look back at your table in Lesson 1 and circle the occurrences of this statement in column b. Did it! ____ (✓) Kudos if you also noticed what was "not good!"

Read Genesis 3.

2. Reread verses 1 to 7. Look closely and compare what is said about interacting with the tree(s) in question; mark or highlight the ways the serpent's and Eve's versions differ from God's.

God had said... (2:15-17)	The serpent said...	Eve said...

3. What happens in verses 8-13? Which details, if any, especially stand out to you?

4. What are the [detailed] consequences of Satan's trickery and Adam and Eve's disobedience? (Stick to verses 14-21 for now.)

The Serpent's:	Eve's:	Adam's:

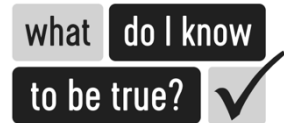
5. Lastly, what happens in verses 22-24 and what, if anything, especially catches your attention?

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

6. When Eve saw, took, and ate of the fruit, what decision was she ultimately making? These cross references, available in Appendix B, may help: Judges 17:16, 2 Samuel 11:1-5, Isaiah 5:20, Isaiah 45:9, Romans 1:18-23.
7. Satan always seems to be in the business of character assassination. What attribute of God was he trying to sabotage in Eve's eyes? (Can you identify a verse from anywhere in the Bible that counters Satan's attack?)
8. The curses and consequences mentioned in verse 15 speak of seeds – the serpent's and the woman's. Who (or what) are the seeds? How do the injuries they inflict on one another compare? What is God implying He will accomplish? (Romans 16:20 may offer insight.)
9. The Hebrew word for *know, knowing* (verse 3:22), *yada*, carries with it the idea of experiential knowledge. Mankind would now experience good and evil; they would now experience death. Why did God send Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden?

10. Reflecting on Genesis 3:

- a. What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



- b. What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

11. 2 Chronicles 4:4 mentions that Satan is god of this world. Jesus said in John 8:44 that Satan is the father of lies. If you are a child of God, Satan sees you as an enemy. What are some practical ways to identify and safeguard against Satan's lies? How might having a circle of close, believing friends help?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I. Listen to podcast, The Tree of Knowing Good & Bad – Wisdom Episode 2 from The Bible Project: thebibleproject.simplecast.com/episodes/tree-of-evil-or-tree-of-bad-wisdome-e2.
- II. After the curse and consequences of their disobedience were stated, Adam called his wife “Eve,” which means *living*. Given that their disobedience meant that they were going to experience death, what did Adam understand that may have led him to choose that name?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Podcast: *The Tree of Knowing Good & Bad – Wisdom Episode 2* from The Bible Project: thebibleproject.simplecast.com/episodes/tree-of-evil-or-tree-of-bad-wisdome-e2.

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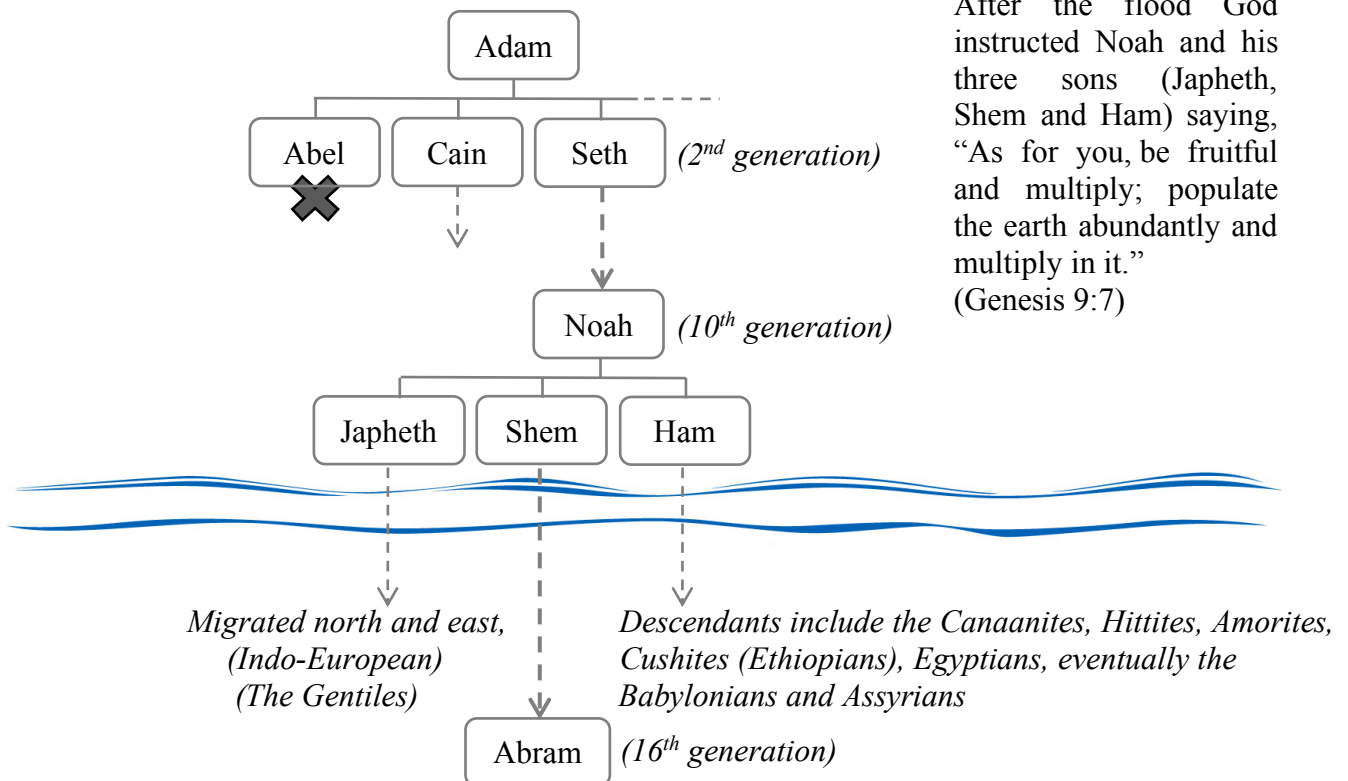
LESSON 3 Genesis 11

The first section of this Scripture, verses 1-9, is the story of the Tower of Babel. I remember hearing this infamous story when I was a child in Sunday School but didn't truly understand the implications or the warnings it has for us. It's astounding how much we have in common with the people of this time and place! Verses 10-32 are the genealogy from Shem to Abram which eventually leads to the genealogy of our Lord and Savior! **And that is how we are adopted into this family!**

Fellowship Question: How have we humans built our own "Towers of Babel" with people who speak our language, think the way we do, are in the same social circles, etc. ...? (Think about this question as you study through verses 1-9.)

We now skip ahead in Genesis to where Abram (whose name is later changed to Abraham) is first mentioned. In the chapters we have bypassed, Adam and Eve's firstborn son, Cain, killed his brother, Abel. The plan for the One promised to set things right (the righteous seed) seemed to be in jeopardy, since Abel was dead and Cain was not a righteous man (1 John 3:12.) God's promise was kept however, as Adam and Eve had a third son, Seth, whose name means "put [in the place of], or substituted." Seth was the replacement for righteous Abel.

Seven generations after Seth, the line for the righteous seed bore Noah, who together with his household (including Noah's sons and their wives) and two of each animal, were spared when God used a flood to rid the world of rampant evil. God's promise to Eve remained steadfast.



INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

God has been in covenantal relationship with man since creation as we have seen in the early chapters of Genesis. A covenant is an agreement of promises. Covenants are sealed with a guarantee of blessings (with obedience) and curses (with disobedience) by one or both participating parties to the committed obligations yielding confident expectancy for fulfillment of the agreed promises. Included in the covenantal timeline of the Bible's storyline as a whole are the following covenants:

- Adamic (Genesis 1-2, Hosea 6:7)
- Noahic (Genesis 9:8-17)
- Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-21, 17:1-14)
- Mosaic (Exodus 19-25)
- Davidic (2 Samuel 7)
- New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:27-34, Ezekiel 36:24-28, Matthew 26:27-30)

God had made a covenant with Noah (and his descendants) to never cut off all flesh by water and to never destroy the earth by flood again (Genesis 9:8-17). During this time all people had one common language. "As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar, and settled there" (Genesis 11:1-2). Shinar, or Babylon, was the southern portion of the great Mesopotamian empire, which also included Assyria. Mesopotamia's founding ruler was Nimrod (great-grandson to Noah via Ham), whose name means, "We shall rebel." It is noteworthy to flash forward in the Bible's storyline to see that Babylon is the future conqueror of Judah, divided Israel's southern kingdom, and Assyria destroys Israel's northern kingdom. Babylon was an urbanized powerful center of civilization, and descendants of the unrighteous seed line of Noah's son, Ham. Babylon at this time is comparable to the influence of Rome in the New Testament. The people of Mesopotamia built ziggurats, or stepped pyramids, for idol worship with a shrine to a pagan god on top. It is thought that the Tower of Babel may have been a ziggurat. Tracking Abram's early years, he was born in Ur of the Chaldeans of Mesopotamia, near Babylon, then settled in Haran, northeast of Ur in the fertile crescent, later when he began his nomadic life with his father.

5. How does this information help us to understand the passage more fully? If you have access to commentaries and other outside resources, what further information do you discover about the time period and culture highlighted in the passage? (Refer to the Welcome Packet for suggested online resources.)

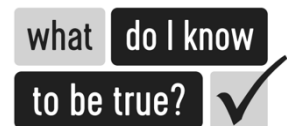
6. Deep Insight Questions:

a) Verse 3 specifies that the people were using brick for stone and tar for mortar. Could it be that the people were making the tower into a waterproof fortress because they didn't believe God's promise (Genesis 9:8-13) that He would never flood the earth again? How does this show their attitude toward God?

b) Why is the genealogy from Shem to Abram important today? (Verses 10-31) Read also: Romans 8:15-17, 9:4-5; Galatians 4:5-7; Ephesians 1:4-5; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38 available in Appendix B.

7. Reflecting on Genesis 11:

a) What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



b) What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

8. How does disobedience and a lack of trust in God affect your own life?

9. In what ways can you show that you are trusting in God and not yourself?
10. How have you built your own “Tower(s) of Babel” with people who speak your language, think the way you do, are in the same social circles, etc.? How can you break out of this mindset?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Why is it important that we seek God in every aspect of our lives?
II) What strikes you in verse 7 when God says, “... let *Us* go down...”?

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LESSON 4
Genesis 12:1 – 9

Fellowship Question: Describe a promise given to you. Was it kept? How has this had an impact on you?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

1. Prayerfully step into Genesis 12 asking God to help you see and understand His Word. Then read Genesis 12:1-9 multiple times through an observation lens and record your findings in the chart below.

Events	Where	Who

2. What clear calling did Abram hear from God?
 - a. How did Abram respond?

 - b. What were the costs of Abram's obedience?

 - c. What is significant about Abram's obedience?

3. Read Genesis 12:1-9 and identify God's promises and Abram's response to God's promises:

Land	People	Blessing
Abram's response to God's promises:		

4. Promises were spoken to Abram, but to whom were they given? What evidence do you see in Genesis 12:1-9 to support your answer?

5. List the Biblical themes you see in Genesis 12:1-9. (You can do it!)

Biblical themes are the stated or implied central concepts of scripture.
Examples: *Kingdom of God, redemption, righteousness, sin, God's sovereignty*

Biblical theme clues:

- 1) Repeated words
- 2) Stated primary subject/topic supported by details
- 3) Implied overarching conceptual ideas
- 4) Section titles.

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it!

Abram took with him his family, extended family members, and his possessions, leaving his country, his people and his father's house to go into God's promised land: Canaan. From the land controlled by the Amorites to the north near the el-Kabir River, Canaan stretched to the land controlled by the Egyptians in the south. Abram's nomadic life took him from place to place within the region of Canaan, known as the purple land, which was inhabited by the Canaanite

people referenced in Genesis 12:6. Canaanites, were known merchants of a purple shellfish traded as fabric dye. Shechem is the first highlighted site of Abram's journey in Canaan. Here stood a shrine used by the Canaanite people, who were descendants of Noah's grandson Canaan, to worship their gods.

Baal, often depicted as a man with bull horns, was considered the king of the Canaanite gods. As the fertility god, Baal was believed to supply the rainfall in which the Canaanites were heavily dependent upon as their primary water supply for sustaining life. Customs of the Canaanites included systematic magic, meaning taking part in behavior to entice the gods to emulate the same behavior, bringing about the practices of sacred temple prostitution. Sexual intercourse of Baal with a goddess was believed to bring rainfall, so priests or other Canaanite men would take part in public sexual rituals in hopes that the fertility god, Baal, would send rain.

Here in Shechem, where the Canaanites inhabited the land, God appeared to Abram and promised to give the land instead to his descendants. As an act of worship, Abram's response was to build an altar, or a simple stone structure, to offer a gift of a clean animal sacrifice acknowledging God's great power in his promise. Again, Abram builds an altar between Bethel and Ai before continuing south through Canaan into the dry land of the Negev region, which spans from the sheep country of the Hebron Mountains through the Zin Wilderness of unfavorable terrain to the Wilderness of Paran leading down into Egypt.

6. How does this information help us to understand the passage more fully? If you have access to commentaries and other outside resources, what further information do you discover about the time period and culture highlighted in the passage? (Refer to the Welcome Packet for suggested online resources.)

