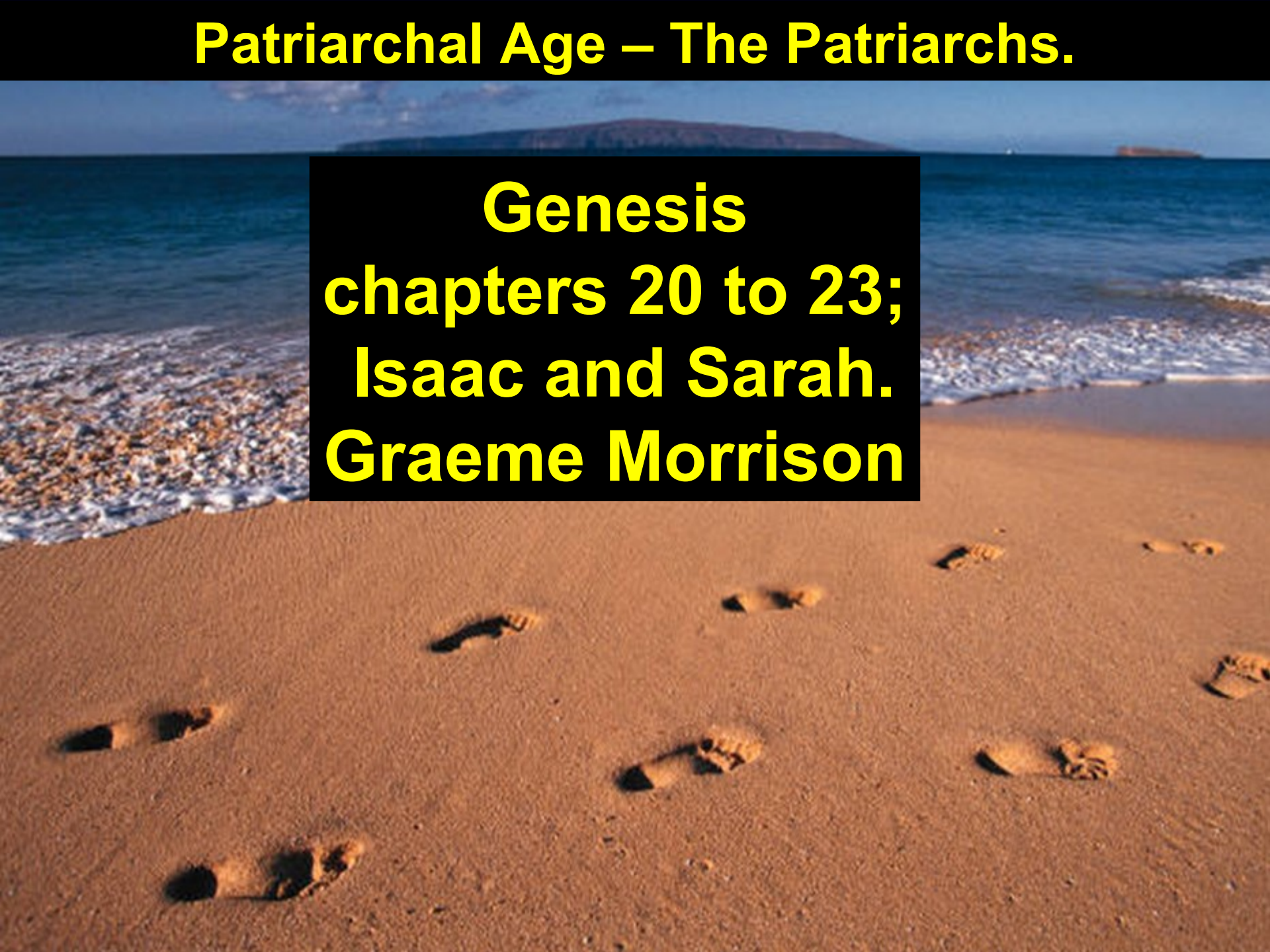
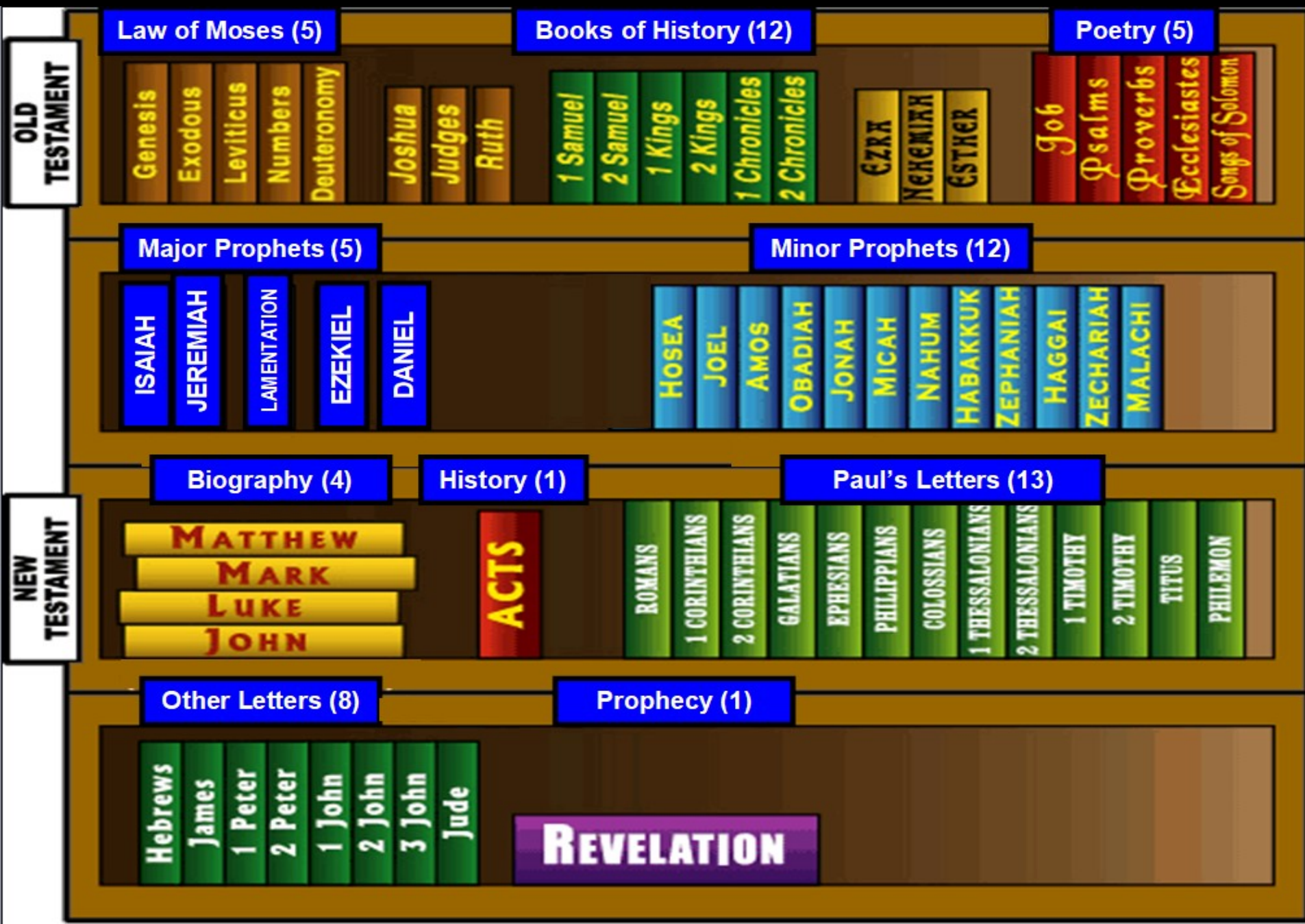


