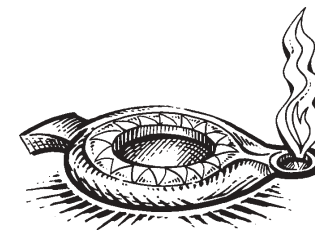


BASIC BIBLE STUDY

An Introductory Guide To Understanding The Scriptures

PART FIVE

The Patriarch Era



"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path"
PSALM 119:105

The Patriarch Era was a time of godly men presiding over a growing family. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, successive generations of the same family, ruled over the Hebrew people in the earliest days of their existence.

On more than one occasion, Abraham must have felt frustrated: his descendants did not behave the way he wanted them to. Passion for God and what He wanted to do in and through the Hebrew people burned like a flame in Abraham's heart. But that flame dimmed in successive generations. However, the time of slavery in Egypt sharpened the spiritual hunger of the Hebrew people, and a great family, which became a great nation, emerged.

THE ARC OF BIBLE HISTORY
#2 ... THE PATRIARCH ERA



I. Review

Fill in the blanks to bring the chart up to date with this era:

ERA	FIGURE	LOCATION	STORYLINE SUMMARY
_____	_____	_____	Adam is created by God, but he _____ and _____ God's original _____ for man.
_____	_____	_____	To be completed in this study

II. Story-line Summary:

Abraham is *chosen* by God to “father” a *people* to represent God to the world.

Test #4: Story of the Old Testament (Fill in the blanks)

ERA	FIGURE	LOCATION	STORYLINE SUMMARY
_____	_____	_____	Adam is created by God, but he _____ and _____ God's original _____ for man.
_____	_____	_____	Abraham is _____ by God to _____ a people to _____ God to the world.

III. Story-line Expansion: There are 4 major men in the Patriarch Era:

1. Abraham
2. Isaac
3. Jacob
4. Joseph

**1. ABRAHAM:
FATHER OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE
(Genesis 11:10-25:18)**

Because of Adam's sin and the fall of man, God's attention is now focused on a plan of redemption for mankind. God wants a people through whom He can work to produce a reflection of Himself and through whom He can spread the message of redemption to the world. He chooses Abraham, who becomes the Father of the Hebrew people, and promises him a country (land), countless descendants (seed), and a worldwide and timeless impact (blessing). Abraham is living in Ur, near the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, at the time. God leads him to the land of Canaan, where Abraham settles and has two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.

There were three great crises in the life of Abraham, which help us to analyse his story.



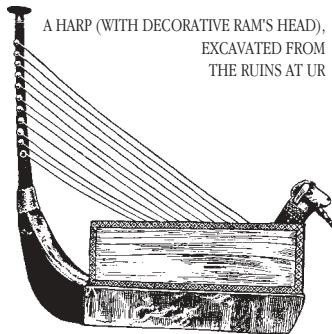
- i. The Call
- ii. The Covenant
- iii. The Cross.

I. THE CALL: Genesis 11:10-14:24

It is clear that Abraham was A CHOSEN MAN. Following a process of elimination in **Genesis 10**, it is clear that Ham and Japheth are mentioned and then left (**10:1,6&21**), in order to leave us free to consider the line of Shem. The descendants of Shem (the Semitic race) appear to have settled in North Assyria, on the borders of Armenia. Some of the Semites, including Terah, migrated south to Ur of the Chaldees - and there Terah became the father of three sons, Haran, Nahor and Abraham (**Genesis 11:26**).

CITY OF UR

Archaeology has shown that in the third millennium BC, Ur was a thriving metropolis. It was one of the richest and most powerful cities of Mesopotamia and for a time ruled the whole of Babylon. It was a place of high civilization and great learning. The inhabitants were of a peaceful disposition and devoted themselves to the pursuit of science



and art. They were, however, all idolaters, worshipping the celestial bodies, chiefly the moon (it would seem the city took its name from the moon as their moon-god was called Hurki).

A decisive factor in the importance of this city was its strategic location on the river Euphrates, which was navigable for sea-going ships as far as Ur. Thus the foundation of Ur's prosperity was foreign trade, which appears to have reached its zenith between 3000 and 1600 BC.

This information assures us that, as he grew up in this influential city, Abraham was not an uncultured individual. He was a highly-cultured, sophisticated man – an inhabitant of one of the largest centres of civilisation then known.

