

Sunday School Class – HPC - May 15, 2022

## ABRAM – ABRAHAM (Genesis 11 – 25)

### I. OVERVIEW

Abraham is called a “friend of God”, the father of the Jews, the father of the faithful and is honored by Jews, Christians, and Muslims as a great and venerated man. He is regarded as one of the most important men in history. He is mentioned in sixteen books of the Old Testament and eleven books in the New Testament. His name as Abram means “exalted father” or as God changed his name to Abraham, “father of a multitude” or “father of a multitude of nations”.

Abraham was born and raised in UR of the Chaldees, which is in modern IRAQ, near Nasiriyah in the southeastern part of the country. UR of the Chaldees was an ancient city that flourished until about 300 BC. The great ziggurat of UR was built by Ur-Nammu around 2100 BC and was dedicated to Nanna, the moon god. Sometimes the moon god is also called by the name of Sin. Sin’s wife was called Ningal. She had many names, and was worshipped in every city as the Mother-goddess. Nina was one of her names from which the city of Ninevah was named. Her commonest name in Babylonia was Ishtar. She was the deification of the sex passion; her worship required licentiousness; sacred

prostitution, female and male, in connection with her sanctuaries was a universal custom among the women of Babylonia. Joshua 24:2 says that Abram and his father Terah worshipped idols though nothing is known beyond that acknowledgement. There is a legend that Abram was persecuted as a child for his refusal to worship idols.

The moon was worshipped as the power that controlled the heavens and the life cycle of earth. To the Chaldeans the phases of the moon represented the natural cycle of birth, growth, decay and death and also set the measurement of the yearly calendar. Among the pantheon of Mesopotamia gods, Nanna was supreme because he was the source of fertility for crops, herds and families. Prayers and offering were offered to the moon to invoke its blessing.

## II. GOD'S CALL OF ABRAM FROM UR

When the LORD called Abram (Genesis 12:1) HE told Abram to leave his country, his kindred and his father's house. Everything familiar was to be left behind, and that included his false religion. We do not know what Abram knew about the true God at that point, but it is likely that he received some instruction as each generation passed down their history to the next. Abram must have been surprised to receive a

direct and awesome revelation from Yahweh (Jehovah).

The moon god and other deities were distant objects of worship, and they did not, (could not), personally interact with men. Abram obeyed the LORD's call. Hebrews 11:8 says Abram's departure from UR was an example of faith in action. On his way to Canaan, he stopped at Haran for a period of time which many commentators refer to as "the wasted years" in that there was no progress in movement to the promised land. After his father Terah's death Abram received another call from the Lord directing him to leave Haran and enter the promised land and Abram obeyed. When he arrived in Canaan he built an altar to Yahweh at Shechem (Gen 12:7). The text indicates that Jehovah's appearance was a deciding factor in his choosing to worship and so he declared his God. Abram continued to learn about Yahweh/Jehovah whom he worshipped. In Genesis 14:22 following the example of Melchizedek, Abram calls Yahweh, "the LORD God Most High", "creator of heaven and earth". This statement shows that Abram set the LORD above and apart from the moon god or any other false god. His decision to worship God alone is settled in Genesis 17 when God establishes the Abrahamic Covenant with Abram. God appeared to Abram when he was 90 years old and revealed Himself to Abram as El Shaddai, "ALMIGHTY God" (The "Strong One", the Nourisher and "Strength Giver", "The All-Sufficient One"). God

changed Abram's name to Abraham and later Sarai's name to Sarah ("my princess" to "Princess"). El Shaddai told Abraham that HE alone was to be God to him and his offspring. Abraham chose to follow Yahweh alone and he demonstrated his commitment by the rite of circumcision so that his heritage became known as those of the Circumcision.

Abraham had forsaken the worship of heavenly objects yet many times in the Old Testament God had to rebuke the children of Abraham for their idolatry. For example, in 2 Kings 23: 4,5 King Josiah of Judah led a revival of Yahweh worship and deposed the false priests who burned incense to the sun, moon and stars. Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth wants people to worship Him and not the things He created. In Romans 1:18-20 we are told, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of the people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and Divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood by the things that have been made, so that people are without excuse." When we worship creation instead of the Creator, we exchange the truth about God for a lie." (Romans 1:25) and reject what God has revealed about everything in life. God saved Abraham out of idolatry, changed his name, and called him to follow Him. As a

result of God's blessings to Abraham, the whole world is blessed." (Genesis 18:18).

### III THE UNCONDITIONAL ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

All God's precepts are attended with promises to the obedient. When He makes Himself known to us as our creator/commander He makes himself known to us as a rewarder: if we obey the command, God will not fail to perform the promise. In the case of the Abrahamic Covenant it is unconditional and does not depend on obedience but on God's sworn oath. Here are the six promises to Abraham: -

1. I will make of you a great nation
  - a. God makes nations (Isa 66:8)
2. I will bless thee
3. I will make your name great
4. You shall be a blessing
5. I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you
6. In you shall all the families of the earth be blest  
This was the promise that crowned all the rest: for it points at the Messiah, in whom all *the promises are yea and amen*. Jesus Christ is the great blessing of the world, the greatest that the world was ever blest with.

