

GENESIS

The Book of Foundations

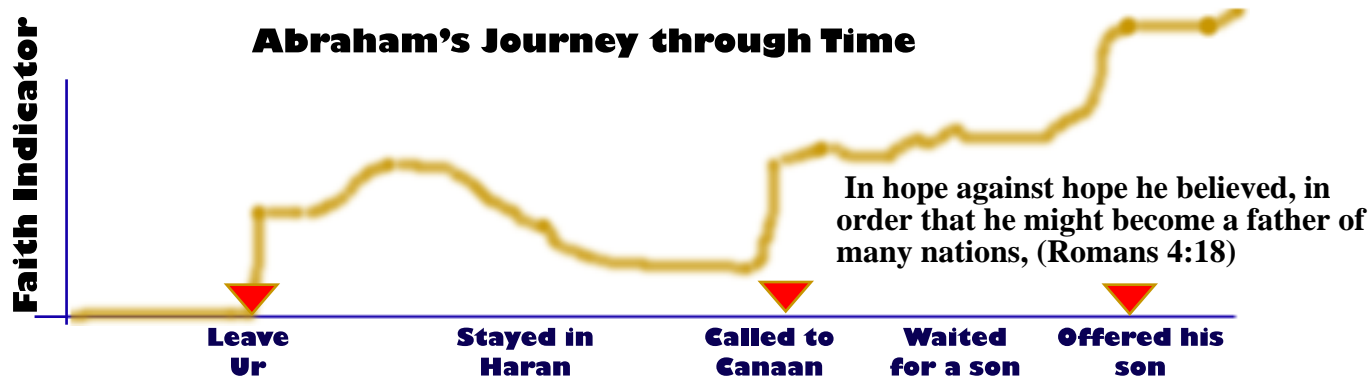
Genesis 12-22

Abraham's Journey of Faith

Objectives:

- Examine how Abraham grew in his faith.
- Describe the importance faith plays in a Christian's life.
- Show how a Christian cultivates this faith.
- Outline some practical steps for us to be men and women of faith.

Abraham's growth in faith can be traced both by God's revelations to him (calling, promises, visions) as well as his own obedience in responding to God.



Let's look at Abraham's life and note four ways to build up our own faith.

A.) *The Call...* (Genesis 12:1)

when God's grace begins to pour into our lives.

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;

When God speaks, listen carefully.
 Ask questions. You might not hear
 from Him for a while!

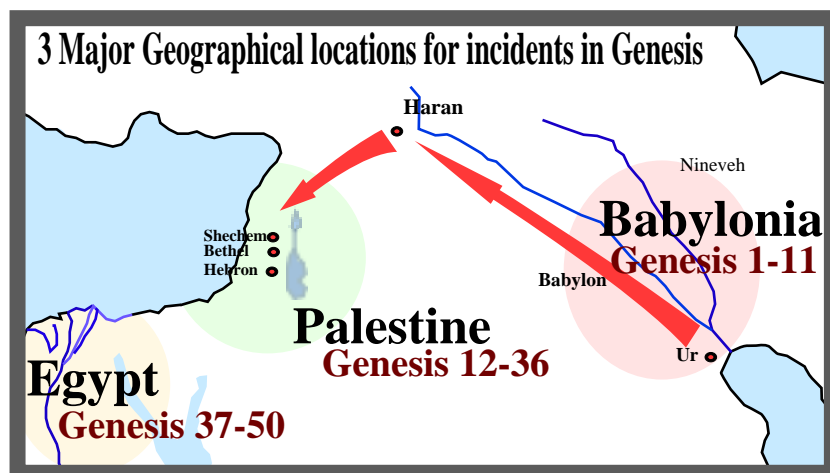
Looking Forward

Note the three 'froms' and the two 'tos.'

Motion and direction of God's believers cause disruption in the flow of the world and enable God's plans to be implemented.

Looking Back

- Born in Ur (2008 creation)
- 75 Leaves Haran for Canaan. (2083 creation)
 LORD appears to him in Shechem.
- 86 Ishmael born in Hebron.
- 99 Promise of Isaac (Gen 17)
- 100 Birth of Isaac (Gen 20-21)
- 120? Offering of Isaac on Moriah (Gen 22)
- 175 Abraham dies in Hebron (Gen 25)



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Genesis 12-22

B.) *The Promises ...* (Genesis 12:2-3) the surety of God's grace in our lives.