IDOLATRY

The Semites, who migrated from the north to Ur (probably for pastoral purposes), were not immune to the heathen practices around them. They too became idolaters: Joshua tells us that even Terah worshipped idols (**Joshua 24:2&15**). It is surprising to think that Abraham was brought up in the middle of these surroundings and subjected, through the impressionable days of his childhood, to this training ... and even more surprising that we are unable to trace anything that suggests he followed in the ways of his father!

Abraham's was **A PLANNED LIFE**. No life is by chance or without purpose - and it becomes especially clear that Abraham's steps were ordered by the Lord.

- i. God called him out of Ur, giving him no promise (**Acts 7:2-4**)
- ii. God called him out of Haran, giving him rich promise (**Genesis 12:1-5**)
- iii. God separated him from Lot, and promised him Canaan (**Genesis 13**)
- iv. God promised a son - Isaac - to perpetuate his name (**Genesis 15**)
- v. God gave him a token - a proof of the certainty of the promise (**Gen.17**)
- vi. God confirmed to Sarah this promise of a son (**Genesis 18**)
- vii. God fulfilled His design in the gift of Isaac, the promised seed (**Gen.21**)

TESTS

Test #1: Major Men of the Patriarch Era (Write in the correct name from the options on the left)

OPTIONS	NAME	DESCRIPTION
Abraham	_____	Father of the nation of Israel
Isaac	_____	Leader in Egypt
Jacob	_____	Father of Hebrew people
Joseph	_____	Second father of promise

Test #2: Story-line Summary (Fill in the blanks from memory)

ERA	FIGURE	LOCATION	STORYLINE SUMMARY
_____	_____	_____	Abraham is _____ by God to _____ a people to _____ God to the world.

Test #3: The Geography of the Patriarch Era (Mark the places, then draw arrows from Ur, where Abraham lived, to Haran - from Haran to Canaan - and from Canaan to Egypt, to represent the geographical movements of the Patriarch Era)



13. Made known through an interpreter (**Genesis 42:23; John 16:13&14**).
14. Became the salvation of his people by providing corn for them in Egypt (**Genesis 42&43; Matthew 1:21, etc.**).
15. Married a Gentile bride (**Genesis 41:45; Ephesians 5:25&26**).
16. God gave him sons which caused him to forget all the sorrow of the past (**Genesis 46:20; Isaiah 53:10**).
17. All was of God (**Genesis 45:8; Acts 2:23**).

This tremendous book of **Genesis**, that covers a history of approx. 2,400 years, and begins with the power of God demonstrated in Creation, ends with a great mourning because of the deaths of Jacob and Joseph. Closing with the words, "a coffin in Egypt," it reminds us of the portion of man as a result of his sin. The redeeming factor is that this is only the end of **Genesis** - not the end of the Bible record. Salvation, already promised and foreshadowed, is to come!

viii. God brought Abraham to Moriah to hand back the seed to the Giver (**Genesis 22**). This was the supreme goal. Though the events of **Genesis 22** constituted midnight from Abraham's point of view, yet it was really midday in the estimate of Jehovah. All along, the divine hand had been working on a beautiful piece of tapestry.

Abraham was a man with **A DIVINE CALL**.

(1) THE COMMAND IN THIS CALL.

The first call came to Abraham when he was in Ur of the Chaldees (**Genesis 11:27-32&Acts 7:2-4**). He, Terah, Lot and the women set out for the land of Canaan. Being a pastoral tribe, and having a multitude of cattle, naturally they looked for a country that met their requirements. They found this at Haran, 300 miles north of Ur.

HARAN

Haran was once a wealthy trading town, located on the main passage between Nineveh and Aleppo/Damascus. **Genesis 12:5** makes it plain that Abraham and his relatives had enjoyed a fair degree of prosperity during their time of residence in this town.

Terah died at Haran - and it appears that around this time, Nahor, Abraham's surviving brother, also moved up to Haran, bringing his idols with him. **Then the call of God came again to Abraham; this time it was more distinct, Genesis 12:1-5.**

This call came in 4 parts:

- (a) Get thee out of thy country
- (b) And from thy kindred
- (c) And from thy father's house
- (d) Unto a land that I will show thee.

What Abraham had to leave was well-defined (his country, kindred and father's house); where he was told to go to was pretty well undefined (a land that I will show thee). No wonder **Hebrews 11:8** puts it like this: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." This is God's way of testing faith.

