

THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL

LESSON #6

CHRONICLES OF
REDEMPTION

The Birth of Israel

Genesis 12-50

THEMES

▶ **God:**

- Is sovereign—God ordained, guided, and preserved Israel, the channel through which He would redeem the world.
- Is all-knowing—He saw and judged the behavior of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah even though they disregarded His authority over their lives.
- Is holy—all sin is offensive to Him. Though men reject God, they still rightfully belong to Him, and He holds them responsible for their sin.
- Is Truth, and His Word is true—God said He would show Abraham a land, and God gave him Canaan. God said He would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and He did. After waiting twenty-five years, God fulfilled His long-anticipated promise to Abraham and gave him Isaac.

▶ **Sin:**

- Blinds the minds of men to their spiritual condition before God and the coming day of judgment.
- Will be judged by God. ALL sin will be judged.

▶ **Faith:**

- Is neither wishful thinking nor a feeling. Rather, it is an attitude of complete confidence in the object of its belief.
- Includes the elements of knowledge, belief, and obedience.
- Is displayed by obedience. Abraham initially demonstrated his confidence in God when he left his country. At God's command, Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Faith, not Abraham's obedient behavior, was the basis by which God declared him to be righteous.

Redemption:

- God's promise of a future Redeemer continues to pass from generation to generation through chosen men, each forming a link in the chain connecting the original promise given in Eden to its fulfillment in the birth of the Redeemer. The divinely established nation of Israel would become God's channel of redemption to the world.
- The Abrahamic Covenant prophetically outlines the future for the nation of Israel. The three components of this promise—a land, a nation, and a worldwide blessing—are traced throughout the Bible to their ultimate fulfillment. The blessing given to all the families of the earth would come through the *Seed* (Gen. 22:18), a direct reference to the coming Jewish Messiah.
- The redemptive principle of substitution is stressed in God's provision of a ram that died in the place of Isaac.

INTRODUCTION

We continue to follow God's unfolding plan of world redemption. Until this time, God worked primarily through _____ such as Seth, Enoch, and Noah. Now He will establish a _____ as the primary instrument to work out His plan in world affairs. This nation is _____. The following lesson covers the remaining forty chapters of Genesis and spans approximately 360 years of world history. To simplify the great amount of text, we will highlight key narratives most pertinent to the purpose of our course.

After the events at Babel, a new beginning is marked by the life of _____, a descendant of Shem. He is identified as the father of the Jewish nation Israel as well as the father of God's faithful followers throughout all generations (cf. Gal. 3:29b). Though Abraham lived 4,000 years ago, he is still remembered for his great faith and is the only man in the Bible called *the friend of God* (cf. 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23).

Abraham grew up in the pagan city of Ur, located in Mesopotamia not too far from Babel. Modern archeological discoveries near Baghdad in Iraq confirm that Ur was a culture advanced in _____ and the arts. Though descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the people had clearly rejected the God of Noah for idolatrous worship of heavenly bodies. In fact, Abraham's father, Terah, *served other gods* (cf. Josh. 24:2). God called Abraham away from his idolatrous homeland. When he left Ur, his wife Sarah and nephew Lot accompanied him (cf. Gen. 11:27-32).

1

The Promise of a Nation: The Life of Abraham



Read Genesis 12:1-3

▶ GOD' PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Speaking directly to Abraham, God made a _____ (binding promise) which had both temporal and eternal significance. This Abrahamic Covenant involved three essential parts:



- 1 A _____: **"Go forth from your country...to the land which I will show you" (12:1).**
Abraham was to journey from Ur to Canaan, a land which God promised He would give to Abraham and his descendants as a possession (cf. Gen. 12:7; Acts 7:2-5).
- 2 A _____: **"And I will make you a great nation" (12:2).**
Abraham was to become the father of many descendants who would grow into the great nation of Israel. This nation would become the channel through which God would redeem the world.
- 3 A _____: **"And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (12:3).**
One of Abraham's descendants, referred to in the New Testament as Abraham's *Seed*, would be the promised Redeemer. From Abraham, and through the nation Israel, would come the Jewish Messiah –the *Seed* Who would bring blessing to all the earth (cf. Gen. 22:18; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:16).

