

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH
BIBLE STUDY – CHRISTIANITY 101
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2025

Stan Campbell, *Bible to Go: Genesis to Revelation in One Hour*, (New York: Faith Words, 2006)

The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)

And the next major story we come to is of the Tower of Babel, where a community of people are determined to build a tower into the heavens in order to “make a name for ourselves” (Genesis 11:4), and ostensibly (supposedly) to share God’s glory. But God “confused their language” so they can no longer communicate with one another, and they scatter to various parts of the world. So, although we’ve only just begun our journey through the Bible, it’s already filled with action. And from here, the pace just picks up. Next comes the era of the patriarchs.

From Mesopotamia to Israel

So far, the action of the Bible has taken place in the “fertile crescent” of the Middle East. The Garden of Eden was located near the confluence (coming together) of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Genesis 2:10-14). Noah’s ark came to rest on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:4), believed to be in what is now Turkey. The city of Babylon (in modern Iraq) has already been established and the Tower of Babel was nearby. So, when does the action of the Bible shift to the land of Israel? Right now.

Abraham (Genesis 12-23)

A resident of the Mesopotamian city of Ur is named Abram. One day, when he is seventy-five years old, Abram received a call from God to leave his home and go to a land God will show him. This is certainly an unprecedented (extraordinary) and curious occurrence, yet we are told “So Abram left” (Genesis 12:4). He travels with his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, his household, his servants, and his flocks. Abra(ha)m continues to be one of the Bible’s preeminent examples of faith, yet he is not without his faults. Twice when he feels threatened by foreign powers, he passed off his wife, as his sister, allowing her to be added to other men’s harems (a palace section where

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH
BIBLE STUDY – CHRISTIANITY 101
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2025

Stan Campbell, *Bible to Go: Genesis to Revelation in One Hour*, (New York: Faith Words, 2006)

king's wives lives). But both times God protects her and returns her, honor intact, to Abram (Genesis 12:10-20, 20:1-7).

Still Abram is no coward. When Lot is kidnapped by a coalition of kings, Abram leads a rescue party to get him back. And when a major disagreement breaks out between the servants of Abram and the servant of Lot, it is Uncle Abe who settles the matter by giving Lot his choice of land on which to settle. (Lot unwisely chooses the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah). As Abram continues to act in faith, God continues to add to what He has promised him. God promised to make Abram's name great, to create from him a great nation, to give him all the land he could see in every direction, and to give him descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. And as one sign of His covenant with Abram, God changes Abram's name to Abraham: "father of many."

The problem is that Abraham doesn't yet have a child, and he and Sarah (whose name is also changed by God) are aging fast. So, when Abraham reaches eighty-six (and Sarah is only ten years younger), Sarah has him sleep with her servant, Hagar, in order to produce an offspring. The resulting child, Ishmael, creates friction within the household. God also reaffirms that Abraham's child is to come from Sarah (Gen. 17:19). And sure enough, when Abraham is a hundred and Sarah is ninety, she gives birth to their son and names him Isaac (Gen. 21:1-3). Through Isaac the Jewish nation will come to be...and through Ishmael, the Arab people. Abram, whose original name meant "exalted father," does indeed become Abraham, the "father of many," and is now revered by Christians, Jews, and Muslims worldwide.

By the grace of God, Next Week's Focus on 3/8/2025 are:

Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. chapters 18-19); Isaac (Genesis chapters 21-22, 24); Jacob (Genesis 25:29-34, 27-33); and Joseph (Genesis 37, and chapters 39-50).