

# SERMON SERIES

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## STORY OF FAITH: WEEK 5

As the Story of Faith progresses, we see God continually working to fulfill His promise in Genesis 3:15 – that the woman’s offspring would one day crush the head of the serpent. God preserved Noah’s family during the flood (Genesis 6), and from Noah’s son, Shem, we have a descendant named Abram (later changed to Abraham) who would be the recipient of an astonishing promise.

**READ GENESIS 12:1-3, 7**

Notice that there was nothing outstanding about Abram initially. In fact, he even came from a family that worshiped other gods (see Joshua 24:2). Unlike the people at Babel, however, Abraham was minding his own business and was not trying to make a great name for himself. (Perhaps this is why God chose him?) Yet in Genesis 12, God took the initiative and made a promise to Abram to make his name great, to bless and protect him, to give him descendants and land, and to bless the world through his offspring. This was a promise of the coming Messiah.

All of this must have sounded a bit much for a 75-year-old man who had no children, no home, and no land. He and his wife, Sarai (later changed to Sarah), were wandering, nomadic shepherds. But as the story of redemption unfolds, we discover that God often uses unlikely people and unlikely ways to accomplish His purposes. (Challenge: memorize Isaiah 55:8-9).

God repeats His promise to Abraham through a strange—but important—covenant ritual in Genesis 15. According to one theology textbook, “A covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their agreement” (Grudem, 1994, p.515). Sometimes covenants were conditional and depended on human obedience to the agreement (i.e., if you do this, then I will do that). Other times they were unconditional (which meant God would uphold His end of the bargain no matter what). This covenant with Abraham was unconditional.

It is not until chapter 21 that God fulfills His promise of a child through Sarah. Isaac is born. God was building Abraham’s family tree, and Isaac would now be the heir of God’s covenantal promise to bless the whole earth.

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## GENESIS 11:27-12:9 ESV

### *Terah's Descendants (Genesis 11:27-32)*

27 Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. 28 Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. 30 Now Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. 32 The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

### **The Call of Abram (Gen. 12:1-3)**

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So, he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. 9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE QUESTIONS

on your own, with family, or with your small group

Read Genesis 12:1 – in your own words, summarize what God told Abram to do in this verse. How would you have responded?

Although we are not specifically told, why do you suppose God chose Abram? Does that affect your idea of being "chosen"?

Genesis 15:6 says that Abram believed God despite the promise appearing impossible. (See Luke 1:37 and Hebrews 11:1). Why is this type of faith important in Abram's life? How about in your life?

In Genesis 15:6 it says Abram's faith was credited to him as righteousness. What does that mean?

Read the covenant story in Genesis 15:1-21. Focus on verse 17. Who is passing between the animal pieces? Why is that significant?

Read Genesis 12:4.

How old was Abram when God promised him descendants?

Read Genesis 21:5.

How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?

How many total years did Abraham wait for the promise to be fulfilled?

How should that affect your patience and prayer life?