7. Deep Insight Questions:

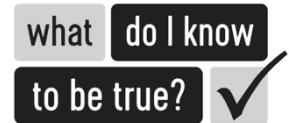
a. Describe the state of God's creation at the time of Abram's call. What does this reveal about the need for God's promises?

b. What specific messages of hope are given in Genesis 12:1-19 of God's greater plan to restore the Kingdom of God through redemptive history leading up to Christ throughout the Old Testament and ultimately through Christ? Refer to Matthew 1:2,16-17; Isaiah 53:4-7,10-12; and Luke 24:44-49 available in Appendix B, as well as the timeline available in Appendix C.

- c. How did the presence of the Canaanites potentially threaten God's promises to the people?

8. Reflecting on Genesis 12:1-9:

- a. What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



- b. What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

9. In verse 8, Abram called on the name of the Lord as a response to the promises he was given. What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord? What are other forms of worship? Which of these draw me closest to God?
10. Practices of the Canaanites that inhabited the promised land lured God's people to turn their eyes from him throughout history. Today, what distractions of the world lure God's people away from him in the same way? Which of these distractions are hardest for you? What does it look like to remain rooted in faith?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Reflect on the great cost of Abram's obedience to his calling. What are some wise guidelines rooted in Biblical truth to consider when seeking to interpret life choices presented before us when we are asking for clarity from the Holy Spirit if it is a calling from God? (e.g. adoption, global outreach work overseas, job change, live kidney donation, etc.)
- II) What promises has God made that I can claim? How ought this affect my daily life? How am I walking as a child of promise? In what ways have I forgotten God's promises?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Video resources on God's bigger story you may find interesting:

TaNak/Old Testament <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/tanak-old-testament/>

Torah Genesis 12-50 <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/genesis-12-50/>

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<https://www.thattheworldmayknow.com/fertility-cults-of-canaan>



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LESSON 5
Genesis 12:10 – 13:4

Fellowship Question: Share about a time when you felt blessed.

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

1. Read Genesis 12:10-13:4 & 20:12, re-read it aloud, then re-read it again. Observe God's Word and record your observations in the chart below.

Events	Where	Who	Themes
		Abram Sarai (Gen. 20:12) Pharaoh Lot	

2. Read Genesis 12:1-9, as a refresher of God's promises. Refer also to the following cross scripture references: Genesis 21:12, Romans 9:7, Galatians 3:16, Deuteronomy 1:21, 6:3, 12:1, 27:3. What does God's Word say about the land and the promised Seed who is Christ?

Land	Seed

3. How did Abram's choices in Genesis 12:10-13:4 potentially threaten God's promises? How did God show himself faithful in this scenario?

4. After referring back to Genesis 12:1-9, what do you observe about God's promise to bless Abram beginning in Genesis 12:10-13:4, as well as God's promise to curse those who curse him, despite Abram's choices?

5. What role did each of the following key players have in sinning against God? What resulted from their actions?

Abram
Sarai
Pharaoh

6. How would you define repentance? In what ways do you see Abram's choices in Genesis 13:1-4 demonstrating true repentance?

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Abram entered Egypt, the land of a stable water supply in the Nile River, for survival due to a severe famine in the promised land of Canaan, which relied on rainfall. Abram's household lived as foreigners amongst the Egyptians ruled by Pharaoh: an honorary title given to the monarchy leader of the land commissioned to lead the people politically as king and religiously. Pharaoh's overarching responsibility was to ensure harmony for the people honoring the goddess Ma'at, one

of 2,000 gods in the Ancient Egyptian pantheon. Egyptians believed people were to be co-workers with the deities in pursuing harmony with absolute truth as a core value.

As supreme ruler, Pharaoh held a position of great power, so a harem of women was considered a deserved privilege. In order to keep the blood line pure, many Pharaohs married sisters or half-sisters, but one wife held the honor of the chief consort, or the Great Wife, whose offspring was heir to the throne. Women in Pharaoh's harem were highly skilled women in areas such as the arts, weaving, and religion, yet beauty was a valued trait. Abram was all too aware of the custom that as a foreigner, he could be killed so another man may take his beautiful wife as his own.

Abram may have been a foreigner, but his wealth continued to accumulate despite his nomadic lifestyle. Wealth was measured in possessions: animals, servants, and land. Possessing rare animals, such as camels like Abram (12:16), was a status symbol of great wealth.

7. How does this information help us to understand the passage more fully? If you have access to commentaries and other outside resources, what further information do you discover about the time period and culture highlighted in the passage? (Refer to the Welcome Packet for suggested online resources.)

8. Deep Insight Questions:

a. Based on what you know about the state of God's creation at the time, God's promises given to Abram, and Abram's choices, how would you explain God's silence while Abram and his household was in Egypt?

b. Elaborate on the meaning of this statement, "In the desert we can be distracted and fail to call on the name of the Lord." Do you agree or disagree? Give evidence from Genesis 12:10-13:4 and from present day.

c. Proverbs 19:21 states, "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." How does this proverb relate to Genesis 12:10-13:4?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

9. How is self-sufficiency, a key theme of Genesis 12:10-20, and the desire for control played out today? In what ways do I get caught up in it? How has God protected me from it?

10. Reflect on what Genesis 12:10-13:4 tells us about God's character and our humanness.

God's Character	Human Nature

11. What would the outcome be if we chose to truly live out life as image bearers of God?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Discuss the scene of Genesis 12:10-13:4 from Sarai's point of view. Taking note of the observation that in the scripture there is no dialogue with Sarai. What does this tell us?
- II) Pharaoh asked Abram a series of questions in Genesis 12:18-19. How do you think he would have answered? What specific responses might he have given?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Pharaoh" found at <https://www.ancient.eu/pharaoh/>

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LESSON 6
Genesis 13:5-18

Fellowship Question: Have you ever been involved in a family dispute over money or an inheritance? How was it resolved?

As always, before beginning your lesson, spend some time in prayer. Ask God to reveal to you any motives or desires that may have taken priority over His best interests for you.

“Nothing but supreme principle can carry anyone through the real, separated and surrendered life of the child of God. If you are prompted by anything less, such as excitement, enthusiasm, fashion, contagious example — you will first be a hindrance, and end by being a failure. Examine yourselves, whether [you] be in the faith. Prove your own selves. And if you are consciously acting from a low and selfish motive, ask God to breathe into you his own pure love.”

F. B. Meyer, *Abraham: The Obedience of Faith*

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Read Genesis 13:5-18, and make some initial observations – noting the events, locations, characters, and themes.

Events	Where	Who	Themes

Additional observations or initial questions you have about the Text:

--

1. Refresh your memory of Genesis 12:10-20. Compare and observe any changes in Abram's attitude and actions between Genesis 12:10-20 and Genesis 13:5-18.

Abram with the Pharaoh in Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20)	Abram with Lot in the Negev (Genesis 13:5-18)

2. What is the basis for Lot's choice of land? Why was this a grave mistake? (See also Psalm 1.)

3. What is God's role in this story?

4. What do you note about Abram's faith compared to Lot's in this passage? What differences do you see in their attitudes toward wealth and possessions?

	Abram	Lot
Faith:		
Attitudes:		

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Up until this point in Abram's story, he has led a semi-nomadic life, moving his tent from place to place. He, along with Lot, would settle in a place, establish grazing rights for their livestock, raise grain, and then move on when circumstances made it necessary. In this passage, their wealth – measured by their flocks and herds – has accumulated to the point where the land can no longer support both them, conflict has resulted, and they must separate. All the land belonged to God (see Leviticus 25:23, *...for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.*) Remember, in Genesis 12:1, God told Abram to leave his family and go to the land He would show him. (It was the legal practice at this time that a person could come into possession of whatever land they could see.) However, Abram chose to take Lot with him and now they are in this situation. As patriarch, Abram has the right to take whatever land he wishes. Instead, he unselfishly and graciously gives Lot the first choice.

Lot looks out and sees fertile, well-watered land in the Jordan Valley and he chooses it, settling near Sodom which is located near the Salt Sea. We will learn much more about Sodom in future lessons, but even at this point in time, it was known to be a wicked place, inhabited by people who were unashamedly open in their sin against the Lord. Abram settles near Mamre in Hebron and immediately builds an altar to the Lord. God gave instructions for building altars which took the form of a raised table of stone (Deuteronomy 27:5-6) or earth (Exodus 20:24) and they served several purposes in Old Testament times. As well as being a place to offer sacrifices, altars were constructed as a place of worship, a commemoration of an encounter with God, a memorial, a place to make a covenant, and a place of refuge.

5. How does this information help us to understand the passage more fully? If you have access to commentaries and other outside resources, what further information do you discover about the time period and culture highlighted in the passage? (Refer to the Welcome Packet for suggested online resources.)

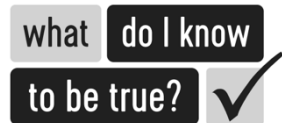
6. Deep Insight Questions

- a. Read Luke 18:18-30, the story of Jesus and the rich young ruler. What does Jesus have to say about wealth in relationship to the Kingdom of God? How does Jesus' response to the ruler relate to Abram's and Lot's choices?

- b. Did Abram put God's promise to him in jeopardy when he agreed to divide the land with Lot? Explain your opinion and note what God tells Abram to do. (Consider Psalm 24:1 which says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.")

7. Reflecting on Genesis 13:5-18:

- a. What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



- b. What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

8. God is ready to fulfill promises in you right now and in the future if you trust in His wisdom instead of your own. To what promises from God do you choose to cling? A few Scripture references pertaining to God's promises are listed here, but there are many more, so share some of your favorites! (Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 26:3, Jeremiah 29:11, James 1:5, John 3:16, 1 Peter 1:3-5)
9. What does the apostle Paul tell us in Galatians 3:15-29 about God's faithfulness to His promise and how is the promise God made to Abram extended to us today?

10. How might the church/body of Christ benefit from Abram's example in times of conflict?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Was there more at stake for Abram than just land and possessions? What else might he have been trying to preserve and protect?

- II) What growth, if any, do you observe in Abram since he left Haran (Chapter 12)? What has been your own experience with spiritual growth – is it steady, fits and starts, or something in between?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

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LESSON 7
Genesis 14

Fellowship Question: When have you paid an exacting price to act with integrity? Conversely, have you ever compromised your integrity and how did that decision ultimately cost you?

In the early 1950's, some 25+ years prior to when ethics legislation¹ was in place in the United States, a project manager relayed to one of his employer's vice presidents how he had handled a recent sales contract with a South American government. The manager had negotiated a substantial deal worth \$10 million in sales to the government, equivalent to just over ten times that today. The government officials then asked for an additional one million dollars for "training". Knowing that the extra one million dollars would go straight into the pockets of the military generals approving the contract, the project manager turned down the business. Bob Galvin, the vice president, was pleased with the manager's actions:

Galvin thanked his manager for doing the right thing, even though every employee in the company would suffer by at least \$100 in his or her profit-sharing check as a result of the lost order. He also noted that Motorola would not take the bid even if the generals had backed down and came back with the bid of \$10 million. He pointed out that Motorola's integrity would be questioned if they conducted business with those known to engage in unethical business practices. The cost to the firm would be much greater than the \$10 million in lost revenue.²

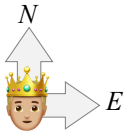

In our lesson this week, we examine events from about 4,000 years ago in which Abram's integrity is tested and displayed. We also encounter one of the most mysterious and intriguing figures in the Bible.

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

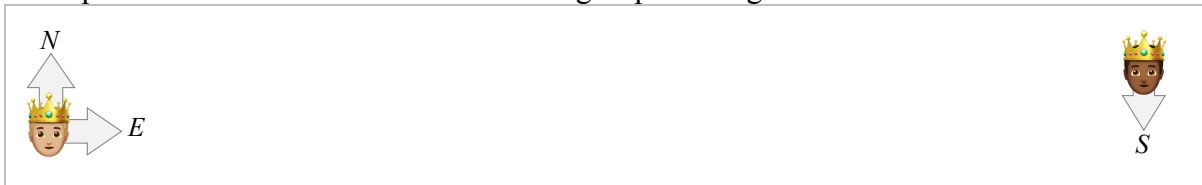
Read Genesis 14.

Whew! The passage mentions a lot of ancient kings and places! Let's break down verses 1-16 a bit, and identify the major groups.