Like God's promise to Noah, the fulfillment of God's covenant to Abraham rested with _____ alone. God would give the land, bring the nation into existence, and bless the earth by sending the Redeemer through the descendants of Abraham. He alone would guard the covenant by protecting Abraham and the nation of Israel until the promise's ultimate fulfillment (Gen. 12:3).

NOTES:



Read Genesis 12:4-5

Clearly, Abraham needed a son in order for God's covenant to be fulfilled. Yet although Abraham was to remain childless for another twenty-five years, so confident was his faith in God that he responded as though the child were already born.

This kind of faith is not natural. Rather, it is supernatural—a _____ from God—which allows the invisible to be clearly seen and the future to become a present reality (cf. Heb. 11:1). Biblical faith is not an irrational, blind leap in the dark. Rather, it rests squarely upon the _____ of a trustworthy God which He alone is able to fulfill.

3 The result of his faith:

- **“...and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (15:6).**

When Abraham responded to God in faith, God changed his status before Him. From then on, he possessed a different relationship with God—a *right* relationship—which he had not previously enjoyed. This righteousness came through his belief in God alone. God saw his _____ and credited it to him as _____. God now saw Abraham as righteous.

▶ THE BURNING OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH:

Abraham had many experiences in the land of Canaan, now modern-day Israel. God continued to prosper Abraham and increase his wealth to the point that he and his nephew Lot had to separate from one another in order to graze their vast flocks and herds. With the whole land before them, Lot chose the most fertile region for himself. He settled close to the city of _____ (Gen. 13:1-13).

The account of the destruction of the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is an interlude in the life of Abraham. When the Lord again appeared to Abraham and revealed His intention to destroy the cities because of their great wickedness, Abraham feared for Lot and pled for his life (cf. Gen. 18:1, 16-33). Through the dramatic events which followed, Abraham observed the _____ of God upon man's sinfulness, but he also saw God's immense compassion and _____ toward man in His treatment of Lot.

NOTES:



Read Genesis 19:1-28

1 God heard the outcry:

- ***“And the Lord said, ‘The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know’” (18:20-21).***

God did not need to perform an on-sight inspection to discover the wickedness of Sodom. But in keeping with His just nature, He sent two messengers (angels) to Sodom in order to confirm what He already knew.

2 God observed the sin:

- ***“Please turn aside into your servant’s house...” (19:2).***

Because Lot knew the sin of the city, he was reluctant to allow God’s messengers to stay outside unprotected in the city square.

- ***“The men of the city...both young and old, all the people from every quarter...” (19:4).***

The homosexuality of Sodom, remembered today as *sodomy*, was pervasive within the city—“*from every quarter*” literally overrunning it—“*...both young and old.*” Homosexuality is a sin because it is a sexual perversion which violates the Biblical pattern for _____ introduced by God in Eden (cf. Gen. 2:22-24; Rom. 1:26-27; Jude 7). Though a culture may tolerate homosexuality or any other sin, right and wrong behavior is defined by God alone, not by popular consensus or majority rule.

- ***“Now behold, I have two daughters...do to them whatever you like...” (19:8).***

Though elsewhere Lot is described as a righteous man who opposed the sins of Sodom, Lot’s judgment here was severely compromised by his association with the surrounding vile culture (cf. 2 Pet. 2:6-8). “*Bad company corrupts good morals*” (1 Cor. 15:33).

3 God displayed His grace:

- ***“Whom else have you here” (19:12).***

Like Noah, Lot faced scorn when he warned of coming judgment. Like the people of Noah’s day, the sons-in-law of Lot were thoroughly absorbed in their culture and could not see their approaching doom. The clear and gracious _____ of God was taken as a joke (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14).

- ***“But he (Lot) hesitated. So the men seized his hand...for the compassion of the Lord was on upon him; and they brought them out...” (19:16).***

Lot’s choice to live in Sodom created a spiritual lethargy which paralyzed him. Without the prevailing _____ of God, which literally *seized his hand* and led him out, Lot would have perished with the rest.

4

God judged the cities:

- ***“Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire...” (19:24).***

As in Noah’s day, God’s judgment on the two cities came swiftly—and the inhabitants of the cities were likewise unprepared.