But there is wisdom, gentleness and encouragement in this call. God does not go immediately to the painful heart of the issue - leaving the father's house - but gently prepares Abraham for that by loosing him first from his country, then from his kindred, and, ultimately, from the father's house. He gives him encouragements too.

(2) THE PROMISE ATTACHED TO THIS CALL.

Corresponding with His 4-part command, God gave Abraham a 4-part promise:

- (a) I will bless thee ... The Individual
 - (b) I will make thy name great ... The Family
 - (c) I will make of thee a great nation ... The Nation
 - (d) In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed ... The Race.
- [NB. clear correspondence between command and promise].

(3) THE RESPONSE TO THIS CALL.

Abraham reacted to the call and promise of God with:

• **Implicit Obedience.** "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him ..." (**Genesis 12:4**). We are not told of any complaints or questions, but only of his act. Note how Abraham's leaving of Haran is emphasised in such a variety of ways in **Genesis 12** to indicate how real and thorough his act of obedience was.

- "He departed" (**v4**);
- "went forth" (**v5**);
- "passed through" (**v6**);
- "removed" (**v8**);
- "journeyed" (**v9**).

• **Great Faith.** (cf. **Hebrews 11:8&9**). Nothing would have appeared more foolish in the eyes of the world than Abraham setting out with his caravan for an unknown land: yet through this action he became the greatest example of faith in God that history provides.

• **Tremendous Devotion.** Abraham went to the land of Canaan as a witness to the truth of monotheism (there is one God) among a people who were almost wholly polytheistic (many gods). Passing through Damascus and Shechem, the Lord appeared to him between Bethel and Ai: Abraham built an altar there.

The spiritual history of Abraham can be traced by the altars he raised/failed to raise. There was, for example, no record of an altar when he sinned and went down into Egypt. "Each step of real advance in the Divine life will involve an altar on which some dear fragment of the self-life has been offered: or a cairn beneath which some cherished idol has been buried."

(4) A SAD DEPARTURE FROM THIS CALL.

A famine in Canaan sparks off a loss of faith in Abraham. He goes "down" to Egypt for help. There are 7 steps in his declension:

- i. He acted without consulting God, **v10**.

Joseph. Jacob's sons, for the most part, have very little commitment to God's call on them as a nation. They sell Joseph as a slave, and he is taken to Egypt. Because of Joseph's righteousness, he rises to become a great leader in Egypt. During a severe famine, his family comes to Egypt for food, is reunited with Joseph, and as a result, enjoys peace and comfort. When Joseph dies, however, his people are enslaved for the next 400 years. This time of trial sharpens the spiritual hunger of the Hebrew people, and they cry out to God for deliverance.



A considerable portion of the book of Genesis is devoted to the story of Joseph. He is one of the few few men without a "but" in their lives. While Joseph was not one of the three 'covenant heads' of Israel (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), he is the link between Canaan and Egypt, and between the story of Genesis and Exodus (cf. **Genesis 50:26 & Exodus 1:6**). In addition to this, Joseph is a most amazing type of the Lord Jesus Christ - **probably the most perfect and full type in all of Scripture.** His life may be outlined as:

- i. Joseph the Son
- ii. Joseph the Slave
- iii. Joseph the Sovereign.

Adopting this view of the life of Joseph points us to the Beloved Son of God, who became a Bondslave and who, out of His great humiliation, was exalted to the throne. The parallels between Joseph and Jesus are undoubtedly many.

1. The Beloved Son (**Genesis 37:3; Matthew 3:17**).
2. Hated of his brethren (**Genesis 37:4&5; John 15:25**).
3. His words were not believed (**Genesis 37:8&10; Isaiah 53:1, John 3:12; 5:47**).
4. His kingship rejected (**Genesis 37:8; Luke 19:14**).
5. The conspiracy against him (**Genesis 37:18; Matthew 27:1**).
6. He was stripped (**Genesis 37:23; Matthew 27:28**).
7. He was tempted, but did not yield (**Genesis 39; Matthew 4:1-11**).
8. Two others bound with him - the one saved, the other destroyed (**Genesis 40; Luke 23:32-43**).
9. He was without guilt (**Genesis 40:15; John 8:46**).
10. He was released by the king (**Psalms 105:20; Acts 2:24**).
11. In him was perfect wisdom (**Genesis 41:39; Colossians 2:3**).
12. All power given to him (**Genesis 41:55; John 2:5, Matthew 28:18**).