1. There are two groups of kings mentioned – four kings in one group and five in the other. You may find it helpful to distinctly mark (with symbols or colors) members of the two groups in the text in Appendix A. Note their names and their city/region:

Kings of the North and East		Kings of the South	
1) Cherdolaomer of Elam		1) Bera of Sodom	
2)		2)	
3)		3)	
4)		4)	
	5)		

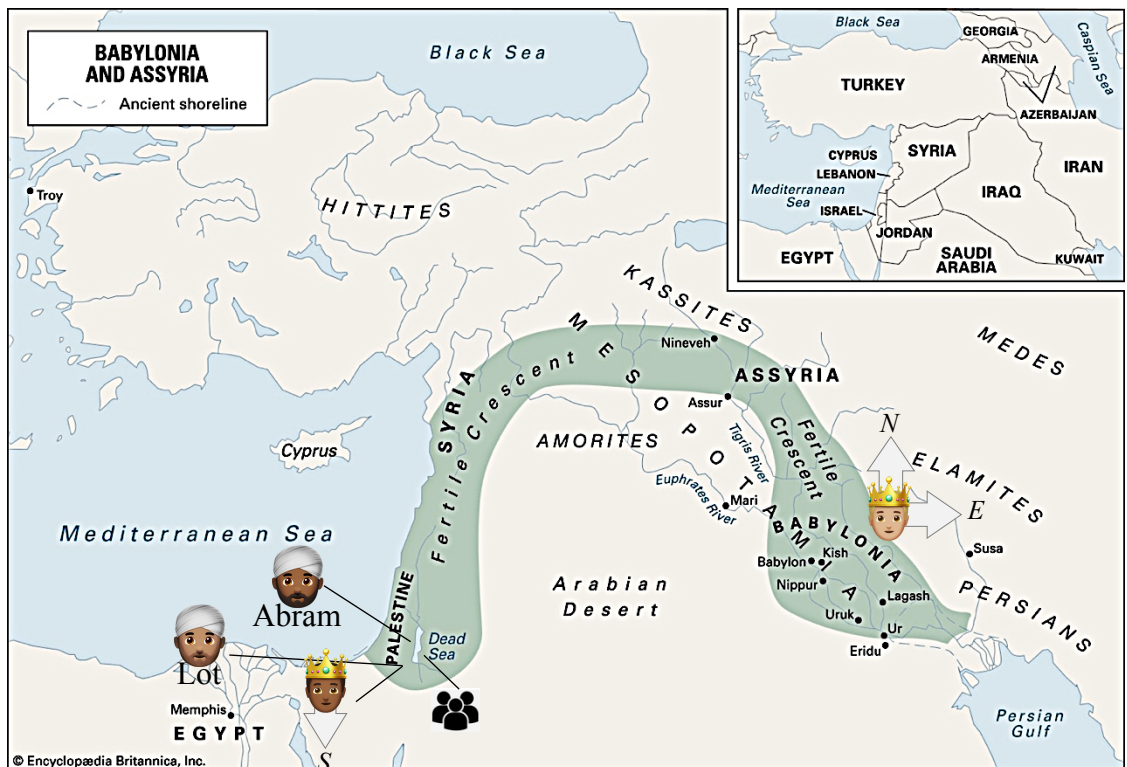
2. What point of contention exists between the groups of kings?



3. What additional people groups and areas are mentioned in verses 5-7? (Mark them in Appendix A if you find it helpful.)

- a) the Rephaim in Ashteroth-Karnaim
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
 - f)
- 

The regions mentioned in this chapter make up an area of the Middle East known as the Fertile Crescent. (Figure 7-1)



Map used in accordance with terms of use.

Figure 7-1

Now that we have the major players grouped and their approximate locations, let's zoom in and look at the sequence of events.

The Valley of Siddim (labeled 1 on the map of Figure 7-2) is where the battle between the kings takes place. But first, the Kings of the North and East work their way down the King's Highway (along the east side of the Jordan River,) reasserting their dominance and control of the region.

4. Reread verses 5-16 and using the map below, follow the movements of the armies. (Not all locations mentioned are shown on the map.) What details catch your attention? The distance from Damascus to the southern end of the Dead Sea is about 260 miles – less than the distance from Boise to Idaho Falls. (Observations about Abram may be listed in question 5.)

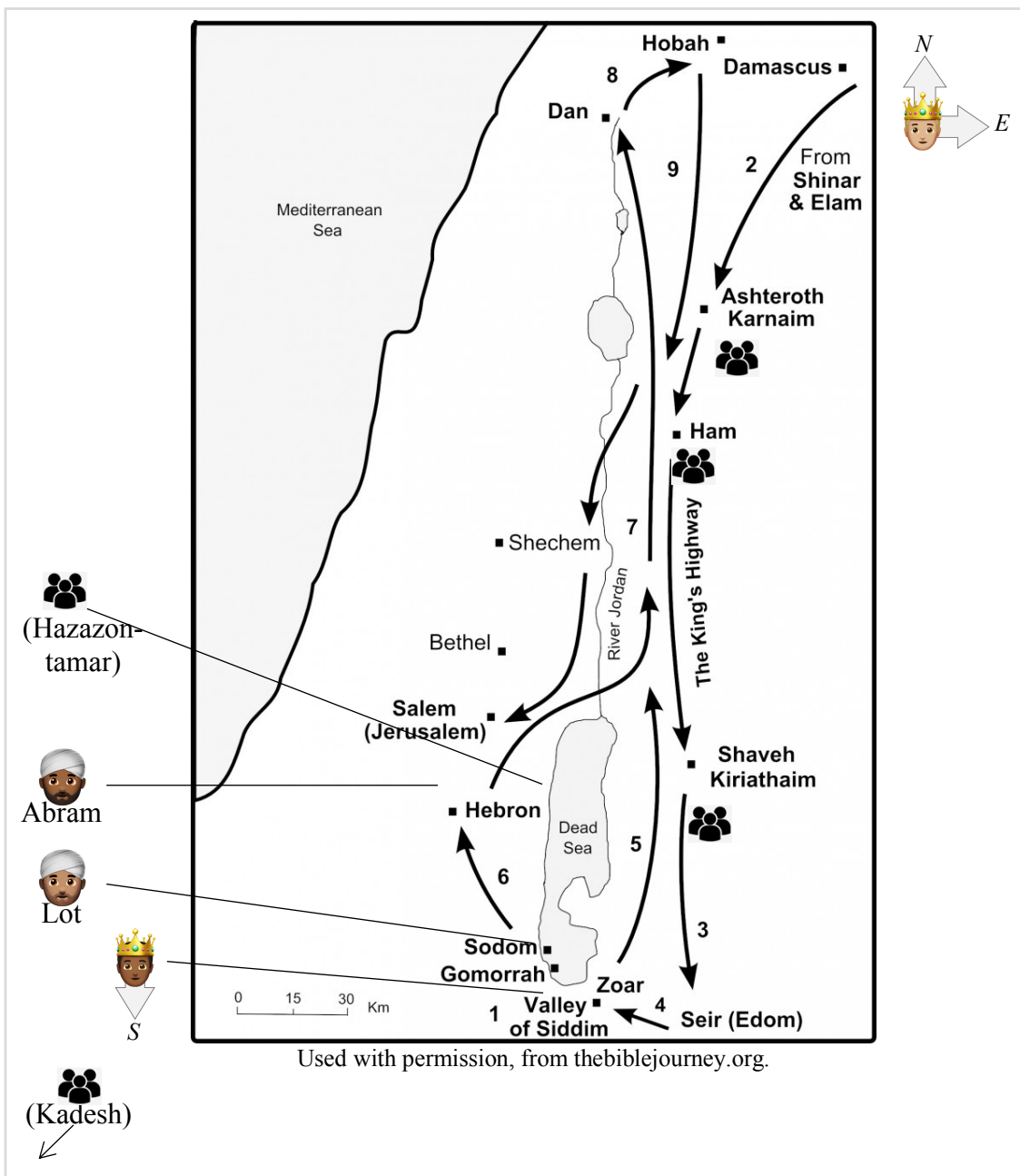


Figure 7-2

5. What do you observe about Abram – his actions, his timing, his motivation?

Read verses 17-24.

6. When Abram returns from defeating Cherdolaomer and his allies, two kings meet him in the valley of the Kings just north of Salem (considered by many Bible scholars to be ancient Jerusalem). Fill in the following table to compare the encounters:

Bera, King of Sodom	Melchizedek, King of Salem
<i>Bera</i> means “son of evil” <i>Sodom</i> means “burning”	<i>Melchizedek</i> means “king of righteousness” <i>Salem</i> means “peace”
	Melchizedek’s additional role/function:
Bera offers Abram:	Melchizedek offers Abram:
Abram’s response to Bera:	Abram’s response to Melchizedek:
What does Abram’s response indicate?	What does Abram’s response indicate?

7. (Optional) What additional observations do you wish to highlight? What themes do you notice? What questions do you have about these verses?

Events	Where	Who	Themes

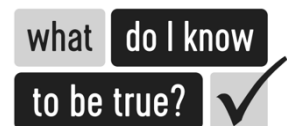
Questions:

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Melchizedek, king of Salem, is one of the most fascinating men in the Bible. He is mentioned in only three places: Genesis 14, Psalm 110, and Hebrews 7. Consider these pieces of information about him:

- 1) Melchizedek, king of Salem literally means *king of righteousness, king of peace*. We know of only one other person who fits that description:
 - a. Jesus is the “righteous Branch; And He will reign as king,” as prophesied of the Messiah in Jeremiah 23:5.
 - b. In Isaiah 9:6, the Messiah is called, “the Prince of Peace.” Ephesians 2:14 says of Jesus that, “He Himself is our peace....”
- 2) Melchizedek is both a king and a priest. Abram’s grandson Jacob had 12 sons who became the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel. After the 400-year captivity in Egypt, the Hebrews were led out of Egypt by Moses of the tribe of Levi. Moses’ brother Aaron was the first high priest of the Levitical order and all high priests were descended from him. The nation of Israel’s kings were of the tribe of Judah. No one could function in both the capacity of king and [a Levitical] priest, as the account of Uzziah demonstrates in 2 Chronicles 26. (King Saul offering a sacrifice in 1 Samuel 13 is another example.)
- 3) Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High (El Elyon) before God ever established the Levitical priesthood. (Exodus 28:1) Hebrews 7:3 tells us the Melchizedek was “without father, without mother, without genealogy.” (His priesthood was not a birthright.)
- 4) King David, in Psalm 110 prophesying about the Messiah to come, wrote that “The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” The order of Melchizedek is therefore superior and eternal, compared to the Levitical priesthood with which David was very familiar.
- 5) Melchizedek offers Abram bread and wine – the very elements that many centuries later Christ gave His disciples as a reminder of the New Covenant.

- 6) Melchizedek blessed Abram [remember that God promised to bless all people through Abram – so Melchizedek blessed the one who would bless all]; Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek as an act of worship toward God.
- The writer of Hebrews 7 highlights that the greater bestows a blessing on the lesser, thus Melchizedek is greater than Abram.
 - The author also argues that whilst the Levites received tithes for God in their service as priests, via their lineage to Abram they also paid tithes to Melchizedek (the lesser pays the greater.) Again, the order of Melchizedek is greater than the Levitical priesthood.
 - Pulling this together, think about how the Jews in power in Jesus' day revered their father Abraham and rejected Jesus as the Christ. The writer of Hebrews points out that Melchizedek is superior to Abraham and as such, Jesus Christ (a high priest in the order of Melchizedek) is also greater than Abraham and [by association] the Levitical priesthood. Christ's priesthood is a superior one.
8. How does this information help us to understand the passage more fully? If you have access to commentaries and other outside resources, what further information do you discover Melchizedek? (Use care to ensure the information aligns with what you see in Scripture!) (Refer to the Welcome Packet for suggested online resources.)
9. Give some thought to the meaning of Melchizedek's name and title and how it is ordered – *king of righteousness*, then *king of peace*. How does *righteousness* precede *peace* in a believer's call and journey?
10. What does it mean to recognize and accept Jesus as both king and high priest? (You may want to review the responsibilities of the high priest in Leviticus 16.)
11. Reflecting on Genesis 14:
- What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



- b. What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

12. From the Abram's example in this chapter, what are some practical and tangible ways you can seek to live a life of integrity?
13. The apostle Peter wrote of believers, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" (1 Peter 2:9) As co-heirs with Christ (the King of Righteousness, the Prince of Peace, the Great High Priest) what does living as a part of the royal priesthood entail? (First, decide – is it a call to perfection or a call toward a direction? Explain your answer.)

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Give some thought to the power of Cherdolaomer's allied forces. Consider how many victories they had had before encountering Abram near the town of Dan. Abram and his allies prevailed when others did not – is there any connection to God's promises to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3?
- II) Are there additional ways in which Melchizedek is an archetype of Jesus Christ?

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Icon made by author *freepik* at www.flaticon.com. Used in accordance with terms of use.

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ENDNOTES

¹In 1977, the United States enacted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), making it illegal for individuals and corporations to bribe foreign governments in order to obtain business and it also set some standards of accounting transparency for corporations.

² Shaw, Robert Bruce. *Trust in the Balance*. Jossey-Bass Inc., 1997.

 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

LESSON 8
Genesis 15

Fellowship Question: Have you ever had to wait for something promised? Are you still waiting? Waiting is hard. Name some different ways that we wait. How does hope fit into waiting?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

1. Read Genesis 15:1-20. Ask the LORD to open your eyes to see what He has for you personally as you read this intimate account. Read it again. Being mindful of what we learned about Abram last week in Chapter 14 after Abram rescues Lot, what do you witness between Abram and the LORD in these verses?
2. Abram is waiting and questioning the LORD. In verses 1-8, what words/themes stand out in this conversation between Abram and the LORD? (Example: *shield* – “I am your shield.”)
3. Verse 6 says, “Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” What does this mean?
4. How would you define Promise Keeper or a Covenant Making God? (In the Old Testament, when we see the name of the LORD in all capital letters, it is referring to our covenant keeping God – Yahweh (or YHWH).) Consider the verses Exodus 3:7-8, Joshua 21:45, 1 Kings 8:56, Isaiah 14:27, John 14:2-3, and Hebrews 10:23 in Appendix B to expand your understanding.

5. We see the LORD's response to Abram's question of "How can I know..." in verse 9-20. What does the Lord ask Abram to bring and to do? (This was a cultural ceremony and Abram knew what the LORD was indicating.)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

As a reminder from Lesson 3, a covenant is an agreement of promises. Covenants are sealed with a guarantee of blessings (with obedience) and curses (with disobedience) by one or both participating parties to the committed obligations yielding confident expectancy for fulfillment of the agreed promises. In our culture we make covenants everyday such as buying a house and taking out a mortgage with a bank. We make marriage vows and expect each other to be committed to that covenant. In both of these instances if one party does not keep their part of the vow or covenant there are consequences.