Luke 17:28-29

“In the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.”

One of the awful characteristics of sin is that it _____ the mind into believing all is well when it is not (cf. Eph. 4:17-19). Judgment appears sudden only because it overtakes the complacent and self-deceived soul.



Proverbs 4:19

“The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.”

- ***“But his wife...looked back...” (19:26).***

Though Lot’s wife had the same revelation of God’s will as her husband, though she fled with her family, her backward glance betrayed a heart still tied to Sodom. She is like many who go along with God’s people, but in the end find that love for the world and pleasure outweigh their love for God and truth. Her blatant _____ to the clear warning of God exposed a sinful heart, and looking back, she was left behind forever.

5

God revealed His faithfulness:

- ***“Now Abraham rose early in the morning...and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah...and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace. Thus it came about...that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow...” (19:27-29).***

2

The Establishment of a Nation: The Life of Isaac

It had been many years since Abraham's first encounter with God, yet he continued to wait for the promised _____. He understood that without an _____ the fulfillment of God's covenant-promise would never be realized. Aged and beyond their own ability to produce children, Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands and determined to have a son through Sarah's servant. This was an acceptable custom of the day whereby a childless wife might obtain an heir for her husband. Nonetheless, it was unacceptable to God for He intended to teach Abraham that there is _____ too difficult for Him (cf. Gen. 18:14). Consequently God rejected Ishmael, the ill-gotten son, as Abraham's heir (cf. Gen. 16:1-16; 21:8-21).

▶ HIS MIRACULOUS BIRTH:

- ***"Sarah your wife shall bear you a son" (17:19).***

Approximately twenty-five years after leaving Ur, and thirteen years after Ishmael's birth, God revealed that the promised child would come from Sarah's own body. Abraham laughed when he heard this and said to himself, *"Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"* (Gen. 17:17). So the Lord told Abraham to name the child _____, which means *he laughs* (Gen. 17:19; 18:9-15).



Read Genesis 21:1-7

- ***"So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age" (21:2).***

God did what he said He _____. Abraham did what God said He _____. God did what no one else _____. Since God is the Source of life, this would not be difficult for Him.

Romans 4:18-21



"In hope against hope [Abraham] believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations... And without becoming weak in faith, he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief...being fully assured that what He had promised, He was also able to perform."



Read Genesis 22:1-8

▶ HIS DIVINE TEST:

- ***“Take now your son, your only son...and offer him” (22:2).***

The staggering request to sacrifice Isaac, who was now at least twenty years old, was a severe test of Abraham's faith in God's promise to him. Isaac was intrinsically tied to God's plan and promise for all future generations (cf. Gen 21:12). Yet he was to be sacrificed as a burnt offering and totally consumed on the altar.

- ***“So Abraham rose early in the morning...and went to the place of which God had told him” (22:3).***

Abraham's faith rested in the _____ of God and was demonstrated by obedience. Like Noah, Abraham's obedience was:

- 1 Immediate:** He did not _____ in order to weigh alternatives.
- 2 Complete:** He did _____ God required of Him. Partial obedience is always disobedience.
- 3 Without challenge:** He did not _____ with God or question His purposes.
- 4 Observable:** Abraham's _____ were in harmony with his belief. There have always been those who _____ they believe God, but their actions contradict their words (cf. Titus 1:16).

- ***“And Abraham said to his young men...‘I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you” (22:5).***

How could Isaac have returned if he was to be consumed on the altar?



Hebrews 11:17-19

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac...
He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead.”*

Abraham was so certain that God would miraculously preserve Isaac's life that he told his servants they both would return.

- **“God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering” (22:8).**

Although Abraham may not have understood what God was about to do, he was _____ that He would somehow provide.



Read Genesis 22:9-19

▶ HIS LIFE-SAVING SUBSTITUTE:

Isaac submitted to his father’s authority by allowing himself to be bound. Once bound, Isaac could not save himself from death. If he was to be saved, help must come from without. Graciously, God provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac. The _____ died, and _____ lived. This is another illustration of the important principle of substitution first introduced when God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins in Eden, and seen later in Abel’s acceptable offering.

