BIBLE TOPICS · OLD TESTAMENT

The Abrahamic Covenant

From Ur to Moriah · c. 2091 B.C.

75 Years Old
When Abram left Haran

25 Years
Of waiting for Isaac

7 Times
God speaks the promise

All Families
Of the earth blessed

C. 2091 B.C.

From Ur to Moriah

The story of the covenant moves in eight stages, from God's call in Haran to the promise passing to Isaac and Jacob.

1
The Call
Leave your country; a land, a nation and a blessing for all.
GENESIS 12:1–9

2
Lot and Melchizedek
Abram gives Lot first choice; God gives Abram the land.
GENESIS 13–14

3
Between the Pieces
Abram believes, and God alone passes between the pieces.
GENESIS 15

4
Hagar and Ishmael
A shortcut to an heir brings pain, but God sees Hagar.
GENESIS 16

5
The Sign of the Covenant
New names, an everlasting covenant, and circumcision.
GENESIS 17

6
The Promised Son
Three visitors, Sodom judged, and Isaac born at last.
GENESIS 18–21

7
The LORD Will Provide
Abraham offers Isaac; God provides a ram and swears an oath.
GENESIS 22

8
Isaac and Jacob
A burial cave, a bride for Isaac, and the promise to Jacob.
GENESIS 23–28

KEY VERSE

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."

Genesis 12:2 (KJV)

Abraham's Journey

GENESIS 11–50

The Journeys of the Patriarchs

From Ur of the Chaldees to the land of Goshen

Abraham to Joseph, c. 2091–1805 B.C. · Routes approximate



Abram: Ur to Haran to Canaan
And down to Egypt in the famine (11:31–12:20)

Jacob flees to Haran and returns
Twenty years with Laban (28–33)

Jacob's family goes down to Egypt
Seventy souls to Goshen (46)

The Fertile Crescent
The usual road between Ur and Canaan

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."

GENESIS 12:1 (KJV)

Travelers went the long way round by Haran and the Euphrates, not straight across the desert. Positions approximate.

What God Promised

THE HEART OF THE COVENANT

What God Promised

God’s promises to Abraham come down to three: land, seed and blessing. Around them stand a great name, kings, God’s protection and, at the center, God Himself.

LAND

The Land

Canaan, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.

“Unto thy seed will I give this land”

GENESIS 12:7

SEED

Countless Descendants

As the stars of heaven, through a son of Abraham and Sarah.

“So shall thy seed be.”

GENESIS 15:5

BLESSING

Blessing for All

God’s blessing on Abraham flows out to every nation.

“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”

GENESIS 12:3

NAME AND KINGS

A Great Name and Kings

A royal line leading to David, and to David’s greater Son.

“kings shall come out of thee”

GENESIS 17:6

PROTECTION

God’s Protection

God stands with those who stand with Abraham.

“Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield”

GENESIS 15:1

GOD HIMSELF

God Himself

The greatest promise of all.

“to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee”

GENESIS 17:7

Seven Times God Speaks the Promise

WHERE	WHAT GOD PROMISES
1. Haran GENESIS 12:1–3	A land, a great nation, a great name, and blessing for all families THE CALL
2. Shechem GENESIS 12:7	This land for his seed FIRST ALTAR
3. Near Bethel GENESIS 13:14–17	All the land he can see, and seed as the dust of the earth AFTER LOT LEAVES
4. In a vision GENESIS 15:1–21	An heir of his own, seed as the stars, and the land from Egypt to the Euphrates THE COVENANT CUT
5. At age 99 GENESIS 17:1–21	Father of many nations, kings, an everlasting covenant, and the sign of circumcision NEW NAMES
6. Mamre GENESIS 18:10–19	A son by Sarah within a year THREE VISITORS
7. Moriah GENESIS 22:15–18	An oath: seed as stars and sand, and all nations blessed in his seed THE OATH

The Land God Promised

THE LAND

The Land God Promised

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in Canaan as strangers, moving between Shechem, Bethel, Hebron and Beersheba. The only land Abraham ever owned was a burial cave at Hebron.

GENESIS 12–37

The Patriarchs in the Land

Where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph lived

Canaan, the land God promised · Positions approximate



Abraham
Chapters 12–25

Isaac
Chapters 20–28

Jacob
Chapters 28–35

Joseph
Chapter 37

"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

GENESIS 13:15 (KJV)

Sodom and Gomorrah are shown at the south end of the Salt Sea; their exact place is not known. Positions approximate.

BibleStudyForAll.com · Map positions approximate · Scripture from the King James Version

Positions are approximate.