(1) THE SUPPLANTER AT BEERSHEBA: Genesis 25-28.

Two prominent features here are **(a) THE BIRTHRIGHT; 25:19-34**, and **(b) THE BLESSING; 27&28**. The joint deceit of Rebekah and Jacob gave rise to the determination of Esau, and eventually resulted in Jacob departing for Haran.

(2) THE SERVANT AT HARAN: Genesis 29-31.

The two prominent facts are **(a) JACOB DECEIVED; 29-30:24**, and **(b) JACOB DECEIVING; 30:25-31**. Jacob entered into a Contract with Laban, but was Cheated. His Children are listed in **Genesis 29:31-30:24**. Laban's Cattle (**30:25-43**), Charge (**31:1-42**) and Covenant (**31:43-55**) are all mentioned in this section.

(3) THE SAINT AT HEBRON: Genesis 32-45.

Prominent among the facts presented about Jacob's life here are his **(a) DISCIPLESHIP; 32&33**, and His **(b) DISCIPLINE; 34-45**. The highpoint of his discipleship was the conflict at Peniel when he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord (**32:22-32**). **Whenever there is discipleship there will always be discipline**. This discipline comes to Jacob in various ways, e.g.

- i. The dishonour done to Dinah (**ch 34**)
- ii. The deaths of Rachel and Isaac (**ch 35**)
- iii. The supposed destruction of Joseph (**ch 37**)
- iv. The disgrace of Judah (**ch 38**)
- v. The departure of Benjamin (**ch 43**).

Given the type of discipline he was compelled to endure, it is hardly surprising that he feels "all these things are against me" (**Genesis 42:36**). What a delight it was, however, for him to later understand that all things had been working together for good. Without pain there is no gain.

(4) THE SEER IN EGYPT: Genesis 48&49.

Jacob pronounces THE PROPHETIC BLESSING **(a)** on the Two Sons of Joseph, **ch 48**, and **(b)** on the Twelve Sons, **ch 49**.

**4. JOSEPH:
LEADER IN EGYPT
(Genesis 37-50)**

Abraham's promises are accepted most keenly by Jacob's eleventh son,

ii. He plotted his own course, **v10**.

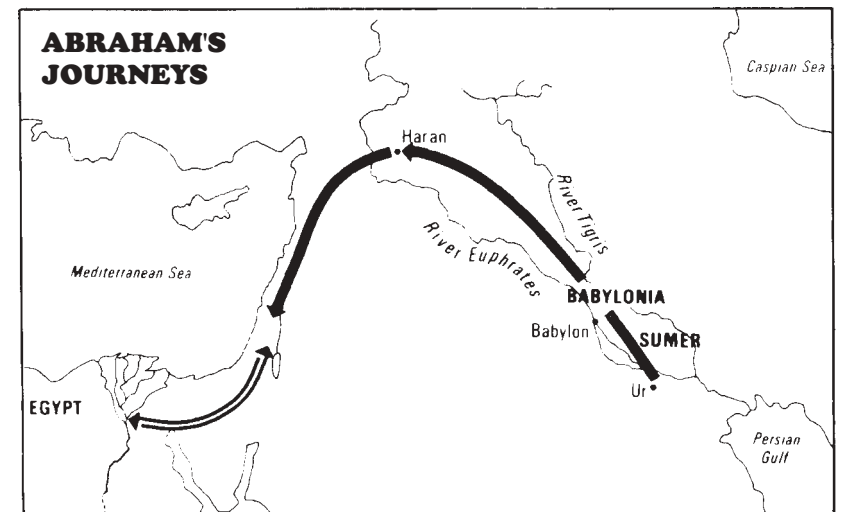
iii. He resorted to duplicity in order to carry out his plan, **v13**. He said that Sarah was his sister, which, according to a frequent use of the word in the Old Testament, was technically true. In fact, Sarah was his niece. But his intention was to deceive - and he must be judged on that basis. "The truth is spoken only when the intention is to convey it, and half a truth is ever the blackest lie."

iv. He allowed Egypt to eclipse God from his sight, (cf. **vs2&12**). God had said one thing; Abraham thinks another. Abraham trusted God with his whole life, but failed to trust Him with this one circumstance of it.

v. Abraham's worldly plan succeeded, **vs14&15**. The plan he laid worked! His life was saved - and Sarah was taken into the royal court.

vi. He became increasingly bogged down in his own deceitful scheme, **v16**.

vii. He was given a lecture on proper living by an idolatrous king and sent out of the country, **vs18&20**.



