

The Bible Story In A Year

Week 3

After considering the story of Job, we now return to the story of Genesis. When we left the book, we had seen that the Bible story was going to focus on Noah's son Shem after the flood. So, after the scattering of the people (Genesis 11:1-9), the Bible records the genealogy from Shem to a man named Abram (Terah's son, Genesis 11:10-32). It is at this point that the Bible story identifies some significant promises concerning this family lineage.

1) God's covenant with Abram. Abram and his family lived in Ur of the Chaldeans. However, God called Abram to leave this land and go to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1, 4-5). Then, God made some promises to Abram (12:2-3, 7). In addition to blessing Abram, three promises are particularly noteworthy in the development of the Bible story. God promised that a great nation would come from Abram's descendants, to give Abram's descendants the land of Canaan, and to bless all peoples on earth through Abram's Seed.

Abram went as God had told him (Genesis 12:4) and came to the land of Canaan (12:5). Note that he was 75 years old when he left Haran (12:4) and was accompanied by his wife (Sarai) and his nephew (Lot); but Abram had no children. After Abram's obedience, the Scriptures demonstrate how God blessed him concerning his wealth (12:5, 16) to the point that Abram and Lot had to separate (13:6-8). Abram gave Lot the choice as to where he desired to go, and Lot chose to live near Sodom (13:9-13). Note that later chapters demonstrate this was not a good decision by Lot, as God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:20; 19:4-7, 12-13, 28-29). Although Abram had no children, God continued to make promises to Abram (13:14-18; 15:1-7, 15:13-16). However, Sarai presented her slave (Hagar) to Abram as a wife to have children by her (16:1-4). Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram (16:16). Later, God changed Abram's name to Abraham (17:4-6) and Sarai's name

to Sarah (17:15-16), since God was still going to fulfill His promises through a son who would be born to them rather than through Ishmael (17:18-21). God's covenant with Abraham was that He would be Abraham's God and the God of Abraham's descendants and God would bless them and fulfill His promises (17:7-8). Part of this covenant also involved circumcision (17:9-14).

God kept His promise and Sarah gave birth to a son who was named Isaac when Abraham and Sarah were 100 and 90 years old (Genesis 21:1-7). Sometime after this, God then tested Abraham's faith in God's ability to keep His promises by commanding Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering (22:1-2). Yet, Abraham trusted God enough to do what had been commanded (though God stopped him from actually killing Isaac, 22:3-14). Once again, God extended His promises to Abraham (22:15-18).

2) God's covenant with Isaac. After Sarah died, Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac. Rebekah was chosen from Abraham and Sarah's family (Genesis 24:1-4, 67). Rebekah would later conceive and give birth to twin sons (25:21-26). Particularly, God told Rebekah that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob, 25:23). Esau later sold his birthright as the firstborn to Jacob for some food (25:27-34). Then, Jacob also stole the blessing Isaac was going to give Esau and Esau wanted to kill Jacob (27:1-46). Through this, God also appeared to Isaac and extended the promises He had made to Abraham to Isaac (26:2-6, 23-25).

3) God's covenant with Jacob. After stealing the blessing, Jacob was sent away by Isaac to his mother's brother (Laban) so he would marry one of his daughters rather than taking wives of the Canaanite women (Genesis 28:1-2). Isaac extended the promise God had given to him and Abraham (28:3-4). As Jacob journeyed, God appeared to him in a dream and extended these same promises to him (28:12-15). After this, Jacob met Rachel (Laban's daughter), he

loved her, and entered an agreement with Laban to work for her for seven years so he could marry her (29:18-20). However, when the time came, Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Rachel's older sister Leah to marry (29:21-25). The agreement was then made for Jacob to take Rachel and continue working for another seven years (29:26-30). This set up a bitter rivalry between these two sisters for Jacob's affection (that would soon include their two maids also, Bilhah and Zilpah). At first, Leah gave birth to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah (29:31-35). Since Rachel could not have children at this time, she gave Bilhah to Jacob and Bilhah bore Dan and Naphtali (30:1-8). Leah then had stopped having children and gave Zilpah to Jacob, who bore Gad and Asher (30:9-13). After this, Leah conceived again and bore Issachar, Zebulun, and a daughter, Dinah (30:14-24). Finally, God opened Rachel's womb and she bore Jacob a son named Joseph (30:22-24). This left Jacob with eleven sons and one daughter. Notice how each of their names reflect the rivalry in the home. God also blessed Jacob with possessions and the family left Laban to go back to Canaan (31:11-13).

A lot has happened in this week's reading that is deeply impactful in the development of the Bible story and God's plan of salvation! While the characters God is using to fulfill His promises through have many flaws, keep your focus on the overall development of the story. We will continue to watch for God to fulfill these promises as we continue the Bible story.

Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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