# **Patriarchal Age – The Patriarchs.**

A photograph of a beach with waves crashing onto the shore. In the foreground, several footprints are visible in the wet sand, leading towards the water. The sky is blue with some clouds, and a distant landmass is visible on the horizon.

**Genesis  
chapters 20 to 23;  
Isaac and Sarah.  
Graeme Morrison**

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# **Patriarchal Age – The Patriarchs.**

## **Isaac Genesis 21-27;**



**Birth of Isaac.**

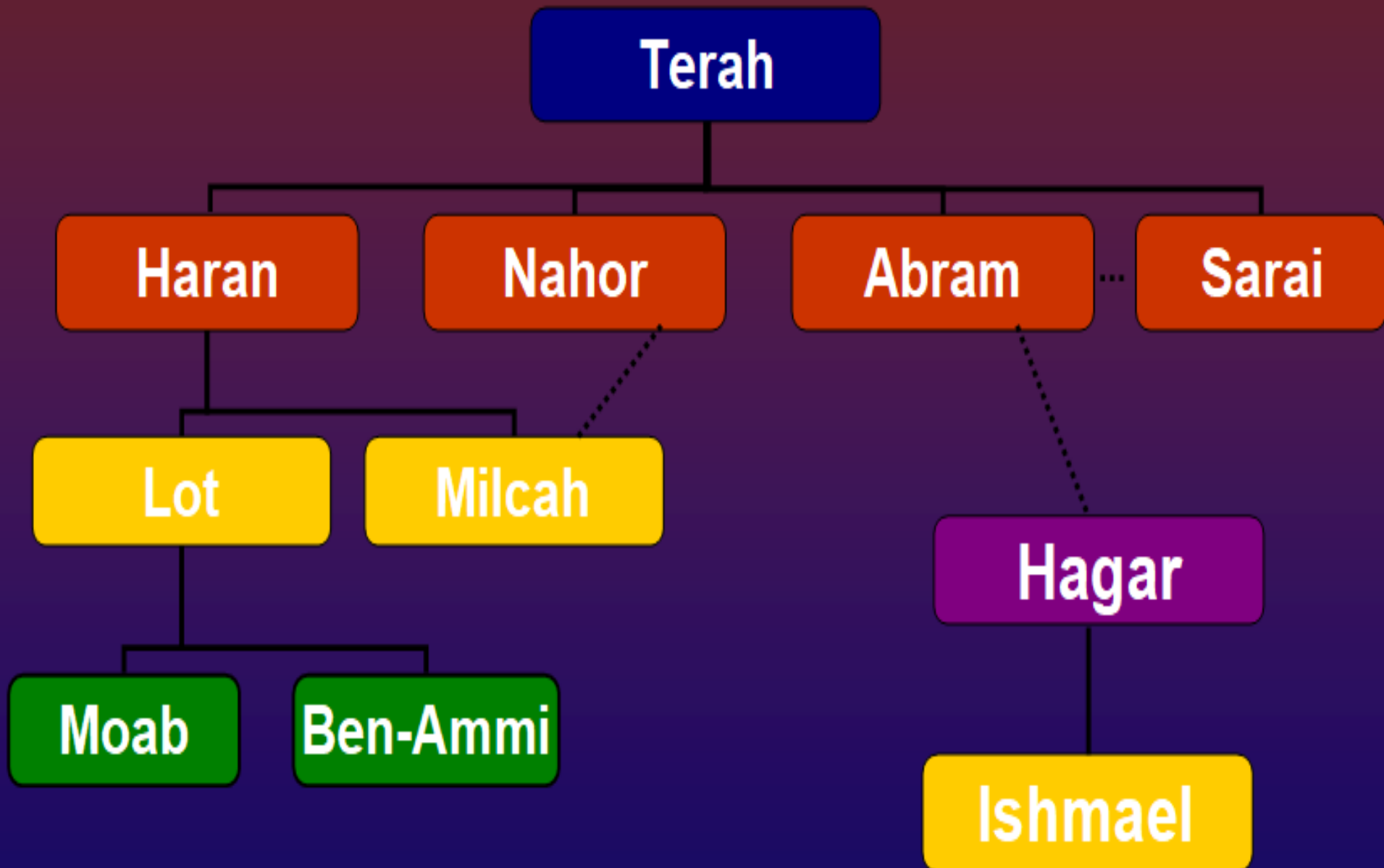
**Sacrifice of Isaac? almost!**

**Two nations in Rebekah Gen 25;**

**Promise to Isaac Gen 26;**

**Isaac blesses Jacob Gen 27;**

# Terah's Family Tree.



# **The Birth of Isaac.**

**Just as God promised,  
Abraham and Sarah had a son. (21:1-3;)**

**Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.  
Isaac was circumcised on the 8th day. (21:1-7;)**

**Great feast at Isaac's weaning. (Gen 21:8;)**

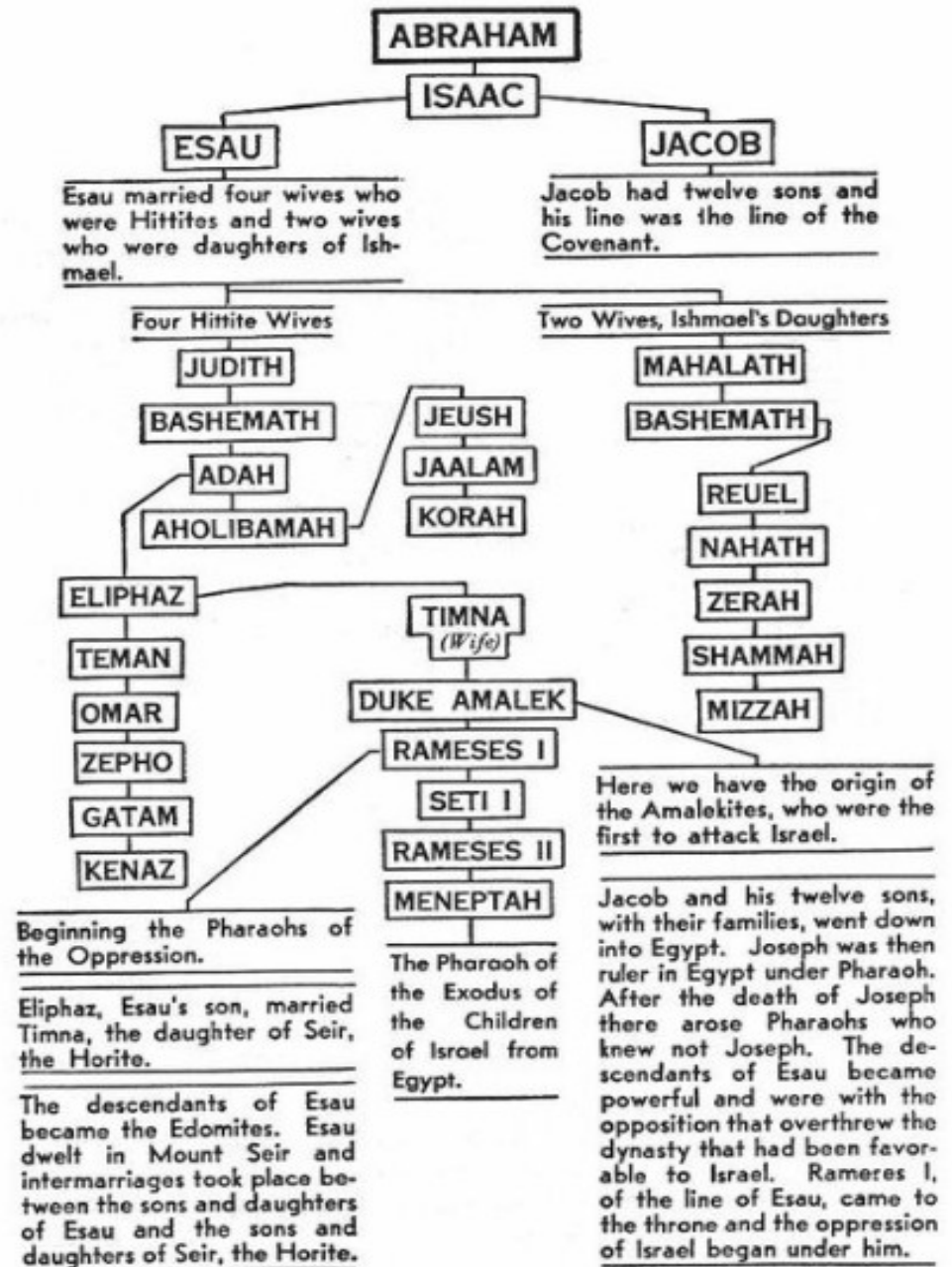
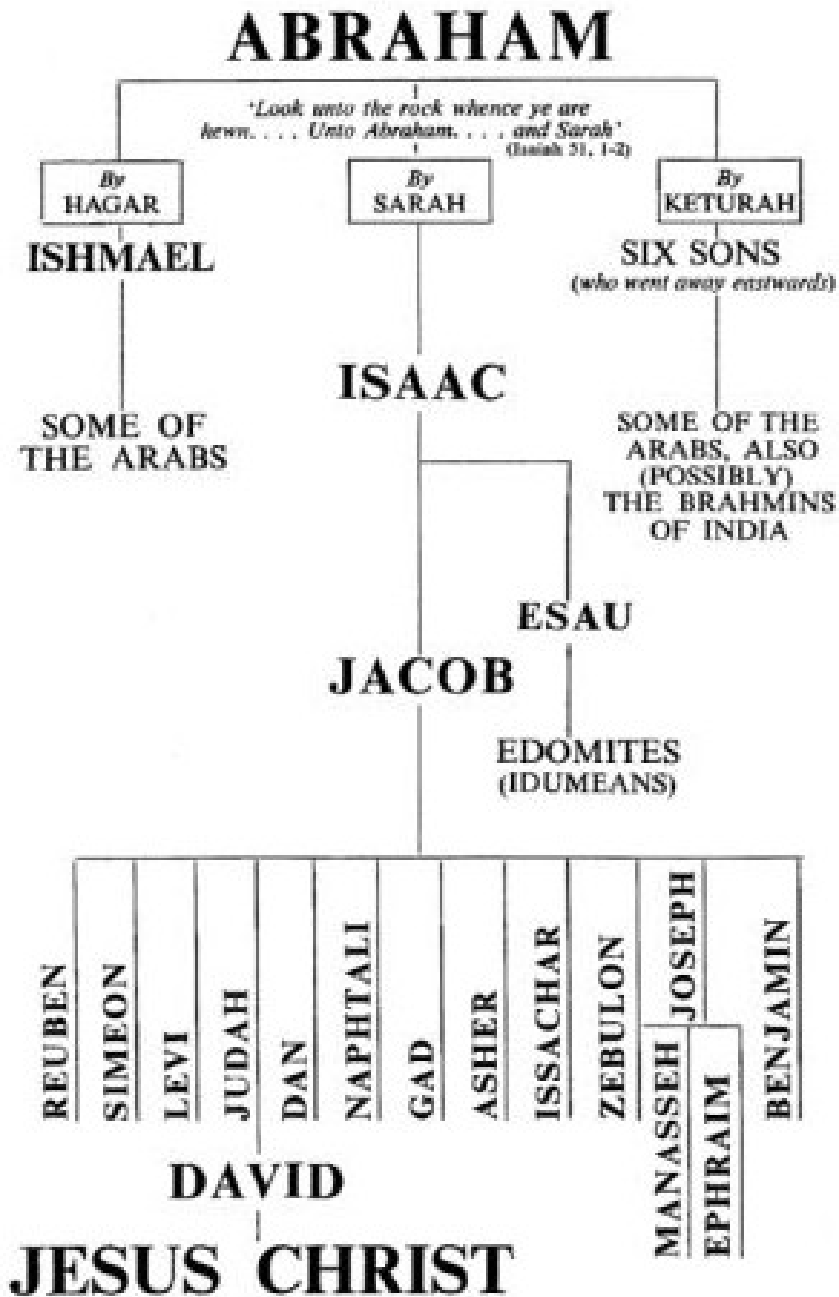
**Ishmael mocks. (Gen 21:9-11;)**

**God's plan for Ishmael. (Gen 21:12-13;)**

**Abraham sends Hagar & Ishmael away. (Gen 21:14-16;)**

**God rescues Hagar and Ishmael. (Gen 17-21;)**

# The Birth of Isaac.



# Isaac and His Parents.

Circumcised by his father. – Gen 21:4;  
Protected by his mother. – Gen 21:8-10;  
Submissive to his father. – Gen 22:6-10;  
24:1-4, 61-67;  
Heir of Abraham's estate. – Gen 25:5-6;



**Gen 21:1-2;** “Yahweh treated Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time God had promised.”

## **The Birth of Isaac 21:1-7;**

**The events of 21:1-7;**  
can be seen in **three different dimensions.**

In 21:1-2; We see the **divine dimension**  
in the birth of the son **as a gift from God.**

In 21:3-5; **Records the response of Abraham**  
**to the birth of this son.**

Finally, 21:6-7; We have the **jubilance of Sarah**  
over the arrival of the long awaited child,  
**who is the joy of her life.**



**Gen 21:1-2;** “Yahweh treated Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time God had promised.”

### **An Act of God 21:1-2;**

If we were to speak to an insurance agent, he would be quick to tell us that an **“act of God”** in his line of work is a disaster over which man has no control.

Isaac was an “act of God” in a very different sense.

He was the result of divine intervention in the lives of Abraham and Sarah, both of whom were too old to bear children.