In order to demonstrate a covenant in Abram's time and culture, two parties would take animals and cut them in half. Both parties would walk through the middle indicating their covenant or vow to follow through with the terms. The implication was, "If I do not do my part, may it be done to me as these animals."

6. What does our Covenant making LORD do in verses 12-20? What do these verses reveal about God's character as a Promise Keeper?

BUT GOD, knowing man, does Abram's part of the covenant as well as His own. God's presence and commitment to the covenant is demonstrated by the smoking pot and flaming torch passing between the pieces of the slaughtered animals in verse 17. God's presence as a flame and smoke (or cloud) is also seen in other cross references such as Exodus 3:2, 14:24, 19:18; 1 Kings 18:38; and Acts 2:3-4.

After passing between the animals when making a covenantal vow, it is understood that the party who fails to keep the covenant will die. God prevented Abram from passing between the pieces. Here the LORD is letting Abram know that He will die in the place of Abram. And He did! Jesus,

the future Seed, died for Abram and for all of us as well. God has a plan. Do we trust His plan? Read Jeremiah 31:31-35 to further understand the heart of our LORD, as well as Galatians 3:15-18 and 3:22.

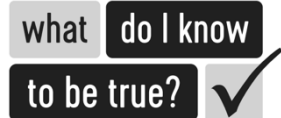
“The animal sacrifices have no power to free us from sin. They are merely pictures and reminders of the fact that, on the cross, something happened that broke the power of sin over our lives.”

– Ray Stedman, *Friend of God*

7. What do verses 12-20 reveal about Abram? What did Abram do to deserve being called righteous by the LORD? Did Abram see all that was promised? (See Hebrews 11:8-16 and Revelation 21:1-4.)

8. Reflecting on Genesis 15:

c. What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



d. What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

Remember – remember what God has done in the past. Think of a time when you saw the LORD do something for you – fulfill a promise, answer a prayer – Hebrews 6:13-20. Remember to tell others what He has done for you and tell your part of His Story.

9. Compare how God took care of Abram in this passage and how He takes care of you today:

God to care of Abram:	God takes care of me:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God came to Abram in a vision • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is present wherever I am (Joshua 1:9) •

10. What are some of God's promises to Abram and to all who believe:

God's promises Abram:	God's promises to me:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will have an heir from your own body. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is with me and is a victorious Warrior for me. (Zephaniah 3:17) •

11. What are some of God's promises you can remind yourself of, in the wait, that bring you Hope?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

I) To whom does the land belong?

“The Land: Lot had lifted up his eyes and chosen for himself; now God says to the man of faith, living in his tent on the hillside, Abram, lift up your eyes. Where? Everywhere – to the north, the south, the east (the portion Lot chose), and the west. All the land is his! This land is consistently the symbol for us of the fullness of life in the Spirit of God; the life of joy, power, love, and glory; the life of refreshing ministry to others. Surely this is what Paul longs for us when he prays, [That you] may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:18-19).”

– Ray Stedman, *The Power of His Presence*

The question then becomes: Am I living by the power of the Holy Spirit and those promises given? Or am I trying to find life apart from Him?

II) Who are Abram's descendants? (Consider Galatians 3:29.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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LESSON 9
Genesis 16

Fellowship Question: How have you reacted when involved in a group project where another group member was not doing their part in a timely manner? If you went ahead without their input, what was the outcome?

Prayerfully read Genesis 16 more than once. It is a familiar story, so ask God to give you new insights and a fresh perspective on the actions of the characters and the events that occur.

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

To help you in your understanding of the passage, list in the chart below the major events, who was involved and where they were at the time. Identify any themes you notice here that we have already encountered in our study of Abraham.

Events	Where	Who	Themes

1. What do you observe about God's character in this passage? What attributes are displayed?

2. In the past lessons, we have discussed promises/covenant and blessings and curses. What references to these ideas do you see here?

3. What are the consequences of Sarai's taking matters into her own hands, immediate as well as long-term?

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

4. Are there events in this chapter that were uncomfortable for you or seemed to conflict with what you see as godly behavior?

Some background information about the cultural context of these events may be helpful to your understanding. In Middle Eastern culture 4,000 years ago, fertility was viewed as a gift from God. A woman's inability to conceive was seen as a divine withholding of blessing, a punishment or even a curse. (see verse 2). The woman was frequently looked down upon socially and was stigmatized by her inability to bear children. This thinking still occurs today in some instances. In the culture of Sarai's time, it was not uncommon for the barren wife of a patriarch to offer her husband one of her servants or a concubine as a surrogate mother. Any children conceived in this manner became the legal offspring of the primary wife.

In many instances, the surrogate was seated on the lap of the adoptive mother while insemination took place, so there was no question to whom the child would belong. Even though this was a socially accepted practice, it was not God's design and there were negative consequences.

5. How did Sarai's actions put the promised righteous Seed (look back at Lesson 2, Question 8 and Lesson 3, Question 6b) in jeopardy?

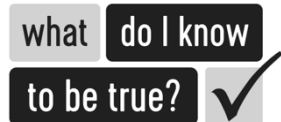
6. To put this passage into the larger context of the book of Genesis, review Genesis 3 and Lessons 1 and 2. What are the parallels between these two passages, both in the human behaviors and in God's response? [If you would like to do further study and put this passage in context with the New Testament, read Galatians 4:22-31 and note how the story of Sarai and Hagar represents the Old and New Covenants.]

Genesis 16 contains the first of many Old Testament references to the “angel of the LORD”. Depending on the context, there are three major interpretations of who this angel is. In some instances, the angel is seen as a created being, a messenger sent by God to deliver a particular message. In others, the angel is seen as God himself in human form (“theophany”) or the preincarnate Christ (“Christophany.”)

7. Based on your examination of the angel’s message to Hagar and her response, would you say this angel is simply a messenger or a manifestation of God Himself? Give specific evidence to support your conclusion.

8. Reflecting on Genesis 16:

a. What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



b. What truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

9. What accepted cultural practices of our day will future generations look back on like we are looking at the practices of Abram’s day? How should the church and we as believers view the cultural practices of our day that do not coincide with God’s design? More importantly, how should we respond to the people who engage in these practices?

10. Think about where Hagar came from, who she was, and how she and God responded to her situation. How does this encourage you in your circumstances? How have you experienced the “God who sees” and the “God who hears” (the meaning of Ishmael’s name)?
11. Now think about who Sarai was, how she dealt with her circumstances and how God responded to her actions. What do you learn that is helpful to you in dealing with ongoing difficult situations?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Read Hebrews 6:11-15 and 10:35-36. Considering these along with Abram and Sarai’s story in Genesis 16, what is the connection between perseverance/endurance and faith? Does one produce the other? Does one make the other possible? Are they essential in order for us to receive God’s promises?

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LESSON 10
Genesis 17:1 – 14

Fellowship question: Is there special significance in your given name at birth? Over time, what other names have been given to you that have special meaning to you/others?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Read Genesis 17:1-14.

God had chosen Abram, making a lasting Covenant with him. God declared Abram righteous as Abram believed God. By the end of Chapter 16, Abram was still living in a land not his own, a father of one son through Sarai's maid, Hagar. Many years had passed since God had talked with Abram. We are not told what was in Abram's mind and heart as he waited. Thirteen years after Ishmael's birth, the LORD appeared (17:1).

1. God said to Abram, "As for Me..." (17:4). List everything God said He will do:

2. List everything God required of Abraham:

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

"God Almighty" is the translation for God's Hebrew name, *El-Shaddai*. (Genesis 17:1) As God reveals His various names in Scripture we can better know and worship Him. His generic name, *God (El or ELOHIM)* is His most frequently used name in the Old Testament. Although the derivation is prehistoric, scholars suggest the meaning of *El* is "might" or "power" or "all mightiness." When *El* is combined with nouns or adjectives, God's personal attributes are further revealed as in *El -Shaddai*.¹ The root of *Shaddai* is *Shad*, Hebrew for breast. So, some scholars have suggested *Shaddai* pictures attributes of tenderness, generosity, and fruitfulness. Therefore, *El-Shaddai* suggests God of "might" and "tenderness" combined.² Others have translated *El-Shaddai* as "*The All-Sufficient One*," others "*The Mountain One*," or "*Rock*." There is not universal agreement of the meaning of this Hebrew name, but the translation "God Almighty" in verse 17:1 reflects God's character.

Culturally during Abram's time, names were a reflection on one's character or circumstances defining their reputation as members in society. In addition, authority was reflected in the right to name or rename another. Abram's name initially meant *exalted father*, but God renamed him *Abraham*, which means *father of many*.

Circumcision was also a cultural norm and a widespread practice in the Near East and performed on young men at the threshold of their manhood. God gave Abraham and his descendants circumcision as a sign [remembrance] of His covenant. At eight days old, each male baby was to be marked by a sign in his flesh – the cutting off of his foreskin. Eugene H. Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases Genesis 17:13b, “That way My covenant will be cut into your body, a permanent mark of My permanent covenant.”

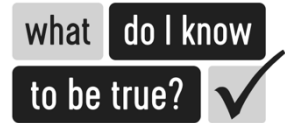
3. God revealed His own special name, *El Shaddai*, to Abram. In light of His name, why/how would Abram fulfill God's call to “walk before Me faithfully and be blameless”? Also see Genesis 5:22 and Genesis 6:9.

4. What do you think brought Abram's face to the ground?

5. What does Abraham's new name tell us about God? About Abraham?

6. To whom/what does the sign of circumcision point? See Genesis 17:11, Ezekiel 36:26-28, and Romans 4:9-17.

7. Reflecting on Genesis 17:1-14:
a. What do you know to be true about God from this passage?



- b. W
c. hat truths can you take away from the text?

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

8. What do I know about God from His name and His promises? (Personalize your answer.)

9. How do I want to “walk and be blameless” this week?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) God said, “I will be your God...for generations to come”. We see the beginnings of God’s community of people from Genesis 17:12-14 continuing on through Revelation 21. Of what significance are these promises to you?
- II) What brought about those being “cut off” (Genesis 17:14) from the people? What cuts off those living in New Covenant times until the second coming of Christ?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

END NOTES

¹ Bible Study Tools.com, Bible Study link, *Names of God*.

² Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (reprinted, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, pp. 32-34.)

REFERENCES

Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, pp. 32-34.

BibleStudyTools.com, Bible Study link, *Names of God*.

 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

LESSON 11
Genesis 17:15 – 27

Fellowship question: How have you experienced the restoration process of a broken relationship?

Beloved, take note as you dive into God's Word of His continued promise reminders throughout His Divine Scriptures. Back in Genesis 12 we read God's words to Abram of his blessing promises: Abram would be made into a great nation, his descendants would be given the promised land, and through him all people would be blessed. Then, again we see these reminders highlighted in the early verses of Chapter 17.

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

1. Read Genesis 17:15-27. Make note of the major events, who was involved and where they were at the time. If you find it helpful, use the provided chart.

Events	Where	Who

2. Reflect on Abram’s plan for an heir in Genesis 15:3 and Sarai’s plan in 16:2. Compare and contrast Abram and Sarai’s plans with God’s plan in Genesis 17:15-22. If it is helpful, use the provided chart.

<p style="text-align: center;">Abram Genesis 15:3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sarai Genesis 16:2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">God Genesis 17:15-22</p>

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Cultural Context: In Biblical Near East culture, a curse was a penalty or consequence for non-compliance of covenant terms between two parties. Blessings were rewards for the covenantal parties who adhered to the agreement. Blessings were generally determined by the party greater in social status, such as a king. Naturally, God, Ruler of Creation, defines the terms of the covenant, or the binding agreement, between Himself and Abram.

Compliance by Abram to the terms set forth by God required obedience in the rite of circumcision of himself and all males in his household, including slaves. Families during the ancient Near East time period were structured under patriarchal codes. Cultural norms placed one male leader as the head of household in which all family members, servants, and possessions submitted to his authority.

Duty and responsibility were core values of households. Heir to headship of household was generally given to the first-born son, but if no male heir was present, the chief servant would inherit the estate. Great social and economic pressure reinforced shame that coincided with barrenness of women, therefore husbands would often take on a second wife if his first wife was

childless. Also, concubines were quite common. Women, in general, held marginal status in this male dominant society.

As mentioned in Lesson 10, names reflected one's character or circumstances, influencing one's reputation as a member in society. Authority was reflected in the right to name or re-name another.

3. Abram's faith has been credited to him as righteousness in Genesis 15:6. Which of Abram's behaviors/actions in Genesis 17:15-27 are reflective of his righteousness?

4. Abram makes a plea to God for Ishmael to live under His blessing. God confirms that Ishmael will live, but His everlasting covenant would be through Isaac in verse 19.
 - a. What have we learned thus far about Ishmael?

 - b. Why was Ishmael not the blessing carrier of the covenant?

5. Genesis 17:6 and 17:16 mention kings that will come from Sarai. In what way is this promise fulfilled at one level in the remainder of the Old Testament and then later in the New Testament? Some references to consider are 2 Samuel 7:9-16, Isaiah 9:6-7, Mark 12:35-37, Matthew 1:1-17, Matthew 1:20-21, and Luke 2:4. (These cross references are provided at the end of the lesson.)

6. Deep insight questions:
- a. For what purpose did God require circumcision as a required term of His everlasting covenant to Abram? (Reviewing Genesis 17:1-14 may help.)

 - b. In what way did God's covenant promise of the heir through Sarai acknowledge the value He has of her? How is this significant for women today?