- 1) I will make you a great _____ (12:2a)
- 2) I will _____ you (12:2b)
- 3) *I will* make your _____ great (Gen 12:2c)
- 4) You shall be a _____ (Gen 12:2d)
- 5) _____ will bless those who bless you (12:3a)
- 6) The one who _____ you I will _____ (12:3b)
- 7) In you all the _____ of the earth shall be blessed (12:3c)

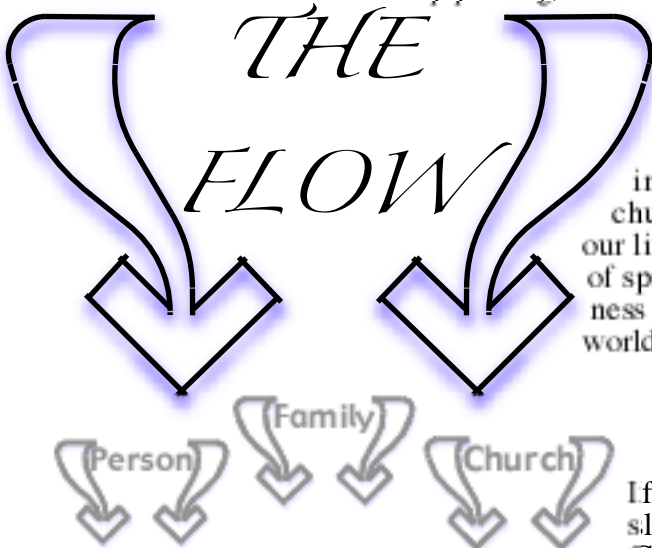
Gen 12:2 "And I will make you a great nation, And I will **ble**ss you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a **ble**ssing;
Gen 12:3 And I will **ble**ss those who **ble**ss you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be **ble**ssed."

Genesis 12:1-3

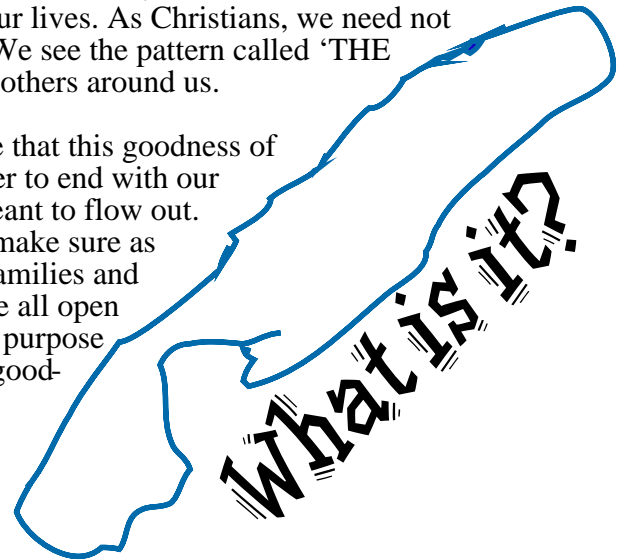
- | | |
|---|---|
| A) Blessings are from God (Gen 12:2a) | Dependent on Him (His blessing) |
| B) Blessings are to be shared (Gen 12:2b) | Accountable to Him (His purpose) |
| C) Blessings are to be multiplied (Gen 12:3) | Grateful to Him (His abundance) |

We see a pattern from Genesis 1 and 2 being again repeated here. God's goodness is being expressed. Where it goes, it wonderfully transforms and blesses. This of course is no different than the power of the Gospel - God's grace. It is all the same.

God wants us to pay attention to His ways. As Abraham's children of faith, God has destined that this great and glorious goodness of God to be poured through our lives. As Christians, we need not strive for blessing as much as open our lives to His blessings. We see the pattern called 'THE FLOW' ebb into our lives nonstop pouring out into the lives of others around us.



We will see that this goodness of God is never to end with our lives but meant to flow out. We need to make sure as individuals, families and churches that we all open our lives to God's purpose of spreading His goodness through the world.