(5) A NEW START ON THE CALL.

Leaving Egypt a chastened, but wiser, man, Abraham goes:

• **Back to the Beginning.** He had learned that progress in the life of faith comes to a standstill as soon as you veer off the course of God's will. God did not reveal Himself to Abraham in Egypt, nor did Abraham build an altar there. Vision and worship are excluded by disobedience: the voice of God cannot fall on closed ears - neither can an unbelieving heart pray. Abraham's time in Egypt was symptomatic of "a saved soul and a lost life."

He discovers that blessing begins where blessing ended, **Genesis 13:1-4**. "And Abram went up out of Egypt Even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, ... Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD." Having got 'back on track', Abraham steps:

• **Forward into Freedom.** **Genesis 13** describes the strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot - and the separation of the ways between the respective parties. Lot chooses by sight, Abraham by faith. Lot took to the plains, Abraham to the hills. Those directions reflect their characters and histories: one sought ease and luxury; the other was prepared to climb and suffer.

The path of faith and separation always leads to freedom. As Abraham travels on the way of obedience, apparent loss is actual gain. He lost a part - Sodom ... but he got the whole - north, south, east and west.

Every step taken with God proves a step into a further, fuller life. After his full surrender to the Lord, Abraham (appropriately) pitches his tent in Hebron, meaning "fellowship."

(6) A VICTORIOUS PATH AFTER THE CALL.

Full surrender to God and fellowship with God brings victory. **Genesis 14** describes the victory Abraham had over four mighty kings from east of the Euphrates. This victorious path brings Abraham face to face with Melchizedek, king of Salem, and priest of the most High God; **Genesis 14:18-20** – a most wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, if not a pre-incarnation appearance of the Son of God (cf. **Psalms 110:4, Hebrews 7**)!

II. THE COVENANT: Genesis 15-21.

(1) THE SUBSTANCE OF IT, Genesis 15:1-5.

For protection and deliverance, the Lord promised that He would be a shield to Abraham; for provision and blessing, he had the Lord as his "exceeding great reward" (cf. **Genesis 14:21-24**).

To address Abraham's greatest problem (he was now 85 years of age - and childless), God pledges that He will provide him with a son.

The further one goes with God, the fuller the blessing becomes.

- At the beginning, Abraham received no promise;
- then there was the promise of a Seed (**Genesis 12**),

prosperous, and dies at an old age after having fathered two sons, Esau and Jacob.

We are not given the impression that Isaac was in the front rank of Bible saints (only once do we read of him building an altar) and no tribute is paid to him, either in Genesis, or in the rest of Scripture. However, he does stand before us as a type of the promised Messiah:

ISAAC'S LIKENESS TO JESUS

1. He was predicted long before he was born (cf. **Genesis 12:7, 15:4 with Isaiah 7:14**);
 2. He was supernaturally begotten (cf. **Genesis 18:12-14, Hebrews 11:11, Romans 4:19 with Matthew 1**);
 3. He was the "only" son in the sense that he was the only son of covenant (cf. **Genesis 22:2 with John 3:16**). There is a contrast between the first "child" of Abraham, Isaac, and the first "seed", Ishmael (**Romans 9:7**). Isaac marks the point of divergence between the "natural" and "covenant" lines.
 4. He was the sacrificial lamb (cf. **Genesis 22 with Isaiah 53:7**).
- It is in these facts and features, rather than in his personal character, that we must look for the real value of the record of Isaac's life.

**3. JACOB:
FATHER OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL
(Genesis 25:19-34; 27-50)**

The promises given to Abraham are passed through Isaac to Jacob, Isaac's youngest son. Jacob begins life as a conniving scoundrel, however, through a series of miracles and other encounters with God, he changes. Jacob has 12 sons, and the promises of Abraham are passed down to them all as a family. While Abraham is the father of the Hebrew people, Jacob is the father of the nation of Israel (Israelites—the new name given to Jacob at the Jabbok); each of his sons becomes the father of one of the 12 tribes that comprise the nation of Israel.