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

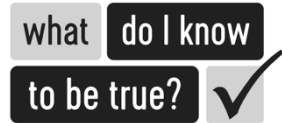
Spiritual principles are Biblical statements of truth gleaned from the Text (or discussion about the Text) that illuminate and inform the Christian's walk and answer the question, "What do I know to be true according to God's Word?"

Spiritual Principle Clues:

1. *Statements about the Biblical theme(s) supported by details of the Text*
2. *Statements about God's character*
3. *Statements of Truth from the Text applicable across time and culture*

7. Let's identify some spiritual principles from the passage that are applicable across time and culture:
- a. What statements of truth about the major ideas of Genesis 17:15-27 can be declared?

- b. What does Genesis 17:15-27 reveal about God's character?
- c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?



APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

8. God responds to Abram's plea, "I have heard you," in verse 20. How have you experienced a similar response from God as His beloved?
9. React to the following statement: *Circumcision is an outward reflection of an obedient heart grounded in faith.* In what areas of your life is God calling you to be obedient?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Abraham and Sarah's name changes both include the addition of the "ah" sound, through the addition of the Hebrew letter "heh." Think about this in light of God's name, *YHWH*, and what you know of covenant. Is it simply a coincidence that a part of God's name is embedded their new names? If not, what might it signify?
- II) God understands mankind's need for remembrances. With what symbols of remembrances do you recall God's faithfulness to His promises?

 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

Cross References for Lesson 11

2 Samuel 7:9-16 [God's message to King David, through the prophet Nathan]

⁹I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. ¹⁰I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, ¹¹even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. ¹²When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, ¹⁵but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”””

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness

From then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Mark 12:35-37

³⁵ And Jesus *began* to say, as He taught in the temple, “How *is it that* the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself said in the Holy Spirit,

‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET.’”

³⁷ David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; so in what sense is He his son?” And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

Matthew 1:1-17

The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram. ⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. ⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. ⁶ Jesse was the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa. ⁸ Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. ⁹ Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰ Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah. ¹¹ Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹² After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel. ¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor. ¹⁴ Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob. ¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Matthew 1:20-21

²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Luke 2:4

⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

†

LESSON 12
Genesis 18:1 – 15

Fellowship question: When have you had the opportunity to respond to a stranger? *OR* Has fear ever motivated you to do something you would not normally do?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Read Genesis 18:1-15.

1. Record your observations of these verses. (What main events stand out? Who is involved in this scene and what are they doing? What themes do you observe in this passage? What do you think the main point (authors intent) of this passage could be?)

2. Read Genesis 18:1-15 again as if you were Sarah in the tent, overhearing this conversation. How would you feel?

3. Consider the progression of God's promises to Abraham that we've studied thus far. How do you see the promises developing and becoming more specific?

Genesis 12:2-3

²And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
³And 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.”



Genesis 15:4-5

⁴Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,
“This man will not be your heir; but one who will come
forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.” ⁵And
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.”



Genesis 17:5-8

⁵“No longer shall your name be called Abram,
But your name shall be Abraham;
For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.
⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make
nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. ⁷I
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. ⁸I 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.”



Genesis 17:16

¹⁶I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her.
Then I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother
of nations*; kings of peoples will come from her.”



Genesis 17:19

¹⁹But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a
son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish
My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for
his descendants after him

Abram's age = 75 years

Abraham's age = 99 years

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Cultural/Geographical Context:

Visitors unexpectedly showed up to Abraham in the heat of the day. Abraham sprinted to show hospitality above and beyond. He bowed to greet them in humility. He offered food, rest and refreshment. All this was culturally appropriate.

Hospitality was deeply valued and one's reputation was tied to their willingness to welcome well. Even strangers were worthy of being extended great hospitality, which generally included food, water, and shelter. Also, it is worthy to note the greeting, "my lord," in Genesis 18:3 was commonly used to show respect.

Abraham and Sarah were living in tents by the Oak of Mamre, which is a familiar geographical location from previous chapters of Genesis. Back in Genesis 13:18, "Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord." Then in Genesis 14:13, it was his neighbors from the great trees of Mamre who allied with him to save Lot from captivity.

4. Deep Insight Questions:

- a. This is the covenant keeping LORD that is talking to Abraham and he has encountered Him before, but does Abraham realize it here? What evidence from the text supports your thoughts?

- b. While persevering in the wait for the fulfillment of God's promise of an heir, what questions or thoughts might Abraham and Sarah have had? (Some examples are provided to get you started.)
 - Has the LORD forgotten us? Has He changed His mind?
 - I am too old to become a parent now.

- c. How does faith in the LORD of the impossible come into play? See Mark 10:27; Luke 1:26, 27; Romans 4:18-21; Hebrews 11:11, 12; 13:2; and Jeremiah 32:17. (These cross references are provided at the end of the lesson.)

Faith is not a reasonable act which fits into the normal scheme of life and perception. The promise of the gospel is not a conventional piece of wisdom that is easily accommodated to everything else. Embrace of this radical gospel requires shattering and discontinuity. Abraham and Sarah have by this time become accustomed to their barrenness. Interpretation Genesis by Walter Brueggmann, pg. 158,159.

The LORD unexpectedly shows up and brings a birth announcement to Abraham and Sarah:
Next year at this time, you will have a son.

The promise (Genesis 15:4) and covenant (Genesis 17:16-21) is now escalated to a precise time. Genesis A Commentary by Bruce Waltke page 268.

Sarah laughs to herself, and the LORD hears it, knows it. His confrontation is so gentle, so kind, "...but you did laugh". This is both a restorative rebuke and an assuring sign: The One who reads her thoughts can open her womb. Genesis A Commentary by Bruce Waltke page 268.

Skill Builder

5. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to page 11-4 or the Spiritual Principles handout to review the concept.)
 - a. What statements of truth about the major ideas of Genesis 18:1-19 can be declared?

 - b. What does Genesis 18:1-19 reveal about God's character? (Is He a covenant-keeping God for you?)

- c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?

what do I know
to be true? ✓

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

6. What are some tangible ways to treat strangers with respect, as if it was the LORD? (Consider who are strangers in your life. How does faith help you see strangers differently? In what ways do you view hospitality as an act of faith?)
7. Knowing that the LORD sees your heart so well, what are some verses and truths that you can cling to when you want to hide or lie? How do you live in a way that says that you don't believe that God is a God of the impossible? What role does faith play as you live out these promises?
- ...yet I will rejoice in the LORD... Habakkuk 3:18
 - Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way. Psalm 139:23, 24
 - The LORD will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Your hands. Psalm 138:8

8. When wrestling with doubt or unbelief of God's promises, to what do you run? How would it look to live in full, faithful confidence of God's promises to you?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Question of barrenness. Not every woman that desires to have children will become pregnant. Does that mean God is not faithful to His word? What are other ways that we live life as if we are "barren"? How does faith move us beyond barren living? Mark 14:36
- II) How should the church be impacted by these verses? How can we do this better? See Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 3:20; 19:7. Are we ready when the Lamb comes?

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 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

Cross References for Lesson 12

Mark 10:27

²⁷Looking at them, Jesus *said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

Luke 1:26, 27

²⁶Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Romans 4:18-21

¹⁸In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." ¹⁹Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years

old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; ²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

Hebrews 11:11, 12

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 there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.*

Hebrews 13:2

² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Jeremiah 32:17

¹⁷ 'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,

Cross-references from the *FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION* section:

Mark 14:36

³⁶ And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶ naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ³⁹ When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'

⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' ⁴⁴ Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or

a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' ⁴⁵Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' ⁴⁶These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Revelation 3:20

²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Revelation 19:7

⁷Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."



LESSON 13
Genesis 18:16 - 33

Fellowship question: As you think about life in our time and place, how should we pray?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Read Genesis 18:16-33.

1. What do you learn about the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah from the text?

2. What do you observe about the relationship between God and Abraham?

Skill Builder

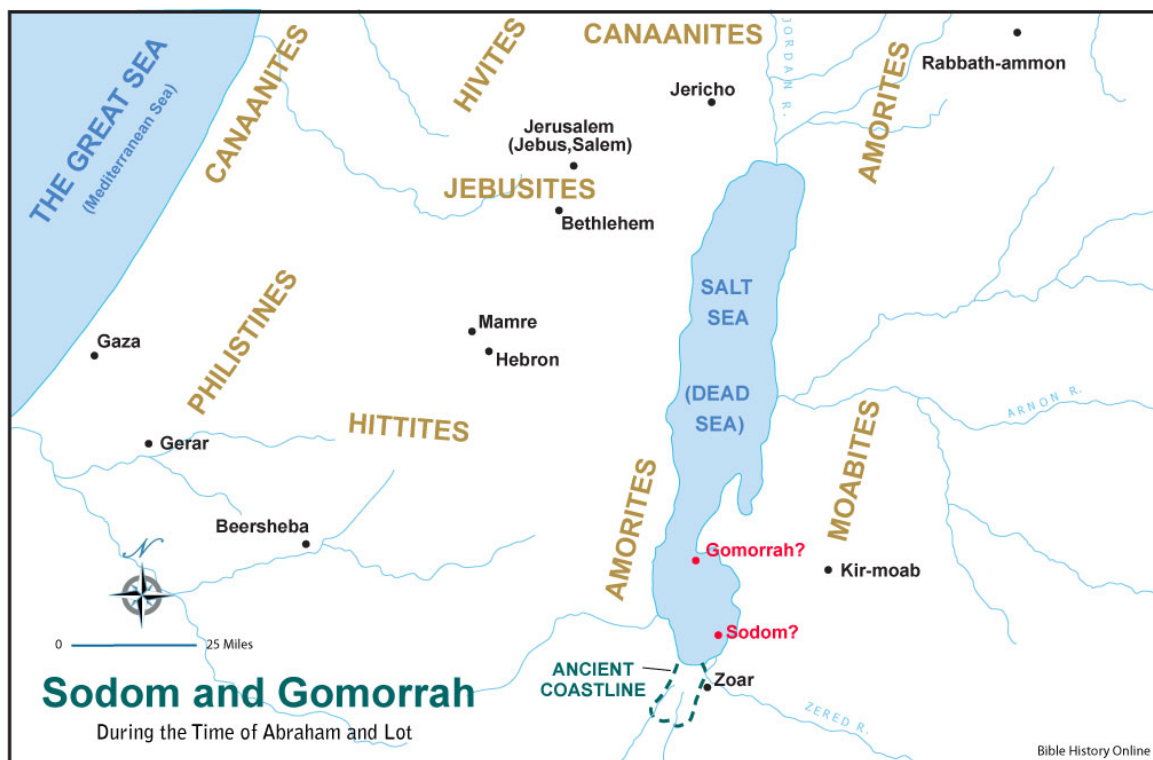
Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

3. Let's review what we have previously discovered about the setting (geographical context) of this passage.
 - a. Review Genesis 13:10-13. What key details inform your understanding of Genesis 18:16-33?
 - b. Reread 18:20 and note the cities named. On behalf of whom does Abraham plead with the Lord and what might Abraham's motivation be?
 - c. From verse 18:1, we know that Abraham was living near the oaks of Mamre. Locate Mamre and the potential locations of Sodom and Gomorrah on the map in Figure 13-1. Did it!



Used with permission in accordance with Bible History Online's terms.

Figure 13-1

4. Let's look now at the cultural context.
 - a. Remembering Genesis 13:13 and 18:20, how does Ezekiel 16:49-51 expand your understanding of Sodom's wickedness? (The Ezekiel passage is included at the end of the lesson.)

- b. Using either a regular dictionary, a Bible dictionary, or an online resource such as BlueLetterBible.org, look up the definition of *haughty* (from Ezekiel 16:50).

A word study of the original language is helpful to maintain context when interpreting this passage:

- *Sin* (Genesis 18:21) is a translation of the Hebrew word, *chatta'ath* (khat-taw-aw'), which means an offense and its penalty. It can also mean a perpetual offense.
- *Righteousness* (Genesis 18:23) is a translation of the Hebrew word, *tsaddiyq* (tsad-deek), which means just in behavior and character.
- In contrast, the word *wicked* (Genesis 18:23) comes from the Hebrew word, *rasha* (raw-shaw), which means guilty or morally wrong.

Skill Builder

5. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to p.11- 4 or the Spiritual Principles handout to review the concept.)
- a. What statements of truth about the major ideas of Genesis 18:20-33 can be declared?
- b. What does Genesis 18:20-33 reveal about God's character?
- c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?

what do I know
to be true? ✓

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

Rhetorically speaking, how far would you go to get rid of a destructive sin in your life? Your sins may not be as blatant as the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah but consider: jealousy; gossip; idolatrous attitudes toward money, your home, your family; etc....

6. Reflecting on sin in my own life:

a. How do I typically deal with sin?

b. Would I allow God to help me walk in victory over a destructive sin? What would [my part in] that look like?

7. Abraham tenaciously petitioned the sovereign Lord to spare Sodom, but even more astonishing is that the Lord lovingly allowed it! How could my own prayer life resemble this? How could this kind of dialoging with God grow my faith? (See Hebrews 4:14-16 and Philippians 4:6, included at the end of this lesson.)

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

I) How can we make a difference in our own sphere of influence? There are likely more than 10 people in our Christian community who are righteous, but what about the other areas of our lives, i.e. neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, etc.?

II) Why do you think that God involves Abram in this process? What could He be teaching Abram through this?

When God proposes something, as He does here concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he usually enlists a human being as His partner. Genesis shows us a scene in which God asks himself, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" Then God lists the reasons why He should include Abraham as a partner in His plan.