It was **the fulfillment of a promise** made long before the birth of the child and **often reiterated to Abraham.** (Gen 12:2; 15:4; 17:15 16; 18:10;)

**Gen 21:1-2;** “Yahweh treated Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time God had promised.”

**Several things are striking about this passage. First, we cannot miss the note of calm assurance.**

**There has been no suspense.** The event comes without surprise, reported as though nothing else could have happened than what did.  
And, of course, this is precisely right.

**Second,** there is a distinct emphasis on the aspect of fulfillment. The birth of Isaac came without surprise simply because that was what **God had promised would happen.**

**Four times** in two short verses the **element of fulfillment** is stressed (“as He had said,” “as He had promised,” verse 1; “at the appointed time,” “which God had spoken,” verse 2;)

**Gen 21:1-2;** “Yahweh treated Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time God had promised.”

It was **God who promised** the child;  
it was **God who accomplished His word**  
And this was done right on schedule.

God’s purposes are never delayed,  
nor are they ever defeated by man’s sin.

God’s purposes are certain.  
What God has promised, He will accomplish.

**Third,** the son seems to be given almost more  
for **Sarah’s benefit** here than for Abraham’s.

**“The Lord,”** Moses wrote, **“took note of Sarah ...**  
**and ... did for Sarah”** (verse 1;)

**Gen 21:3-5;** “Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth. Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.”

**Sarah wanted that son more than Abraham did.**

You will remember that Abraham spoke to God on behalf of **Ishmael**, seemingly to accept him as the son of promise. (Gen 17:18;)

Neither did Abraham seem to take the promise of a son too seriously when he was willing to subject Sarah to the dangers of Abimelech's harem at the very time she was about to conceive the promised son. (Gen 17:21; 18:14;)

Even though Abraham may not have desired this child as much as his wife, God faithful to His promises. Gen 15:4; 17:16, 19, 21; 18:10; **God gave Abraham and Sarah a son.**



**Gen 21:3-5;** “Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth. Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.”

His response to **the birth of Isaac** might be described as “**dutiful.**” In obedience to the instructions given him in Genesis 17, **Abraham named the baby Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day.**

**Abraham thus followed God’s instructions out to the letter,** perhaps without the joy that could have been experienced.

We are reminded that **Abraham was now 100 years old.** In a way, Abraham and Sarah were more like Grandparents to Isaac than parents.

Who of us would have been overjoyed at the birth of a child at this age? When Abraham could have been drawing his pension for 35 years, he again became a parent. At the **age of 113** he would enter into **the teenage years** with his son.

**Gen 21:6-7;** “And Sarah declared, “God has brought me laughter! All who hear about this will laugh with me. For who would have dreamed that I would ever have a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!”

**Sarah's Ecstasy 21:6-7;** If Abraham's response to the birth of this child is merely dutiful,  
**Sarah's is delirious:**

They named him **"Isaac,"** which means **"he laughed,"** as God had commanded them.  
(Gen 17:17-19; 18:12;)

Making a word play on her son's name, Sarah praised God for giving her cause to **"laugh,"** including that all who heard about this miraculous birth **will "laugh" with her.**

More than anything, **their laughter** was prompted by the **absurdity of the thought of having a child so late in life.**

The name **Isaac** took on a new significance, he was a delight to his mother, so late in her life.

# Isaac and Ishmael.

- Contrasted.** – Gal 4:22-23, 28-29;  
**Conflict.** – Gen 21:8-9;  
**Cooperation.** – Gen 25:8-9;



**Gen 21:8-9;** “The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham gave a great banquet on the day Isaac was weaned. Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing (laughing) with her son Isaac.”

### **The Crisis with Ishmael 21:8-21;**

Abraham’s lack of enthusiasm about his son Isaac may seem very conjectural, and we must admit this candidly, but the events of Gen 21:8-21; certainly seem to strengthen this impression about Abraham’s attitude toward his son.

**On the day Isaac was weaned,** Abraham prepared **a great feast.** This seems to have provided the occasion for celebration in those days.

We should bear in mind that **the weaning of a child** often **occurred much later** than it would today. Isaac could easily have been three or four years old, or even older.



# **Ishmael Sent Away.**

**On the day Isaac was weaned,  
Sarah saw Ishmael making fun of Isaac.**

**Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.  
Isaac was circumcised on the 8th day. (21:1-7;)**

**She did not want Ishmael to be an heir with Isaac.**

**Sarah asked Abraham  
to send Hagar and Ishmael away.**

**While this displeased Abraham, God told him  
to do as Sarah wished & Abraham obeyed. (21:14;)**

**Gen 21:9;** “Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing (laughing) with her son Isaac.”

This part of the narrative completes **the repetitive thread of the word "laugh/laughed"** that began in Genesis 17:17; with Abraham's laughter when God first promised him a son from Sarah.

The thread of **"laughter"** that began in Gen 17:17; continued through 18:12, 13, 15; 19:14; 21:6 (twice), and 9;

The **sight of Hagar's son** at the feast **robbed Sarah of all of the joy** she should have had.

By this time **Ishmael** would have entered his teens and **would likely** have **reflected his mother's disregard for Sarah and her son.**

**Gen 21:9;** “Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing (laughing) with her son Isaac.”

**The key to understanding** this passage  
is in **identifying what Sarah saw**  
**that so distressed her.**

What could it have been that would have caused  
God to allow Hagar and Ishmael to be sent away?

This episode took place  
immediately after Isaac was weaned.

**Question:** How old was Ishmael at this time?  
See Gen 17:21, and 25;

**Answer:** **Ishmael** was 13 years old when he was circumcised,  
14 when Isaac was born, and in this part of the family drama  
he would have been about **15 or 16 years old**, near manhood.