If 'THE FLOW' is stopped, then it begins decaying. Backsliding well describes either the lack of opening our lives to God's goodness (maybe because of bitterness) or the unwillingness to share what blessings God has given to us (maybe because of worldliness or selfishness). Solutions are easy.

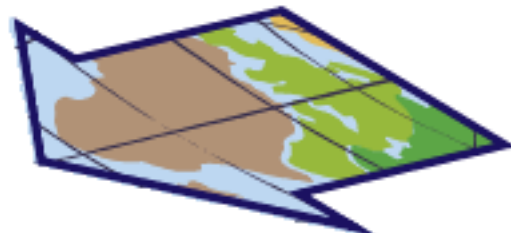
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C.) *The Method ...* (Genesis 15)

the means God's grace flows into our lives.

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

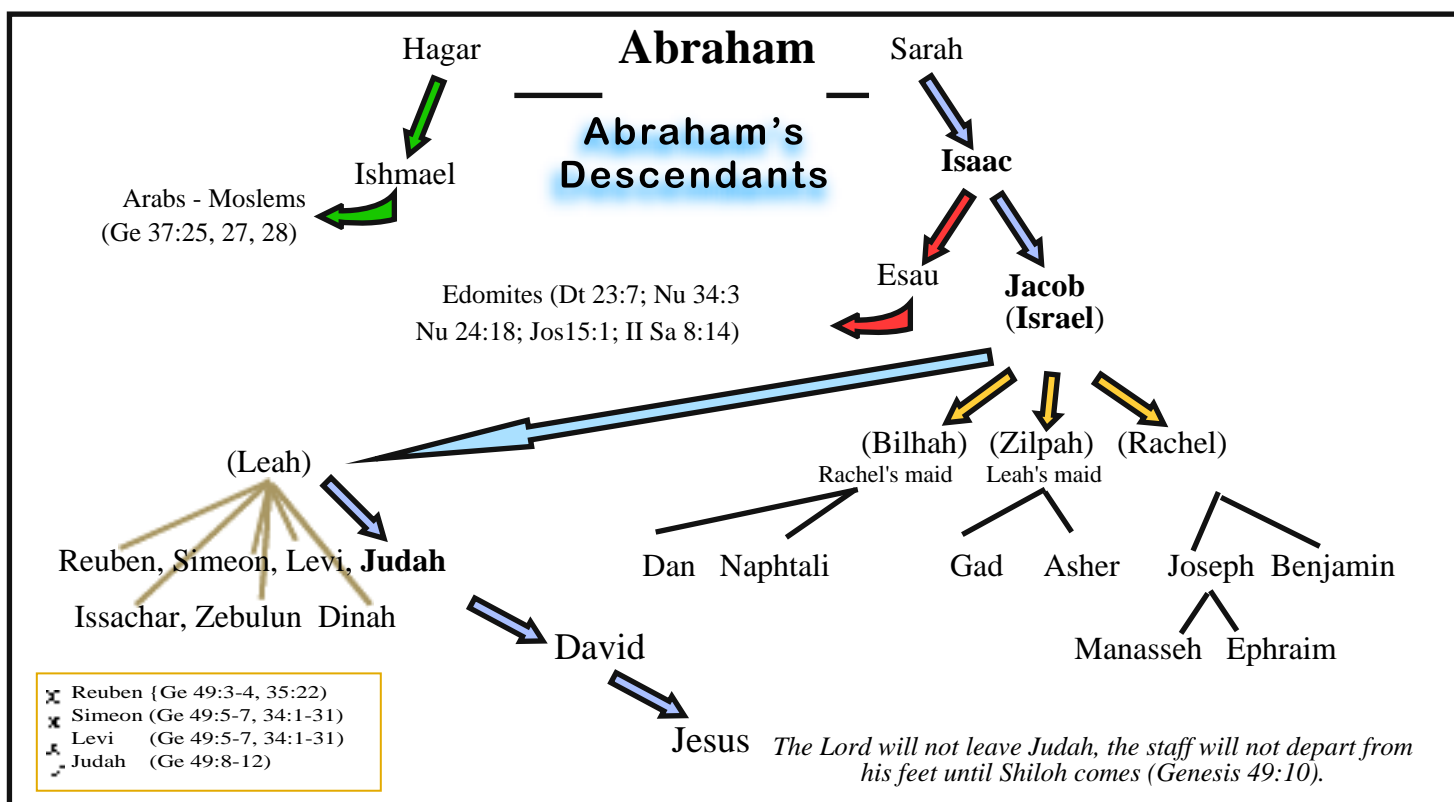


God creates situations where we might gain more faith and so be able to safely incorporate more of His grace into our lives so that His goodness might reach more people. Faith is crucial to this process, not just the initial faith needed but the pursuing faith.

God could easily have given Abraham a son or many of them. He only gave Abram a promise of many descendants. He had no children. Surely anyone around that heard of God's promise to aging Abram would laugh and mock him. This was the challenge of his faith that was embedded in his name 'Abram,' meaning 'exalted father.'

And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them."

And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.



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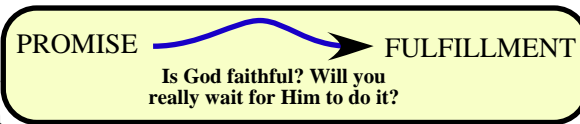
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D.) The Testing ... (Genesis 22)

the means God's grace abounds in our lives.

Tests of the LORD

Waiting for God's timing is one hard thing to do. Waiting for something to happen tests both the importance of what God has said as well as our belief that God will fulfill His Word. Genesis 22 leaps beyond this, though, with another kind of test, the test of sacrifice.

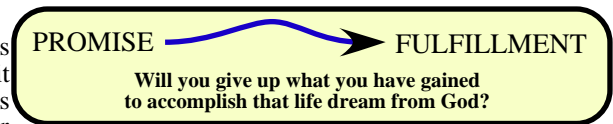


The timing test tried Abraham on endurance and suffering. Many years he had to go without. This test to sacrifice his only son Isaac, however, tested his belief in the impossible as well as God's determination to accomplish what He would. Abraham was asked to give up every glimmer of hope to fulfill the things that he waited for throughout his whole life.

No matter how much Abraham has prospered, the test is about who he would pass it down to. By offering up Isaac to God, Abraham was willing to sacrifice all that he had or dreamed of. He cared less for his dreams than obedience to what God wanted.

