

The Book of Genesis

The Story

Abraham and Sarah

Wednesday 23 June 2021

6:30 PM-8:00 PM

Opening Prayer

Reading Assignment – Genesis Chapters 12 - 20

Background

We have now completed the first part of this three-part story. We have witnessed the creation, and the primeval world of earth with a focus on its human inhabitants. We have been told about the extensive sin on the people of the antediluvian age, and God's determination to destroy all creatures that lived upon the earth by a great flood, except the members of one family and pairs of all the animals to replenish the earth after the flood. As Noah exits the Ark, God blesses him and his sons, and establishes a covenant with Noah. Under this covenant, people are given permission to eat meat for the first time. All animals are acceptable as food, and there are no unclean animals. The only prohibition is that humans may not consume blood. To do so is to give up your own blood in death. God, for his part, pledges to never destroy the earth again by water.

Part two tells the stories of Abraham and Sarah, their descendants and their relatives. Abram, one of the many descendants of Noah lived in the city of Ur, in Mesopotamia. But his father, Terah, moved the family, including Abram and his wife Sarai, and Lot, his grandson and nephew to Abram north and west to Haran. And it is in Haran that God is first recorded speaking with Abram. He is told by God to leave his father's tent and go to the land of Canaan, which he does along with his wife and nephew.

Abraham and Sarah represent another opportunity for humanity to be redeemed from the life of sin, which it has quickly returned to after the flood. They will be parents to a new people who will be blessed by God. Can this new people love God more than the pleasures of sin? And now we continue with the amazing story of Abraham, Sarah and their adventures under the care of God.

Questions to Consider

1. Why Abram/Abraham?
2. Abraham was described as an Aramean. What does that mean? He is also called a Hebrew. What does that mean? Was Abraham ethnically, culturally, or religiously Jewish?
3. In Egypt, Abram denies that Sarai is his wife (12:10-17). Is this the act of an ethical person? Explain.
4. Abram rescues Lot and his family from warring kings, and is blessed by Melchizedek (14:17-20), whom we met in the Book of Hebrews. What do you remember about Melchizedek?
5. God has been guiding and encouraging Abram and in Chapter 15 God makes the first of two covenant statements. Discuss.
6. Chapter 16 brings us to the birth of Ismael, the first-born son of Abram. Sarai does not like it. He allows Sarai to drive the boy and his mother away. Abram once again does not show himself to be very praiseworthy. Discuss.
7. What is the central point of Chapter 18 for you?
8. What is the central point of Chapter 19 for you?
9. In Chapter 20 Abraham proves himself deceitful and self-serving once more. Discuss. What do you think of Abimelech in this story? Was a trap set for him?

Closing Prayer