**Gen 21:9;** “Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing (laughing) with her son Isaac.”

The literal translation of Genesis 21:9 is that 16 year old **Ishmael was "laughing"** with the 2-3 year old Isaac on **the special day** in which **Isaac** was being **honoured by his father** and the whole community.

Some Bible scholars **interpret the laughter as mocking or malevolent** that **Ishmael**, like his mother who distained Sarah (Gen 16:5), was **ridiculing his brother**.  
(Waltke, page 274, 294).

**Isaac will become a Christ-like figure** in chapter 22; and the connection could be made to Jesus' "brothers" / **Jewish kinsmen laughing and scorning God's righteous Son**.  
(Mt 9:24; Mk 5:40; Lk 8:53;)



**Gen 21:9;** “Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing (laughing) with her son Isaac.”

**Other scholars have suggested something much more sinister.**

**In ancient Near Eastern literature "laughter" can be a euphemism for sexual foreplay or the sexual act.**

**They suggest that Ishmael was attempting to molest his brother, demeaning him to the community.**

**This they say was an attempt to secure Isaac's place as the favoured son just as Absalom took physical possession of his father's concubines in order to usurp his father's leadership.  
(2 Sam 16:21-22;)**

**Gen 21:9;** “Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing (laughing) with her son Isaac.”

**2 Chron 36:16;** “But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

RSV’s ‘**playing**’ (implying that Sarah was insanely jealous) is unfair: it should be translated ‘**mocking**’ (AV, PV.)

This is **the intensive form of Isaac’s name** verb ‘**to laugh,**’ **its malicious sense here is demanded by the context** and by Galatians 4:29; (**‘persecuted’**)! Derek Kidner. Genesis (Chicago: Inter Varsity Press, 1967), p. 140.

**Gen 21:9;** “Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing (laughing) with her son Isaac.”

**Question:** Whatever the **"laughter"** pointed to, what did Sarah seem to identify as the danger to her son in Genesis 21:9-10; and **what was her solution to the problem?**  
**Notice Sarah never says Ishmael's name.**

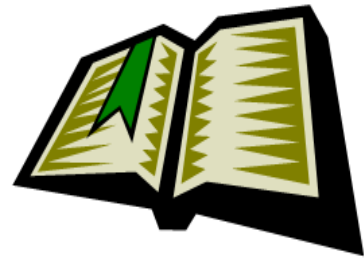
**Answer:** She saw Hagar's teenage son as a **danger to Isaac's position** as the heir.

**Sarah's solution** was to have **Hagar and Ishmael expelled from the community.**

## **Isaac and Ishmael. Galatians 4:29-30;**

**“But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say?**

**"Cast out the bondwoman and her son,  
for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”**





**Gen 21:10;** “Drive away that slave-girl and her son.’ She said to Abraham, ‘this slave-girl’s son shall not share the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

How **out of character Sarah** seems at this moment.  
How **different the description** of her in Peter’s letter  
is from that described by Moses:

“And let not your adornment be external only - braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewellery, and putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”

“For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.”

“Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.” (I Peter 3:3-6;)

**Gen 21:10;** “Drive away that slave-girl and her son.’ She said to Abraham, ‘this slave-girl’s son shall not share the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

**Sarah is obviously not at her best in chapter 21,**  
but then neither is Abraham.

Some have tried to applaud Sarah for her depth  
of **spiritual insight** concerning the fact that  
Isaac would be the heir, not Ishmael.

I think that her primary motive  
was that of **jealousy and a protective instinct**  
to see to it that her son  
got what was coming to him.

**Gen 21:10;** “Drive away that slave-girl and her son.’ She said to Abraham, ‘this slave-girl’s son shall not share the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

**Sarah**, like every Christian today, **had moments she would just as soon forget entirely.**

This is surely one of those times for her. Peter’s use of Sarah as an example of humility and submissiveness overlooks this event as **an exception to the normal rule.**

In a similar fashion the writer to the Hebrews spoke of Abraham and Sarah as **those whose faith we should imitate.**

Their **mistakes and sins** were **not mentioned** because **they were dealt with once and for all under the blood of Christ.**

**Gen 21:11;** “11This greatly distressed Abraham,  
because the slave girl's child too was his son.”

Furthermore, **their sins are not the point** of the  
author's purpose in Hebrews, but **rather their faith.**

Men's sins are recorded in Scripture in order to remind us  
that the men and women of old were no different  
than we are and to serve **as a warning and instruction to us  
not to repeat their mistakes.** (cf. I Corinthians 10:11;)

Abraham was **deeply grieved** by the decision  
that was being forced upon him.

From chapter 17 we know that he was very attached  
to his son Ishmael and that **he would have been content**  
for this child to be the heir through whom  
God's promises were to be fulfilled.

**Gen 21:11;** “11This greatly distressed Abraham,  
because the slave girl's child too was his son.”

This, however, was impossible because  
**Ishmael** was the result of human effort,  
devoid of faith. (cf. Galatians 4:21ff;)

The attachment of Abraham to this son,  
Ishmael, was so great that **a crisis**  
**had to be reached before** he would come to grips  
with the situation.

While we cannot justify the motivation of Sarah  
for her ultimatum, such a move had to occur **in order to force**  
**Abraham's hand in setting aside his aspirations for Ishmael.**

**Gen 21:12;** “but God said to him, 'Do not distress yourself on account of the boy and your slave-girl. Do whatever Sarah says, for Isaac is the one through whom your name will be carried on.’”