### III. THE GRIEVOUS EXAMPLE OF LOT'S BACKSLIDING

Though a righteous man who grieved over the environment he chose a downward path that left him with nothing but a legacy of people that became enemies of Israel. He went into the situation very rich and emerged very poor. An object lesson for all time.

#### IV. ABRAHAM'S TIMELINE – BRIEF COMMENTARY

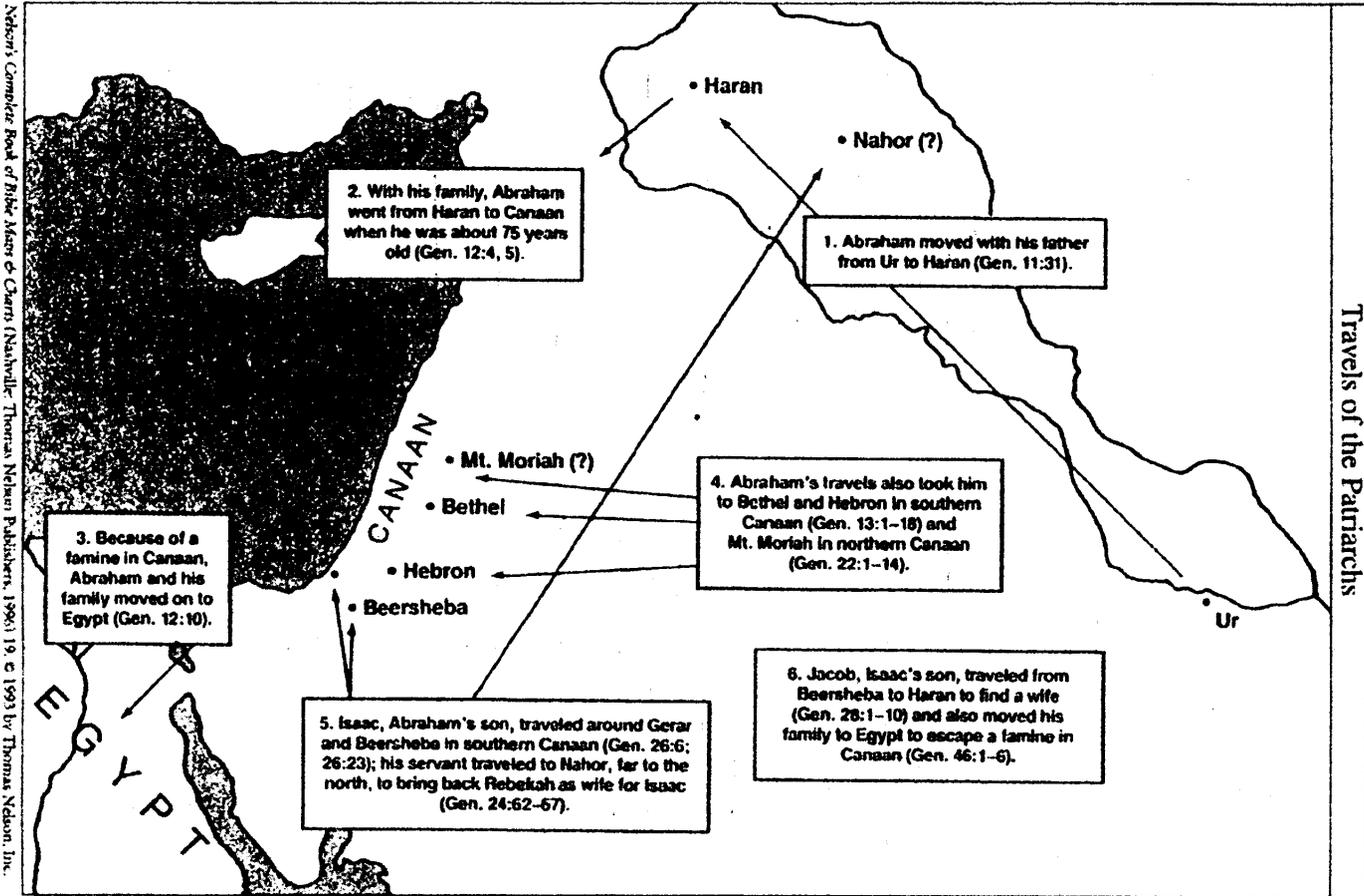
Note: see time-line chart attached.

A common aspect of narratives in Genesis is that they frequently foreshadow future events that will occur later. Here are examples: Abram's Egyptian sojourn foreshadowed Israel's experience in the exodus.