> *"Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates"*
>
> Genesis 15:18 (KJV)

The Covenant Through the Bible

GENESIS TO HEBREWS

The Covenant Through the Bible

Once God made His promise to Abraham, the rest of the Bible keeps coming back to it.

WHAT HAPPENS	IN THE TEXT
Passed to Isaac GENESIS 26:3–4	**“I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father”** GENESIS 26:3
Passed to Jacob GENESIS 28:13–14	**“in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed”** GENESIS 28:14
Remembered in Egypt EXODUS 2:24	**“God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob”** EXODUS 2:24
The land given JOSHUA 21:43–45	**“the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers”** JOSHUA 21:43
Sung in worship PSALM 105:8–11	**“He hath remembered His covenant for ever”** PSALM 105:8
At Jesus’ coming LUKE 1:72–73	**“To remember His holy covenant; The oath which He sware to our father Abraham”** LUKE 1:72–73
Preached to Israel ACTS 3:25	**“And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed”** ACTS 3:25
Opened to the nations GALATIANS 3:8–29	**“if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed”** GALATIANS 3:29
An unbreakable oath HEBREWS 6:13–18	**“because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself”** HEBREWS 6:13

THE PROMISE TODAY

The Promise Today

The covenant rests on God’s own oath, so every part of it will be kept. Its blessing reaches every believer now, and its promises to Israel will be fulfilled when Christ returns.

UNCONDITIONAL

Resting on God

God alone passed between the pieces and swore by Himself, so the promise depends on Him.

“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

ROMANS 11:29

NOW

Blessing for Every Believer

All who believe in Christ, Jew or Gentile, are Abraham’s children by faith.

“they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

GALATIANS 3:9

STILL AHEAD

The Land and the Nation

The promises of land and nationhood to Abraham’s descendants will be fulfilled when Christ returns and reigns.

“And so all Israel shall be saved”

ROMANS 11:26

See Jesus Returning for the thousand-year reign of Christ, when the promises to Israel are fulfilled.

Abraham and Jesus

THE REST OF THE STORY

Abraham and Jesus

Paul says the gospel was “preached before … unto Abraham” (Galatians 3:8). Jesus is Abraham’s promised seed, the Lamb God provided, and the One through whom the blessing reaches every nation.

The Son of Abraham
“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
MATTHEW 1:1

The Promised Seed
“And to thy seed, which is Christ.”
GALATIANS 3:16

Before Abraham Was
“Before Abraham was, I am.”
JOHN 8:58

The Lamb God Provides
“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”
JOHN 1:29

Blessing for the Nations
“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ”
GALATIANS 3:14

Every Promise Kept
“For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen”
2 CORINTHIANS 1:20

FOR TODAY

Five Things to Remember

Abraham’s story is about God’s faithfulness and a man who learned to trust it.

1
Land, Seed, Blessing
God promised a land, countless descendants and blessing for all families.
GENESIS 12:1–3

2
Faith, Not Works
Abraham was counted righteous before he was circumcised.
ROMANS 4:11

3
God Bound Himself
God alone passed between the pieces, then swore by Himself.
GENESIS 22:16

4
Through Isaac and Jacob
The covenant went to Isaac, not Ishmael, and to Jacob, not Esau.
GENESIS 17:21

5
Open to Every Nation
In Christ the blessing of Abraham reaches the Gentiles.
GALATIANS 3:14

6
Walk by Faith
Abraham went out not knowing where he was going.
“and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”
HEBREWS 11:8

THINK ABOUT IT

Questions for Reflection

Abram left what he knew with only God’s word to go on: what is God asking you to trust Him with before you can see where it leads? Sarai and Abram tried to make God’s promise happen their own way: where are you tempted to take a shortcut instead of waiting on God? Abraham held nothing back, not even Isaac: is there anything you hold more tightly than you hold God?

KEY THEMES

Six Themes of the Covenant

These six truths run through the story of Abraham and the promise.

1
God Makes the First Move
Abraham’s family served other gods when God called him.
JOSHUA 24:2–3

2
Faith Counted as Righteousness
Abraham believed God’s promise, and God counted it as righteousness.
“And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.”
GENESIS 15:6

3
God Binds Himself
God alone passed between the pieces and swore by Himself.
HEBREWS 6:13

4
Blessed to Be a Blessing
God blessed one family so every family on earth could be blessed.
GENESIS 12:2–3

5
Waiting on God’s Time
Twenty-five years passed before Isaac was born.
“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief”
ROMANS 4:20

6
The LORD Will Provide
On Moriah God provided the ram in Isaac’s place.
GENESIS 22:14