**God reassured Abraham** that as painful and unpleasant as the situation might be, putting Ishmael away was the right thing to do. **In this instance he should listen to his wife:**

**We should notice that it is both Hagar and the boy who are close to Abraham’s heart.**

Up to now **Hagar** has been referred to as **Sarah’s maid**, but here she is called “**your maid**” by God. Sarah, we recall, was intensely jealous of Hagar and of her son. (cf. Genesis 16:5;)



**Gen 21:12;** “but God said to him, 'Do not distress yourself on account of the boy and your slave-girl. Do whatever Sarah says, for Isaac is the one through whom your name will be carried on.’”

It is **impossible** for a man to enter into **an intimate relationship** such as the one **Abraham** had with **Hagar** and then to simply walk away.

**Sarah knew this, and so did God.**  
**In more than just a physical way Abraham**  
**had become one with Hagar,**  
**and Ishmael was the evidence of this union.**

**Gen 21:13;** “I will make a nation of the descendants of Hagar's son because he also is your son.”

In **chapter 17:19;** God had **refused to accept Ishmael** as the heir of Abraham. **Isaac,** He had insisted, **would be the heir of promise.**

It was therefore necessary for Ishmael to be sent away and forever eliminated from the status of an heir.

**Therefore Sarah's demands were to be met, and Ishmael was to be sent away.**

Yet **the promises** God had made to Hagar (16:10 12) and to Abraham (17:20;) concerning Ishmael **would be honoured:**  
“And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant.” (Genesis 21:13;)

# **Ishmael Sent Away.**

**Hagar and Ishmael headed south  
into the wilderness of Beersheba. (21:14;).**

**An angel appeared to Hagar and promised her  
Ishmael would become a great nation.**

**Ishmael took a wife from Egypt and became  
an archer in the wilderness of Paran. (21:20-21;)**

**Gen 21:14;** “Early the next morning, Abraham took some bread and a skin of water and, giving them to Hagar, put the child on her shoulder and send them away.”

The **sending away** of the son of a concubine was not without precedent in that day.

In the **Code of Hammurabi**, Law 146, the children of slaves who were not made heirs must be set free as compensation for this.

Abraham’s sending away of Ishmael fits very nicely into this practice.

**By giving him his freedom**, he indicated that **Ishmael had no part in his inheritance**, which was kept exclusively for Isaac.

**Gen 21:14;** “Early the next morning, Abraham took some bread and a skin of water and, giving them to Hagar, put the child on her shoulder and send them away.”

**Abraham arose early** to send off Hagar and Ishmael.  
While it sounds far less spiritual.

Surely **an early start would be wise in the desert,**  
since travel should be done in the cool of the day.

**An early departure** would make it easier to say  
their good-byes **without the interference of Sarah.**

Abraham would want to **express his love**  
for both **Hagar and Ishmael** without an audience.

**Gen 21:14;** “she walked out into the wilderness of Beersheba,  
wandering aimlessly.”

Some have suggested that Hagar lost her way  
in the desert and that this explains why she  
**“wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.”**

Why did she not return to Egypt,  
as she seemed to be heading there  
when she first escaped from Sarai. (16:7ff;)?

Later, she would take a wife for Ishmael from Egypt.  
(Gen 21:21;) Hagar possibly did not return to Egypt  
because she believed that God would fulfill  
His promises concerning Ishmael  
in the place where she chose to wander.

**So she sojourned in the wilderness, much like  
Abraham, trusting God to bless them there.**



**Gen 21:16;** “When the water was gone she left the youth in the shade of a bush and went off and sat down a hundred yards or so away.

“I don't want to watch him die,”  
she said, and burst into tears, sobbing wildly.”

**The boy was** no infant here, as we might suppose,  
but **a teenager**, for he was nearly  
fourteen years older than Isaac. (cf. 17:25;)

Not wanting to see him die, Hagar left Ishmael some distance from her under what little shade the bushes would afford.  
She then lifted up her voice and wept.

It was **not Hagar's cries** that brought God's attention,  
but the boy's. **As a descendant of Abraham,**  
**Ishmael was the object of God's special care.**

**Gen 21:17-18;** “Hagar, what's wrong? Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy's cries from the place where you laid him. Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.”

**His cries brought divine intervention:  
And God heard the lad crying; and the  
angel of God called to Hagar from heaven.**

**19 “Then God opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a well.  
She immediately filled her water container  
and gave the boy a drink.”**

**The solution to Hagar's problem was already present.  
Through her tears she could not see the well close by.**

**More than likely, it was not a distinct structure  
but simply a small source of water hidden among the bushes.  
God thus enabled her to see things as they really were,  
and Hagar and the boy were refreshed and revived.**

**Gen 21:20;** “And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness of Paran. He became an expert archer.”

**God's working in Hagar's life may seem harsh to us,** but we understand His dealings to be such that His promises were accomplished.

You remember that **Ishmael** was to be a “**wild ass**” of a man, **hostile toward his brothers**, a free spirit.