Those reasons might be called the rights of friendship. Here is where Abraham earned the title by which he is known in Scripture: "the friend of God" (see 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; and James 2:23). Here God says, in effect, "I won't keep Abraham in the dark because of what I am about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. I will tell him because by grace I have favored him and called him to be the father of many descendants and a blessing to all the nations of the earth; and I have chosen him so that he might instruct his household to keep my ways. Because I have taught him to walk rightly before me, I will reveal to him my secrets."

Perhaps you already see a parallel to your Christian life. The parallel is this: Every believer in Jesus Christ stands in exactly the same relationship with God that Abraham experienced. Like Abraham, we have been given a favored position before God, and we have received this position by His grace, not through our own merit or effort. We

have been called into the family of God and have become children of the living God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, we are continually being taught by grace how to walk righteously and justly before God. As we learn these lessons, we become the people to whom God reveals His secrets. ... We must also learn to walk before God in righteousness and justice. Only then does God begin to share His secrets with us.

Perhaps the reason some people get more out of the Bible than other is that they have learned this two-way relationship. God truly loves to reveal His secrets to His obedient people.

– Ray C. Stedman, *Friend of God*

III) Verse 20 says, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” What do you think our Lord is hearing in our day and in our culture? How grievous are our sins against those who have no voice?

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 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

Cross References for Lesson 13

Ezekiel 16:49-51 [God's message to Jerusalem through the prophet Ezekiel]

⁴⁹Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. ⁵⁰Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw *it*. ⁵¹Furthermore, Samaria did not commit half of your sins, for you have multiplied your abominations more than they. Thus you have made your sisters appear righteous by all your abominations which you have committed.

Hebrews 4:14-1

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Philippians 4:6

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.



3. When Lot finally realized that God is serious about destroying Sodom, what is it that he is concerned about?

4. How did God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?

Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Recall what we discovered about Sodom in Lessons 6 and 13 – in Genesis 13:13 we learned that, “the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.” Sodom is often associated with sexual lust and lewdness, but we understand from Ezekiel 16:49-51 (page 13-5) the extent of Sodom’s wickedness beyond just sexual sin. The people of Sodom committed abominations before God. Rather than honoring Him, the people of Sodom were arrogant,

prideful, lacking in respect, and unconcerned for others. Their idleness was evident in their unwillingness to help the poor and needy even though food and luxury were in abundance.

Cultural Context

“Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom” tells us that Lot held a leadership position of great authority and influence. Here at the city gate is where the elders and city officials would meet together on stone benches. Gathering at the city gate positioned them to be seen and to observe citizens as well as travelers passing through. No longer was Lot a tent dweller of the nomadic lifestyle. He, at this point, is a city dweller. Lot was most likely the city magistrate of Sodom, which in today’s world could be compared to the office of mayor. His role would have been to vet visitors and guests of the city, as well as ensure justice.

“When he [Lot] saw them [the visitors], he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.” Welcoming city visitors would have been expected of Lot. Respect and honor were displayed in Lot’s behavior according to the practice of the time. Extending hospitality was also an expected custom coupled with the weight of protecting guests. To disregard the safety of visitors would threaten the city’s reputation, which is of utmost importance to a civil leader.

5. Deep Insight Questions:

a. Why is Lot concerned about the wellbeing of the visitors if they stay in the square?

b. Read 2 Peter 2:6-10. (Included at the end of this lesson.) How does this information add to your understanding of Lot’s character? Does it correlate with the observations you made in question 1? If you need to update or correct your understanding of Lot’s character, make some notes below:

c. Why does Lot’s wife look back toward Sodom as they are fleeing? Read Luke 17:22-33 to aid your understanding. (What is her real sin?) (The Luke passage is included at the end of this lesson.)

8. Think again about the behavior of Lot's wife and Jesus' words in Luke 17:22-33. As we address sin in our own lives, do we pray more about *preserving* our lives or *changing* our hearts? Can you identify a heart attitude that could better align with God's will? Write a prayer to Him, turning that area of your life over to His capable hands.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) What wisdom does Psalm 1 impart about walking as a child of the light in a dark world?
II) What is the cost of obedience? How does it compare to the cost of disobedience?
III) When God has set a direction and said, "Go," why do we hesitate? Why are we tempted to look back?

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 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

Cross References for Lesson 14

2 Peter 2:6-10

⁶and *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 *lives* thereafter; ⁷and *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 by *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, ¹⁰and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority.

Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

Luke 17:22-33

²²And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!'" Do not go away, and do not run after *them*. ²⁴For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. ²⁵But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶And just as it happened in the days

of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; ²⁹but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. ³²Remember Lot's wife. ³³Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it.

Matthew 5:16

¹⁶Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.



3. What was the problem/solution scenario of Genesis 19:30-35? What does tricking their father reveal about Lot's daughters' awareness of their sinful actions?

Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Cultural Context

Social pressures were strong and deeply rooted as part of the patriarchal family structure of Lot's time. Highlighted below are a handful of the social customs of the patriarchal family:

- marriages were arranged through social networking
- dowries often included a female slave
- inheritance rights were given to the firstborn son
- handmaidens were given to husbands to provide offspring if a wife was barren
- polygamy was common
- women were lowly members of society without many rights
- women relied on husbands and/or sons for provision

5. Biblical Context Reflections

- a. Lot's descendants from his daughters' deceptions were the Moabites and the Ammonites. What do we learn about their later relationship with Israel from the following cross-references? (Cross references are available at the end of the lesson.)

Israelites – Deuteronomy 2:9, 19

Saul – 1 Samuel 14:47

David – 2 Samuel 8:2

Solomon – 1 Kings 11:1-8

What conclusions can you make about Lot's family legacy from the above cross references?

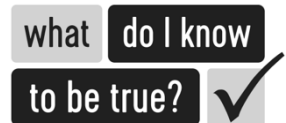
- b. Knowing Ruth is a Moabite, what is significant about the seed-line of Christ that we read about in Ruth 4:21-22 and Matthew 1:5? (Cross references available at the end of the lesson.)

Skill Builder

6. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to p.11- 4 or the Spiritual Principles handout to review the concept.)
- What statements of truth about the major ideas of Genesis 19:27-38 can be declared?

 - What does Genesis 19:27-38 reveal about God's character?

 - What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?



APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

- What are some of today's social pressures that cause us to lose sight of our faith and how do we guard against these distractions?

- How can we intentionally build a righteous family legacy rooted in enduring faith?

Further Applications:

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Culture deeply influences our worldview filters. What about our culture contrasts Biblical truth? Think beyond the obvious answers. What does it truly look like to live counter-culturally to honor God?
- II) How are my insecurities and sin struggles affecting others?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Moabites <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Moabite>
Ammonites <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ammonite>

REFERENCES

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New Dictionary of Biblical Theology. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2000. Print.

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Cross References for Lesson 15

Deuteronomy 2:9

‘Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession.’

Deuteronomy 2:19

¹⁹ When you come opposite the sons of Ammon, do not harass them nor provoke them, for I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession.'

1 Samuel 14:47

⁴⁷ Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment.

2 Samuel 8:2

² He defeated Moab, and measured them with the line, making them lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.

1 Kings 11:1-8

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, *for* they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. ⁴ For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been*. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father *had done*. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. ⁸ Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Ruth 4:21-22

²¹ and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, ²² and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

Matthew 1:5

⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.



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LESSON 16
Genesis 20

Fellowship question: How has God redeemed a situation (other than your salvation) in which you did not deserve His grace or in which your efforts failed to produce the desired result?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

1. As you read Genesis 20, think about the choices Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech make. Jot your observations.

2. How do you observe God intervening on behalf of Abimelech? of Sarah? of Abraham?

3. Compare Genesis 12:10-20 and Genesis 20. Find the similarities and differences.

Similarities	Differences

Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Geographical Context

Chapter 20 of Genesis opens with the statement, “Now Abraham moved on from *there*...” The word *there* refers to Hebron (Genesis 18:1; 13:18). Nomadic Abraham pitched his tent in Gerar, a city ruled by Abimelech, a name or title used to honor Philistine kings. (Similar to how *Pharaoh*, is used for Egyptian kings.) Gerar was located in the northern end of the dry Negev desert, and northwest of Beersheba. (See Figure 16-1.)



Figure 16-1
(Used with permission in accordance with Bible History Online's terms.)

Cultural Context

Although a harem of women was a political right of Abimelech's powerful position, adultery would not have been culturally acceptable. Similar to the situation we saw with the narrative of Pharaoh in Genesis 12:10-13:1, Abimelech would have had the right to take any unmarried woman into his household; even 90-year-old Sarah.

Generally, restitution in a situation of wrongdoing would have been paid by the offending party. To atone for his part, pagan king Abimelech compensated Abraham with sheep, cattle, slaves, and money to vindicate Sarah according to Genesis 20:16. A word study of the original Hebrew word, *kěcuwth*, helps us to further define the word *vindication* as covered, being set right, and cleared of blame.

Another word study that helps with interpreting this passage is of the Hebrew word, *taah*, translated in verse 20:13 as *wander*. *Taah* is used 50 times in the Bible and never with a positive connotation. It is generally translated as to go astray, stagger, or err.

4. Deep Insight Questions:

- a. Once again, we see Abraham choosing to lie (telling a half-truth) and once again we see God rescuing him, choosing him and using him for His purposes. Abraham is unfaithful, yet God is faithful. In what ways is it surprising that Abraham acted as he did? (In answering, consider Abraham's years of seeing God's faithfulness and God's promise of the arrival of a son within a year's time. Think also of demonstrations of Abraham's obedience and leadership.)

- b. What do we learn about God as He allows Abraham to receive plunder in this situation?

The biblical heroes, God's covenant partners, are never superhuman; their great acts of faith are often bounded by failings and fears. Abraham clearly struggles with his own flawed patterns. The disclosure of Abraham's failures confirms God's sovereignty and power. He is gracious in election and capable of working out his good purposes through his human servants.

— *Genesis A Commentary* by Bruce Waltke pg. 284

8. Have you experienced a situation where you assumed as Abraham did, “there is no fear of God in this place” (verse 11), which caused you to walk by fear? What truth(s) from this study or other verses can you cling to?

Skill Builder

Further Applications:

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Abraham and Sarah find themselves in a situation where they have a choice whether or not trust that God will be faithful as He has been before. How can we protect our faith walk to trust?
- II) How might the situation in Genesis 20 have played out had Abraham had a community of men surrounding him who were also followers of YHWH? How does community help you in your walk? (If you don't involve your community of fellow believers in your decision making, give some thought to the reasons behind that.)

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Wenham, Gordon J. *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 16-50*. Word Books, 1994.

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LESSON 17
Genesis 21:1 – 21

Fellowship question: Tell of a time you experienced God's provision in an unexpected way.

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

This year's study began with God's promise. Eve's offspring (seed) would crush the serpent's (Satan's) head (Genesis 3:15). God's promise involved one man (Abraham), his descendants, a land (Canaan) and nation (Israel) from whom the promised One (Jesus) would be born to bless the world. God's promises are sure!!

Carefully read through Genesis 21:1-21 several times.

1. From the passage, who is the main character? Explain.

2. Record your observations, noting God's words and actions toward:

Sarah – (Sarah had been barren 70+ years. See Galatians 4:23, included at the end of this lesson.)

Abraham – (It was Sarah's plan that Hagar bear Abraham a son. Now Sarah demands their expulsion.)

Isaac – (The covenantal promise of Genesis 12:2 is beginning to unfold in Isaac's birth now 25 years later.)

Hagar – (Hagar had wandered in the desert once before. See Genesis 16:7-13.)

The boy – (Ishmael, being 13 years older than Isaac, was probably 16-18 old at this time.)

Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Cultural context

Mesopotamian culture from which the patriarchs came helps us understand the social structure and practices throughout Genesis. Ancient law records, the Code of Hammurabi (1790BC), in Babylonia and laws contained in the Nuzi cuneiform tablets (1450BC), allowed a man to adopt as his heir any children he may have fathered through a slave woman. These laws also permitted inheritance rights to be transferred to a son born later to the primary wife even after she

had adopted her surrogate's son. From these ancient Mesopotamian customs and laws the legality of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael is not clear.

3. Deep Insight Questions:

- a. Prior to God's intervention in this chapter, what disappointments do you imagine Sarah, Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael were experiencing?

- b. What might have been some purposes God had in mind for them during this time?

- c. Characterize their responses to God's intervention in each situation.

Skill Builder

4. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to p.11- 4 to review the concept.)
 - a. What statements of truth about the themes and main ideas of Genesis 21:1 – 21 can be declared?

 - b. What does Genesis 21:1 – 21 reveal about God's character?

- c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?



APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

5. Are you in a season of waiting for God to intervene in your life? What does this journey look like for you?

We want God to act fast, but Godspeed is almost always slow. From Isaiah to Malachi there is a consistent theme of waiting in lament for God to act.... All of the Hebrew prophets composed poems around this recurring theme: The Lord is coming, God is about to act but for now...we wait. It is in the waiting that our soul grows quiet and cultivates a capacity for awareness by which we can discern what God is doing when he does act. In fact, God is always acting because God is always loving the world and always giving birth to something..... Learn to sit with Jesus. Learn to be quiet. Learn to wait.

– tweet from Brian Zahnd, pastor

6. By faith, what promises from Scripture give you hope as you wait with God? (See Hebrews 10:23 and 11:11-12, included at the end of this lesson.)

Skill Builder

Further Applications:

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

I) Is God fair in choosing Isaac over Ishmael? Explain your thinking.

The genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew 1:1-17 begins with “Abraham begetting Isaac;” no mention of that deserving elder son unfairly banished, Ishmael. Then Isaac begets Jacob; not a word about his elder brother Esau whose birthright Jacob stole. Jacob begets Judah and his brothers; why is Judah chosen and not the good and extraordinary Joseph?... Matthew’s genealogy contains the flawed and inflicted and insulted, the cunning and the weak-willed and the misunderstood. The names that appear in the final fourteen generations before Jesus are unremarkable or unknown except that they appear in Matthew’s account.

– Gail Godwin in *Genealogy and Grace*

God loved and cared for both Isaac and Ishmael and their descendants. Abraham’s descendants through Ishmael (Genesis 25:12-18) are recipients of God’s extraordinary blessings and account for the northern Arabian tribes. Job and his friends were Arabs. When Israel prospered spiritually the Arabs did as well. Isaiah 42:1-10; 60:1-7 reflects a priority for the Arabians in God’s plan of visitation to the Gentiles. The Magi were likely from Central Arabia. Arabs heard the gospel at the Day of Pentecost. Paul went to Arabia for three years after his conversion, some think in part to bring God’s message to the Arab peoples.

– Tony Maalour in *Arabs in the Shadow of Israel: The Unfolding of God’s Prophetic Plan of Ishmael’s Line*

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 Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019

Cross References for Lesson 17

Galatians 4:23

²³ But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.

Hebrews 10:23

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

Hebrews 11:11-12

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 there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.*

†

Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

3. Refresh what you know about *covenant*:
 - a. What do you remember *covenant* to mean?

 - b. What are examples of present-day covenants and how are they generally sealed?

 - c. How was the peace treaty sealed as a covenant between Abimelech and Abraham?

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Cultural & Geographical Context:

Here in Beersheba, meaning “the well of the oath or seven,” a covenant is made between Abraham and Abimelech, the Philistine king of Gerar. Beersheba is located in the Negev desert region south of Gerar and south of Hebron, where Abraham had resided at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Beersheba is often used in the Old Testament as the southern boundary city marker of Israel in the phrase, “from Dan to Beersheba” (1 Kings 4:25, Judges 20:1).

Between two parties entering into covenant, there would often have been an exchange of possessions, which served as covenant reminders. In addition, memorials were often shared. (See Genesis 31:43-54 to read about a stone pillar, an example of a covenantal memorial built between Jacob and Laban.) In Genesis 21:33, Abraham planted a tamarisk tree. This desert tree was well adapted to salty conditions. *Eschel*, Hebrew for tamarisk tree, is an abbreviation of the words, food, drink and accommodation. Its branches would have offered shade, but water could also be collected off of the leaves as well as honeydew excreted from the aphids that would attach themselves to the tree.

4. Deep Insight Questions:

- a. Keeping the events of Genesis 20 in mind, specifically 20:17-18, why would Abimelech open the conversation in Genesis 21:22 with, “God is with you in everything you do?” What does this statement tell us about Abraham, God and Abimelech?

- b. Looking back again at Genesis 20:3-5 and 20:14-15, why would Abimelech say to Abraham the words of verse 23: “Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendant. Show me the same kindness I have shown to you?”

- c. What is the significance of the tamarisk tree planted by Abraham here in Beersheba?

7. Would people say the same thing about me that Abimelech said about Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do?” Why or why not? Reflecting on my ways, what behaviors radiate my faith? What might I need to modify so others may see the Spirit in me?

Skill Builder

Further Applications:

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) What signs of remembrance come to mind in my life?
- II) How did Abraham’s behavior reveal his understanding of the spiritual principle we later learn about in the New Testament, in Romans 12:18: “As far as it depends on you, live at peace?” How can I live out Romans 12:18, “As far as it depends on you, live at peace?” With whom do I need to apply this spiritual principle and how?

ADDITIONAL VIDEO RESOURCE

“Tamarisk Tree.” *YouTube*, Jerusalem Botanical Gardens, 14 Jan. 2013,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5h4HtS-JZA>

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Gangel, Kenneth O. and Stephen J. Bramer. *Holman Old Testament Commentary*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group 2002. Print.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5h4HtS-JZA>

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(No cross-references for Lesson 18.)
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Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Geographical Context

Mount Moriah is about a three-day trek from Beersheba. Centuries later, King David purchased this site (1 Chronicles 21:25-22:1) to offer a sacrifice to God to stop a plague from harming the people. David's son Solomon later constructed the first Temple (2 Chronicles 3:1) on this site. God had chosen this specific location for Abraham's sacrifice and centuries later in this same location the Levitical priests sacrificed animals for the sins of the Jews. All of this was a foreshadowing of greatest sacrifice – Jesus' crucifixion at the place called The Skull. (Luke 23:33)

Cultural Context

It was common practice among the cultures living in the land during Abraham's time to offer human sacrifices. In Genesis 22:13, we see the first mention of substitutionary sacrifice in the Bible.

3. Deep Insight Questions:

- a. What did Abraham believe about God –

before his test? (From previous chapters in Genesis such as 17:19 & 21:1-3.)

during his test? (Hebrews 11:17-19, available at the end of the lesson)

after his test? (Genesis 22:11-19)

- b. Read Isaiah 53:7-12, John 1:29, John 19:16-18, Mark 10:45, and Romans 8:32 available at the end of the lesson. Compare and contrast the two sons: Isaac & Jesus.

- c. Read Genesis 22:16-18, John 3:16, and 1 John 4:9-10 available at the end of the lesson. Compare and contrast the two fathers: Abraham & God the Father.

5. Take time with God to ponder the questions below, then respond by writing your personal confessions:

How do I view my gifts (possessions, abilities, relationships, etc.)?
What would it look like for me to repent of their supreme importance in my life?
By His strength am I willing to learn contentment in receiving from Him what He wants to provide?
What part of Genesis 22:13-18 gives me strength and hope for my life?

6. What did it cost God the Father to give His only Son Jesus for me... and why *this* sacrifice? (Make your answer personal.)

Skill Builder
<u>Further Applications:</u>

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Isaac, “Abraham’s darling, Sarah’s laughter, the church’s hope, the heir of promise, lies ready to bleed and die by his own father’s hand, who never shrinks at the doing of it. Now this obedience of Abraham in offering up Isaac is a lively representation of the love of God to us, in delivering up his only begotten Son to suffer and die for us, as a sacrifice. *It pleased the Lord himself to bruise him.*” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary) See Isaiah 53:10 and Zechariah 13:7. How can it be that “*it pleased the Lord himself to bruise him?*”
- II) In Genesis 22:14, Abraham called the name of the place *YHWY-Jireh*, or “The Lord Will Provide.” Consider what this implies about Abraham’s faith and God’s character. How does God demonstrate this character attribute in needs both big and small?

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Stedman, Ray C. *Friend of God: The Legacy of Abraham, Man of Faith.* Discovery House, 2010.

 *Cole Women’s Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

Cross References for Lesson 19

Genesis 17:19

¹⁹ But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Genesis 21:1-3

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 Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.

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 *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

Isaiah 53:7-12

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.
⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the living
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*?
⁹ His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.
¹⁰ But the Lord was pleased
To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief;
If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering,
He will see *His* offspring,
He will prolong *His* days,
And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.
¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul,
He will see *it and* be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will justify the many,
As He will bear their iniquities.
¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,
And He will divide the booty with the strong;
Because He poured out Himself to death,
And was numbered with the transgressors;
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors.

John 1:29

²⁹ The next day he **saw* Jesus coming to him and **said*, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 19:16-18

¹⁶ So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified.
¹⁷ They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

Mark 10:45

⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Romans 8:32

³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

John 3:16

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

1 John 4:9-10

⁹ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Isaiah 53:10

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased
To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief;
If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering,
He will see *His* offspring,
He will prolong *His* days,
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

Zechariah 13:7

⁷ "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
And against the man, My Associate,"
Declares the LORD of hosts.
"Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered;
And I will turn My hand against the little ones.



INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Cultural Context

Mourning the passing of a loved one with a sense of immediacy was seen as a sign of respect. Failure to do so would have been believed to carry a curse. Loud wailing while sitting in the dirt was a customary ritual.

We find Abraham in the opening scene of Genesis 23 rising from mourning his beloved wife to speak to the sons of Heth (Hittites) who were gathered at the city gate. As a reminder, the city gate would have been the center of civil affairs and legal transactions. Men sitting at the city gate held prominent positions in the city. The public space would also allow for witnesses to gather, ensuring a binding contract.

Although Abraham had become somewhat of a regular, albeit nomadic, resident in the land of Caanan, he was a foreigner (*ger* in Hebrew). As a stranger and an alien, Abraham had restricted rights, including the inability to own land. Abraham had an urgent need to bury his wife, yet had no place to do so.

Abraham engaged in a dialogue with the men at the city gate, which followed common bargaining patterns of the time. Often a high price would have been proposed by a seller, but the buyer would bargain to bring down the price. Abraham paid full price, which most historians agree was beyond fair and some would even say was an outrageous price.

4. Deep Insight Questions:

- a. How did Abraham view himself, compared and contrasted with how the Hittites saw him? What does this tell us about Abraham's relationships in the land and his character?

- b. Does having a glimpse into the cultural practice of bargaining modify how you interpret the dialogue in this passage? If so, how?

- c. If Abraham would have accepted the free burial site for Sarah, what would the lasting consequence have been? Why was there a need to pay for the property?
- d. Following the progression of the promises and the Abrahamic covenant, what can we infer about Abraham's actions in Genesis 23? (See Genesis 12:7, 15:7, 15:18, and 17:8)

Skill Builder

5. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to p.11- 4 to review the concept.)

a. What statements of truth about the themes and main ideas of Genesis 23 can be declared?

b. What does Genesis 23 reveal about God's character?

c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?

what do I know
to be true? ✓

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 Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019

Cross References for Lesson 20

Genesis 12:7

⁷The 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.

Genesis 15:7

⁷And 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."

Genesis 15:18

¹⁸On 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:

Genesis 17:8

⁸I 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."

Romans 4:23-25

²³Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, ²⁴but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵*He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

1 Peter 1:17-19

¹⁷If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*.

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Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Genesis 24 provides the first instance that marriage customs are highlighted in the Bible. Marriage customs among nomadic groups such as Abraham's were often designed to maintain the social continuity as well as the continuation of the group. Marriage contracts were often arranged by the father or oldest male kin to benefit the family and ensure that the children would be brought up in a way that would be a credit to the group as a whole. Marriage outside the kinship group was generally discouraged.

This passage never mentions the servant's name. He may have been Eliezer, who is mentioned in Genesis 15:2, but this story takes place nearly 50 years later, so Eliezer may have been dead by this time. The probable reason he is not named is that he is going in the name of Isaac, not acting on his own behalf. Abraham is now 140 years old (Isaac was 40) and the journey to Mesopotamia was over 500 miles. It was too difficult a trip for Abraham to make himself.

The act of the servant placing his hand under Abraham's thigh to swear an oath to carry out his requests was a Middle Eastern custom that signified that it was a very solemn oath. Jacob's dying charge to Joseph in Genesis 47:29 was similarly enforced. The "thigh" was actually a euphemism for the body's procreative parts, the source of offspring. Some believed that a vow made by placing the hand there created the sense that the oath was being made in the presence of one's descendants, with them as witnesses to the vow. Because what was about to take place would determine the continuation of Abraham's seed, this was an appropriate form for the oath to take.

4. Abraham asks the servant to swear to two restrictions in his mission to find a wife for Isaac. What are they and why is each significant? See also Genesis 12:1, Deuteronomy. 7:3-4, 1 Kings 11:14, 1 Corinthians 7:39.

5. Why is it so important for Isaac's bride to be chosen with such care?

St. Augustine said, "The Old Testament is the New Testament contained; the New Testament is the Old Testament explained", and we know that all Scripture points to Jesus in some way. One technique used to accomplish this is the use of *types* in the Old Testament which relate to *antitypes* in the New Testament. A *type* is a person or thing in the Old Testament believed to foreshadow another in the New Testament (Webster). The *antitype* (or the person or thing being represented) is always easier to understand than the *type* and is superior to it, just as your shadow is not the complete, real you but the complete, real you is necessary to create the shadow. Two examples of type are Adam and Jonah (see 1 Corinthians 15:22 and Matthew 12:40).

6. The characters in Genesis 24 can be seen as types for entities in the New Testament. For each character, check the provided cross-reference and then list the New Testament antitype and how this character foreshadows what is to come.

Type	Antitype	Person or Event Foreshadowed
Abraham (John 14:26)		
Isaac (Hebrews 11:17, John 3:16)		
Servant (John 16:13-14)		
Rebekah (Ephesians 5:25-32)		

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

9. How is the servant's task similar to our task of evangelizing? What principles can we derive from this passage that could help us in sharing the gospel with others?

10. What elements of the servant's prayers and resulting actions can you use in your own prayer life? (See also James 4:2-3, Nehemiah 4:7-9, Isaiah 38:5, 21, 1 John 5:14.)

11. This passage illustrates both trust in God and in human relationships. What principles about trust can you apply to situations in your life right now? Are there circumstances where you need to learn to trust God more fully? Situations where you need to rely on the help of others or where others need to be able to depend on you?

Skill Builder

Further Applications:

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Considering the types and antitypes identified in question 6, what similarities can you identify in each set? (Example: Rebekah/the Church – loved and cherished by the son/Son.)
- II) The Text states that the servant was the oldest in Abraham's household. Think about the years he had been with Abraham, watching Abraham's faith grow and be tested. The servant's journey to Nahor (Haran) would have been around 450 miles. Estimating that a loaded camel can travel about 25 miles per day, the servant would have had a three-week journey to ponder his task. Now review his prayer in verses 12-14. What can you surmise about the servant's faith?