- **“..Now I know that you fear God” (22:12).**

Withholding nothing, Abraham abandoned that which was most dear to his heart and trusted God alone to provide. He named the place *Yahweh yireh*, meaning in Hebrew *the Lord will provide*. God affirmed Abraham’s _____ by restating that His promise to Abraham would be fulfilled through Isaac.

3

The Expansion of a Nation: The Life of Jacob

Thus far, we have traced the progress of God’s promise of a Redeemer through the generations from Adam to _____, Seth to _____, Noah to _____, and from his descendants to _____. The promise continues to pass from generation to generation through chosen men, each forming a link in the chain connecting the original promise given in Eden to its future fulfillment in the birth of the Redeemer. The divinely established nation of Israel will become God’s channel of redemption to the world.



Psalm 33:11

*“The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of His heart from generation to generation.”*

▶ THE PROMISE PASSED FROM ABRAHAM TO ISAAC:

- ***“And it came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac” (Gen. 25:11).***

The blessing here refers to the blessing of God's _____ with Abraham now passing from father to son.

▶ THE PROMISE PASSED FROM ISAAC TO JACOB:

From Isaac, the promise passed to _____, Isaac's second-born son. Departing from the typical order of the first-born receiving the inheritance, God chose that Jacob would inherit this blessing even before his birth (cf. Gen. 25:23; cf. Rom. 9:10-12). Later, God spoke to Jacob directly...



Genesis 28:13-14

“I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and your descendants. Your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth...and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

God changed Jacob's name to _____, the name of the nation that would become God's chosen channel of blessing to the world (Gen. 32:28).

▶ THE PROMISE PASSED FROM JACOB TO JUDAH:

Jacob had twelve sons from whom God would build the nation of Israel. Each son would head one of the twelve _____ of Israel. Their names were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin, in order of age (Gen. 35:23-26). Although Judah was the son through whom the Redeemer's lineage is traced, it is Joseph who played a larger role in the developing nation at this time (cf. Luke 3:33).



Read Genesis 50:15-26

When the entire account of Joseph's life is taken into consideration, God's sovereign preservation of _____ is the central theme. From beginning to end, God was active in the life of Joseph. He used slavery, imprisonment, and even famine as a display of His sovereign will in the affairs of men (cf. Ps. 105:16). Throughout Joseph's life, and at every turn, he was plagued by the destructive schemes of those seeking his harm. But God was with him. Joseph understood this, for he told his brothers: "*You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good **in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive***" (Gen. 50:20). God over-ruled every negative circumstance to bring about the fulfillment of His purpose for and through Israel, His channel of world redemption.

CONCLUSION

Consider the magnitude and comprehensive nature of God's plan for humanity:

As _____ replaced Abel while Cain was rejected, and _____ alone found grace escaping the flood, as _____ was singled out as the only line through whom the Redeemer would come, and from all the descendants of Shem only _____ was called the father of Israel, so _____ was chosen from all nations to become God's channel of blessing to the world. Each, through no merit of his own, became the focus of God's grace and sovereign choice to take part in His unfolding plan of world redemption.

Questions

1. What are the three essential parts of God's promise to Abraham?

2. Why was the fulfillment of God's promise of a nation humanly impossible to Abraham and Sarah?

3. How is God's promise to bring blessing to all the families of the earth related to His promise in Genesis 3:15?

4. What is faith? What were the evidences of Abraham's faith?

5. What is righteousness? On what basis did God declare Abraham righteous?

6. What was the root cause of the wickedness displayed by the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah?

7. Why does the Bible teach that homosexuality is sin?

8. What aspects of God's character can be seen in the account of Sodom and Gomorrah?

9. Why was Lot's wife left behind?

Questions

10. What warning does God intend the account of Sodom and Gomorrah to bring to modern man?

11. Why could Isaac be called a *miracle child*?

12. What were the far-reaching implications of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?

13. How is the concept of substitution displayed in the account of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac?

14. How did the choices of Cain, Noah, Lot, Lot's wife, and Abraham reveal their object of devotion?

15. What role did Jacob's sons play in the expansion of God's channel for world redemption?

16. What grand purpose for the nation of Israel did God accomplish through Joseph's life?