Abram went to Egypt because of a famine (12:10); so Israel (see Joseph's narrative, but particularly Gen 41:54 and 45:11), Both Abram and Israel Sojourned in Egypt and were threatened with death (Gen 12:13; Exod 1:16). Abram acquired wealth from Pharaoh (Gen 12:16): so the Israelites received wealth from Egypt (Gen 47:27). In the same way the Lord sent *plagues* upon Pharaoh to deliver Abram (Gen 12:17), so He sent plagues upon Egypt to Deliver Israel (Exod 9:14); 11:1); In Genesis Pharaoh, sends Abram out of Egypt ((Gen 12:19,20), While in Exodus Pharaoh sends the Israelites out of Egypt (Exod 12: 32,33). Finally, Abram went out to The Negev with Lot; was rich in livestock, silver and Gold; and worshipped the Lord (Gen 13:1-4). Likewise, Israel left Egypt and went to the Negev with

A mixed multitude; was rich in livestock, silver, and Gold; and worshipped by celebrating the Passover (Exod 12: 35-42).

Blessings!



### The Life of Abraham

Event	Old Testament	New Testament
The birth of Abram	Gen. 11:26	
God's call of Abram	Gen. 12:1-3	Heb. 11:8
The entry into Canaan	Gen. 12:4-9	
Abram in Egypt	Gen. 12:10-20	
Lot separates from Abram	Gen. 13:1-18	
Abram rescues Lot	Gen. 14:1-17	
Abram pays tithes to Melchizedek	Gen. 14:18-24	Heb. 7:1-10
God's covenant with Abraham	Gen. 15:1-21	Rom. 4:1-25 Gal. 3:6-25 Heb. 6:13-20
The birth of Ishmael	Gen. 16:1-16	
Abraham promised a son by Sarah	Gen. 17:1-27	Rom. 4:18-25 Heb. 11:11, 12
Abraham intercedes for Sodom	Gen. 18:16-33	
Lot saved and Sodom destroyed	Gen. 19:1-38	
The birth of Isaac	Gen. 21:1-7	
Hagar and Ishmael sent away	Gen. 21:8-21	Gal. 4:21-31
Abraham challenged to offer Isaac as sacrifice	Gen. 22:1-19	Heb. 11:17-19 James 2:20-24
The death of Sarah	Gen. 23:1-20	
The death of Abraham	Gen. 25:1-11	

### Old Testament Names for God

1. Elohim, meaning "God," a reference to God's power and might (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 19:1)	banner" (Ex. 17:15)
2. Jehovah (sometimes spelled Yahweh), a reference to God's divine salvation (Gen. 2:4)	9. Jehovah-Maccaddeshem, meaning "The Lord thy sanctifier" (Ex. 31:13)
3. El-Elyon, meaning "The most high God" (Gen. 14:17-20; Is. 14:13, 14)	10. Jehovah-Shalom, meaning "The Lord is peace" (Judg. 6:24)
4. El-Roi, meaning "The strong one who sees" (Gen. 16:12)	11. Jehovah-Rohi, meaning "The Lord my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1)
5. El-Shaddai, meaning "The God of the mountains" or "God almighty" (Gen. 17:1; Ps. 91:1)	12. Jehovah-Sabaoth, meaning "The Lord of Hosts" (Is. 6:1-3)
6. Jehovah-Jireh, meaning "The Lord will provide" (Gen. 22:13, 14)	13. El-Olam, meaning "The everlasting God" (Is. 40:28-31)
7. Jehovah-Rapha, meaning "The Lord our healer" (Ex. 16:26)	14. Jehovah-Tsidkenu, meaning "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer. 23:6)
8. Jehovah-Nissi, meaning "The Lord our	15. Jehovah-Shammah, meaning "The Lord who is present" (Ezek. 48:35)
	16. Adonai, meaning "Lord," a reference to the lordship of God (Mal. 1:6)

### Abraham—Justified by Faith

In Genesis 15:6, we are told that when Abraham "believed" in the Lord, it was "accounted" to him for "righteousness." The apostle Paul quoted these words as an illustration of faith over and against works (Rom. 4:3, 9, 22; Gal. 3:6). Abraham was regenerated by faith, and so are we!

This quotation is one of the clearest statements in all Scripture about justification. Abraham's faith is not a meritorious work. It is never the ground of justification—it is simply the channel through which it is received and it, too, is a gift. His faith was "accounted" or "imputed" to him, which is a term used in both financial and legal settings. It means to take something that belongs to someone and credit to another's account. It is a one-sided transaction. Abraham did nothing to accumulate it; God simply credited it to him. In this case, God took His own righteousness and credited it to Abraham as if it were actually his. This God did because Abraham believed in Him.

The "righteousness" imputed to Abraham is unique: (1) God is its source (Is. 45:8); (2) it fulfills both the penalty and precept of God's law. Christ's death as a substitute pays the penalty exacted on those who failed to keep God's law, and His perfect obedience to every requirement of God's law fulfills God's demand for comprehensive righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; see Heb. 9:28); and (3) because God's righteousness is eternal (Ps. 119:142; Is. 51:8; Dan. 9:24), the one who receives it from Him enjoys it forever.