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Cross References for Lesson 21

Genesis 12:1

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;

Deuteronomy 7:3-4

³Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. ⁴For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.

1 Kings 11:14

¹⁴Then the LORD raised up an adversary to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal line in Edom.

1 Corinthians 7:39

³⁹A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:22

²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Matthew 12:40

⁴⁰for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

James 4:2-3

²You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not

ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

☐ **Nehemiah 4:7-9**

⁷Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, *and* that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry. ⁸All of them conspired together to come *and* fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it.

⁹But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.

☐ **Isaiah 38:5**

⁵“Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.’”

☐ **Isaiah 38:21**

²¹Now Isaiah had said, “Let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil, that he may recover.”

☐ **1 John 5:14**

¹⁴This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.



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LESSON 22
Genesis 24:28 - 67

Fellowship question: What comes more naturally to you when an opportunity presents itself? Are you cautious and carefully investigate the option, or do you jump right in?

OBSERVATION – Lord, help me to discover it!

Skim Genesis 24:1-27 to refresh your memory of Abraham's servant and his assignment to procure a bride for Isaac, Abraham's son.

Now read verses 28-67.

1. List the events of Chapter 24: (verses covered in Lesson 21 are done for you)
 - (v. 1-9) Abraham sends his senior servant to find a wife for Isaac from the land of Abraham's relatives. Servant swears:
 - a. he will find a wife for Isaac from the land of Abraham's relatives (not from the daughters of the Canaanites) and
 - b. he will not take Isaac back to Mesopotamia.
 - (v. 10-14) Servant journeys (with camels and gifts) to the city of Nahor. Near a spring outside the city, the servant asks God to reveal the woman he seeks by two criteria:
 - 1) he will ask her for a drink for himself
 - 2) she will give him water and then (of her own volition) water his camels also
 - (v. 15-21) Rebekah (Abraham's great-niece) comes on the scene and fulfills the criteria
 - (v. 22-24) Servant gives her gifts and inquires who she is; she invites him to her family's home for lodging; servant worships the LORD.
 -

2. Re-read chapter 24, looking for details about the servant, Rebekah, Laban, and Isaac. What does the Text tell you about each of them and what can you deduce about them from their actions?

	<u>From the Text</u>	<u>My Deductions</u>
The Servant		
Rebekah		

	<u>From the Text</u>	<u>My Deductions</u>
Laban		
Isaac		

3. List the choices/decisions that are made the narrative of chapter 24, and note who is making them:

Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

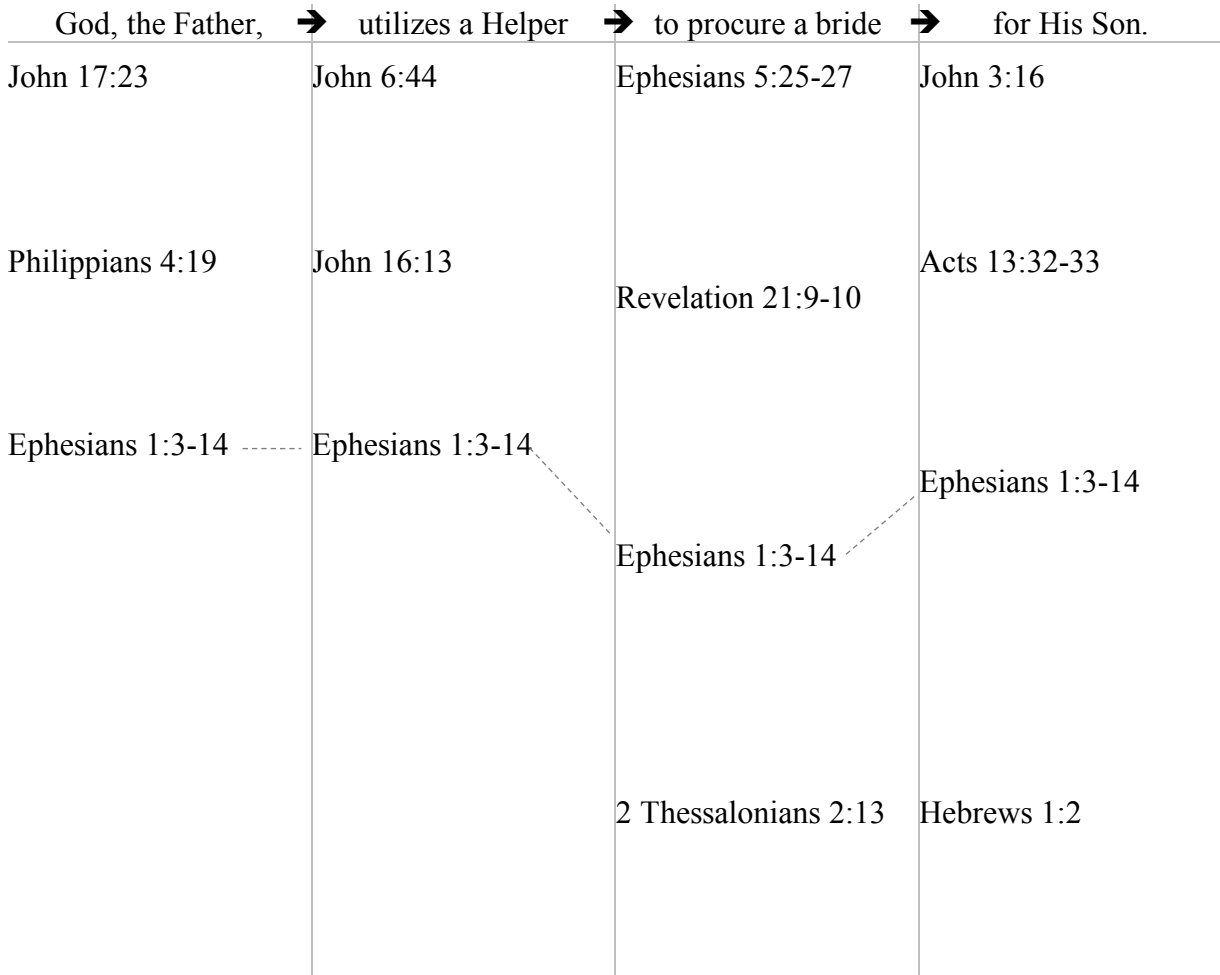
Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

4. A substantial amount of papyrus was used to record the quest to find a wife for Isaac. The event was important enough to be told and then recounted immediately in the narrative. Discovering New Testament parallels may be enlightening as to possible reasons behind this:
 - a. Starting with the following simple summation of chapter 24, use your observations and what you have learned over the course of this study to explore the nuances of the statement. Some examples are given to get you started.

Father Abraham	→ sends a servant	→ to find a bride	→ for his son, Isaac.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loves Isaac (Gen 22:2) • wealthy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trustworthy • his master's representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chosen by God • chooses to go 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his father's only begotten son (Gen 22:2) • child of the promise

b. Now consider how this parallels the gospel of Jesus Christ and the believer's response to it. Use the cross references below (or find your own!) and add what you discover:



Skill Builder

5. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to p.11- 4 to review the concept.)
- a. What statements of truth about the themes and main ideas of Genesis 24:28 – 67 can be declared?
 - b. What does Genesis 24:28-67 reveal about God's character?
 - c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?

what do I know
 to be true? ✓

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 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

Cross References for Lesson 22

John 17:23

²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

Philippians 4:19

¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹ He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. ¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

John 6:44

⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 16:13

¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

Revelation 21:9-10

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

2 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

John 3:16

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Acts 13:32-33

³² And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, ³³ that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.'

Hebrews 1:2

² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Genesis 12:1-3

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."

Genesis 13:14-17

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."

Genesis 15:5

⁵And 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."

Genesis 17:1-8

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"I will establish My covenant between Me and you,
And I will multiply you exceedingly."

³Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,

⁴"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you,
And you will 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 have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. ⁷I 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. ⁸I 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."

Genesis 27

Now it came about, when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son." And he said to him, "Here I am." ²Isaac said, "Behold now, I am old *and* I do not know the day of my death. ³Now then, please take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me; ⁴and prepare a savory dish for me such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die."

⁵Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring *home*, ⁶Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, ⁷'Bring me *some* game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.' ⁸Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you. ⁹Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, that I may prepare them *as* a savory dish for your father, such as he loves. ¹⁰Then you shall bring *it* to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death." ¹¹Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. ¹²Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing." ¹³But his mother said to him, "Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get *them* for me." ¹⁴So he went and got *them*, and brought *them* to his mother; and his mother made savory food such as his father loved. ¹⁵Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. ¹⁶And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. ¹⁷She also gave the savory food and the bread, which she had made, to her son Jacob.

¹⁸ Then he came to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me." ²⁰ Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have *it* so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God caused *it* to happen to me." ²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." ²² So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." ²³ He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. ²⁴ And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am." ²⁵ So he said, "Bring *it* to me, and I will eat of my son's game, that I may bless you." And he brought *it* to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank. ²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Please come close and kiss me, my son." ²⁷ So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said,

"See, the smell of my son
Is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed;
²⁸ Now may God give you of the dew of heaven,
And of the fatness of the earth,
And an abundance of grain and new wine;
²⁹ May peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you;
Be master of your brothers,
And may your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed be those who curse you,
And blessed be those who bless you."

³⁰ Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. ³¹ Then he also made savory food, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." ³² Isaac his father said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." ³³ Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was he then that hunted game and brought *it* to me, so that I ate of all *of it* before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." ³⁴ When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, *even* me also, O my father!" ³⁵ And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing." ³⁶ Then he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" ³⁷ But Isaac replied to Esau, "Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?" ³⁸ Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, *even* me also, O my father." So Esau lifted his voice and wept.

³⁹ Then Isaac his father answered and said to him,

"Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling,
And away from the dew of heaven from above.

⁴⁰ "By your sword you shall live,
And your brother you shall serve;

But it shall come about when you become restless,
That you will break his yoke from your neck.”

⁴¹ So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.” ⁴² Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, “Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you *by planning* to kill you. ⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban! ⁴⁴ Stay with him a few days, until your brother’s fury subsides, ⁴⁵ until your brother’s anger against you subsides and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?”

⁴⁶ Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

Genesis 29:1-30

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. ² He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. ³ When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.

⁴ Jacob said to them, “My brothers, where are you from?” And they said, “We are from Haran.” ⁵ He said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know *him*.” ⁶ And he said to them, “Is it well with him?” And they said, “It is well, and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep.” ⁷ He said, “Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them.” ⁸ But they said, “We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep.”

⁹ While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess. ¹⁰ When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. ¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept. ¹² Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah’s son, and she ran and told her father.

¹³ So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister’s son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things. ¹⁴ Laban said to him, “Surely you are my bone and my flesh.” And he stayed with him a month.

¹⁵ Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?” ¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ And Leah’s eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. ¹⁸ Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.” ¹⁹ Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me.” ²⁰ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give *me* my wife, for my time is completed, that I may go in to her." ²² Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast. ²³ Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and *Jacob* went in to her. ²⁴ Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. ²⁵ So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?" ²⁶ But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years." ²⁸ Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. ²⁹ Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. ³⁰ So *Jacob* went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.

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★ Genesis 13 (Lesson 6)

Genesis 14 (Lesson 7)

★ Genesis 15 (Lesson 8)

Genesis 16 (Lesson 9)

★ Genesis 17 (Lessons 10 & 11)

★ Genesis 18 (Lesson 12 & 13)

Genesis 19 (Lessons 14 & 15)

Genesis 20 (Lesson 16)

★ Genesis 21 (Lessons 17 & 18)

★ Genesis 22 (Lesson 19)

Genesis 23 (Lesson 20)

Genesis 24 (Lessons 21 & 22)

Genesis 25:1-11 (Lesson 23)

3. Now that you have refreshed your memory, what would you include if you were writing a eulogy for Abraham? (If you're feeling creative, write out a eulogy or an obituary for Abraham.)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Re-read Genesis 25:5,6, and 9.

4. What happens to Isaac's half-brothers and why? (Look back at Genesis 17:15-22, if needed.)

Abraham is one of the most frequently mentioned patriarchs in the New Testament. (Only his descendant Moses is mentioned more often.) Consider how Abraham lived 400 years before God gave the Law to Moses. (Exodus 24:3-8) Both men were held in the highest regard in the Jewish culture of Jesus' day.

Why is Abraham such a key figure to both Jews and Christians? For Christians, is it only because of Abraham's place in Jesus' human lineage? Can Abraham's life help us to better understand Jesus' sacrifice on the cross? Let's take a look.

Read Romans 3:28 – 5:6.

5. Explain how Abraham could be declared righteous before God's Law was given. How is this tied to a Christian's salvation through Jesus Christ?

Skill Builder

6. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to p.11- 4 to review the concept.)
 - a. What statements of truth about the themes and main ideas of the life of Abraham can be declared?

 - b. What does the story of Abraham reveal about God's character?

 - c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?

what do I know
to be true? ✓

Cross References for Lesson 23

Exodus 24:3-8 (NASB)

³ Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" ⁴ Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and the *other* half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" ⁸ So Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Romans 3:28-31 (NASB)

²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. ²⁹ Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

³¹ Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Romans 4 (NASB)

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷ "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,
AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

Notes:

⁸“BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.”

⁹Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” ¹⁰How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; ¹¹and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, ¹²and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

¹³For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; ¹⁵for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

¹⁶For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷(as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.” ¹⁹Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; ²⁰yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. ²²Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ²³Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, ²⁴but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵*He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 5:1-6 (NASB)

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

⁶For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.



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