The life of Jacob can be divided into four parts, each associated with a particular place, and with two outstanding features in each. He is:

- i. The Supplanter (at Beersheba, meaning "Well of the Oath");
- ii. The Servant (at Haran, meaning "Very dry, parched");
- iii. The Saint (at Hebron, meaning "Fellowship");
- iv. The Seer (in Egypt, meaning "Land of depression").

(3) THE SECRET OF VICTORY.

Abraham believed and obeyed God. When he set out with Isaac for the mount, he said to his young men, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (**Genesis 22:5**). This proves that Abraham believed that "God was able to raise him up, even from the dead" (**Hebrews 11:19**). He went up that mountain, believing in a resurrection ... what immense faith!

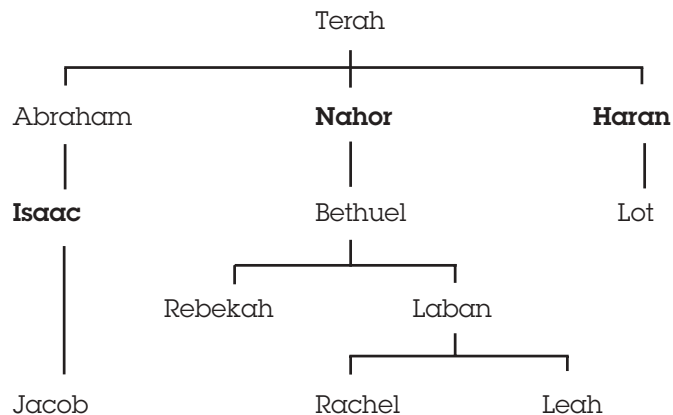
(4) THE RANGE OF THE BLESSING; Genesis 22:15-19.

Individual, family, national, and universal blessing is promised.

(5) THE LINE OF THE PROMISE; Genesis 22:20-24.

A genealogy is given to introduce us to Rebekah who was, along with Isaac, destined to perpetuate the chosen line. (The story of how they were drawn together is reserved for the fuller treatment of **Genesis 24**).

THE FAMILY TREE



**2. ISAAC:
SECOND FATHER OF PROMISE
(Genesis 21-28:9)**

Isaac becomes the second father of promise as the fulfilment of Abraham's promises are passed down to him. He witnesses several major miracles during his life. He lives in the land of Abraham, becomes

- followed by that of a Sphere (**Genesis 13**),
- and now that of a Son (**Genesis 15**). The promise is building!

(2) THE SEAL AND ASSURANCE OF IT, Genesis 15:8-13.

When covenants were made at that time, they were affirmed and validated by the death of an animal. If the covenant was deemed sufficiently important, a number of animals were sacrificed. **Genesis 15:8** records Abraham's query to God when the Lord revealed the nature of the covenant to him: "And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

A SPECIAL COVENANT

God condescends to make a special covenant with Abraham. In those days, when a covenant was made, the animal was divided in half - and the two parties entering into the covenant passed between the divided sections of the animal. Therefore one party was saying to the other, "If you fail to keep your side of the covenant, may what has happened to this animal happen to you!"

God instructs Abraham to divide the animals (**Genesis 15:10**). Had God and Abraham walked through this divided sacrifice together, it would have been a bilateral covenant: the fulfilling of the covenant would have depended on both parties living up to their respective responsibilities. That would have been a tragedy here, for man has always failed to fulfil the requirements and perform the will of God. However, when the time for walking through the covenant came, a deep sleep fell on Abraham. The symbol of God, in the form of a smoking furnace, passed between the divided sacrifice; thus God walked through by Himself! That made it a unilateral covenant and signified that the responsibility for the fulfilling of the promises regarding Abraham's seed and the land that seed would possess now rested entirely upon God. He made the promise, He passed between the pieces, He takes the responsibility for its fulfilment, He gave the promised seed, and He takes all the glory.

(3) THE SCOPE OF IT, Genesis 15:13-21.

It embraces the whole of Israel's history up to the time of the captivity. Reference is made to:

- (i) The Egyptian Bondage, **v13**;
- (ii) The Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings, **v14**; and
- (iii) The Possession of Canaan, **vs18-21**.

(4) THE RECEPTION OF IT, Genesis 15:6.