Morality of Sacrifices

Some ask about the morality of asking a father to kill his child. The issue is not easy to resolve unless one takes God's perspective. Let's first ask if it was immoral to offer up Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 2:23) on the cross? If it was immoral, then God is not holy. He has done something that violates His per-



son. Since He is holy, we must accept the fact that God can ask others to give up their life by the hand of others, especially when there is a greater purpose involved. This is what we do in war, but this scene is much greater. It is the scene of redemption and salvation. The One who set the laws of the world established what is moral by who He is and what He wills.



Isaac was a strong teenager that was willing to give up his life. We do not read of any sort of physical struggle to have Isaac lie on the altar. By carrying the wood (figure of Christ carry the cross), we know Isaac was at least a young man. It is possible that Abraham knocked him out but the context doesn't lead us to this line of thinking. Instead we see an obedient son laying on the altar when being bound by his father. This is the perfect picture of Jesus who willingly gave up His life on the cross at His Heavenly Father's request. Isaac, it seems then, willingly

gave up his life at his father's request just as Jesus did.

Faith grows the most in life's struggles through circumstances that God puts before us.

Assignments

- Do the following graph assignment.
 - Note what year you believed on the left and this year on your right.
 - Mark key times of spiritual growth and obedience in your life with a triangle.
 - Mark with an X any significant struggles and doubts that kept you down.
 - Draw a line graph to connect the points.

Faith Indicator

Journey through Time

(Your name)

Conversion date

Today's date

- Describe one faith struggle that you went through and really grew from.

3. To allow 'THE FLOW' to fully operate in your life, you need to be ready to sacrifice all of your own desires, dreams, comforts and loved ones. Meditate on Romans 12:1-2 along with Genesis 22. Picture yourself on the altar as a living sacrifice. Tell the Lord that you are willing to give up these things that His grace and goodness might more effectively spread to the world.