"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." This is one of the greatest verses in the Bible - "one of its foundation stones; one of its seed plots."

Out of 14 words, 3 key ones occur for the first time - and they immediately pass into the realm of great theology. They are:

- i. Believed
- ii. Counted
- iii. Righteousness ... the PATH of SAVING FAITH! (cf. **Rom.4**)

(5) THE COMPROMISE OF IT, Genesis 16.

Abraham felt he could help God to fulfil this covenant. Even though God had promised that He would give Abraham a son, a seed and a land, **Genesis 16** chronicles a tragic episode in Abraham's life when he took Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, for the purpose of producing a male heir. It was a lapse of faith - or an act of ignorance. Either way, Ishmael, (the result of that union between Abraham and Hagar), was born in a manner that was not in accordance with God's plan. Due to the fact that Abraham had attempted to fulfil God's covenant through the energy of the flesh, 13 years of silence ensue (between **Genesis 16:16 and Genesis 17:1**). "Fleshly haste frustrates its own end and postpones promised blessing" (W.G. Scroggie).

(6) FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THE COVENANT; Genesis 17.

1. At the age of 99, God reaffirms to Abraham that His covenant with him would be fulfilled (**17:1&2**) ... in an "exceeding" and "everlasting" fashion (**17:2,6,7,8&19**).
2. Abram's name is changed to Abraham, meaning "father of a great multitude" - and Sarai's to Sarah, meaning "princess" (**17:5&15**).

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF NAME

Commenting on the changing of Abram to Abraham, Donald Grey Barnhouse has said: "In Hebrew God added one letter to Abram's name, the letter formed by breathing. In Hebrew, the name Jehovah is formed by the five vowels, I,E,O,U,A, with a twice-repeated H. The word for spirit, which means 'breath,' is ruach in Hebrew, which is pronounced by expelling air. God was adding His name to that of Abram."

3. God reveals Himself to Abraham using the name "the Almighty God" - El-Shaddai (**17:1**). John Phillips has defined this name as: "He is the strong one in the sense conveyed by the word Shaddai ('the breast,' the common Old Testament word for a woman's breast). God is Shaddai because He nourishes, gives strength, satisfies, pours Himself into the life of the believer. He is God all-sufficient."
4. While the covenant of God would be established with Abraham through Isaac (**17:19&21**), Ishmael would be blessed by God, accord-

ing to Abraham's desire (cf. **17:18 with 17:20**). However, this blessing of Ishmael would carry a heavy price for Abraham's descendants. Donald Grey Barnhouse notes: "The blessing of Ishmael has carried with it the most terrible results of the centuries. Out of Ishmael came two horrible things - both of them great hindrances to the people of God. For out of Ishmael came the Arab race, which today bars the advance of Israel, the rightful owner of the land which God swore should belong to Isaac and his descendants. And from Ishmael came **Islam** which is the strongest threat to the advance of Christianity the world has ever seen."

SUMMARY ... CHS.18-21

- Genesis 18:** Three visitors welcomed (including the Lord Himself) and Abraham's intercession for Sodom.
- Genesis 19:** The destruction of Sodom; the salvation of Lot and his daughters; the origin of Moab and Ammon - tribes which were to prove a constant snare to Israel (cf. **Numbers 25**).
- Genesis 20:** Abraham and King Abimelech. An old sin resurfaces.
- Genesis 21:** Isaac is born; Hagar and Ishmael leave. Sarah's demand that Hagar and Ishmael should be sent away ran counter to custom: Abraham needs a word from God before he is willing to agree. A study of **Galatians 4:24ff** will show that this rift was inevitable.

III. THE CROSS: Genesis 22.

Abraham and Sarah waited for 25 years before the promise of a son was fulfilled. Now comes the ultimate test (test is the meaning of the word "tempt" in **Genesis 22:1**).

(1) THE TERMS OF GOD'S COMMAND; Genesis 22:1&2.

- a. What? ... take and offer a burnt offering.
- b. Whom? ... thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest.
- c. When? ... now.
- d. Where? ... Mount Moriah.

This was a journey of about 50 miles: it took three days (**v4**). Mt. Moriah was one of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem now stands, possibly the temple hill itself (cf. **2 Chronicles 3:1**).

(2) THE MEASURE OF ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE.

Genesis 22:3 makes it clear that Abraham's obedience was absolute: all that God commanded, he did.