**This kind of man** could not be raised in the city with all of its conveniences and advantages.

Learning to survive in the desert, to prevail over hostile elements was **just what it took to make a man out of Ishmael.**

As basic training lays down the foundation to make a good soldier, **so desert survival made a man of Ishmael.**

# **The Two Covenants. (Galatians 4:21-31;)**

**Bondwoman (Hagar)  
Ishmael.**

**Born of flesh.**

**Mount Sinai (Law).**

**Present Jerusalem.**

**Children in slavery**

**Free woman (Sarah)  
Isaac.**

**Born through  
the promise.**

**Law of the Spirit.**

**Free Jerusalem above.**

**Children of promise.**

**He who was born according to the flesh **persecuted**  
him who was born according to the Spirit.**

# Ishmael Settles in the wilderness of Paran.

## CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles  
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Canaanites

Canaanites

Sidon •

Tyre •

• Laish (Dan)

Hobah?

Damascus •

Sea of Chinnereth  
Yarmuk R.

Galeed?  
Gilead

• Mahanaim?

Dothan •

Shechem •

Wadi Farah

• Succoth  
Peniel  
Peniel

Jabbok R.

• Bethel (Luz)  
• Ai

Jericho

Mt. Moriah  
Salem (Jerusalem)  
• Bethlehem (Ephrath)

• Mamre  
Hebron (Kirjath-arba)

Dead Sea

Arnon R.

Ammonites

Moabites

• Gerar

• Beersheba

• Rehoboth

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are thought to be located beneath the shallow waters at the south end of the Dead Sea. This area was called the Vale of Siddim.

Zoar

Zered R.

• Beer-lahai-roi?

Wilderness of Paran

Edomites

Mt. Seir

# **Abraham and Abimelech. Gen 21:22-32;**

**Abimelech, king of Gerar, came to Abraham. (21:22;)**

**Proposal of Covenant at Beersheba. (21:22-24;)**

**Abraham remained in this land for a time**

**Problem over the well of water (21:25-26;)**

**The Sheep, Oxen, and Seven Ewe Lambs (21:27-31;)**

**Called on the name of the Lord,  
the Everlasting God at Beersheba (21:32-34;)**



# LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

**Left Ur for Canaan.**

**Wandered in tents.**

**Famine.**

**Rescued Lot. (twice)**

**Gave up Ishmael.**

**Son of Promise.**

**Problems with  
Ishmael resolved.**

**Peace with neighbours.**

**No material worries.**

**Now it came about after these things  
that God tested Abraham.**

# The offering of Isaac. Gen 22:1-14;



# **LIFE OF ABRAHAM.**

**God told Abraham to go to the land of Moriah with Isaac, two young men, and wood for the Offering and offer Isaac as a burnt offering. (22:1-2;)**

**Abraham obeyed God.**

**Left donkey with the two young men.  
Carried knife and fire as Isaac carried the wood  
for an altar, Isaac's Question?**

**Abraham builds altar and binds Isaac.  
Stopped from slaying him  
by the angel of the Lord.  
(22:11-12;)**

**Gen 22:1-2;** “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

**As we first come to this command,**  
we are struck by the obvious question:-  
**Why is God doing this?**

**What kind of God** would command a man  
to engage in the human sacrifice of his own son?

To be fair, we must admit that the rest of the story  
is going to assure us that **God does not permit**  
**Abraham to go through with this sacrifice.**

**Gen 22:2;** “And He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

He will let him go right up to the point of being about to kill his son and then he will stop him.

But **why does God put Abraham** through the agony and ordeal of such a preparation in the first place?

Doesn't the New Testament assure us that **God does not tempt people?**

“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. (James 1:13;)

There is a subtle different between **being tested** versus **being tempted**.  
**The difference is one of intention.**

# The Offering as a Test.

## **Tempted**

The intention is to make the person being tempted fail.

## **Tested**

The intention is to exercise the faith of the person being tested so that it will be strengthened.

**When Satan tempts us, it is in order to make us fall.**  
He does not have our best interests at heart.  
**He has our worst interests at heart.**

It is a bit like having the Ford Corporation do a testing of Toyotas. Their testing would likely be designed so that the Toyotas would fail.

# **The Offering as a Test.**

**Nissan checked the Windscreens on imported cars, they set such a high standard that the imported cars could not be sold in Japan because they failed to meet the standard, thus giving Nissan an unfair trade advantage.**

**On the other hand, a test that they carried out of their own vehicles would likely be designed so that they might learn about their cars and improve their product.**



# The Offering as a Test.

Abraham called to Faith: Promise of a Seed (12:1-9;)		
	Sojourn in Egypt and denial of Sarai (12.10-20;) • Lot separates from Abram (13)	
	War on Sodom; Rescue of Lot by Abraham (14.1-24;)	
	Covenant Ceremony: Animal Sacrifice (15)	
	Ishmael born (16)	
	Covenant Ceremony: Circumcision (17)	
	Destruction of Sodom; Rescue of Lot by Angels (18:1 - 9:38;)	
	Sojourn in Gerar and denial of Sarah (20:1-8;) • Ishmael separates from Abraham (21)	
Abraham's Faith Tested: Blessing of the Seed (22.1-19;)		

# The Offering as a Test.

**God tests Abraham** and the test comes in a form that was **appropriate to that age and culture.**

**You see, the idea of the sacrifice of a firstborn was not unique.** There were other ancient religions that carried this same idea, **especially in the case where a covenant had been broken.**

**It is for this reason that Abraham** doesn't respond to this command with a complaint that such an **expectation is immoral or wrong.**

# **The Offering as a Test.**

**Abraham realises something** that we today  
have generally lost sight of - that  
**God is the One who gives life and all life is His.**

**So, God provides a test of Abraham.**

**It is a test of his faith.**

The good news is that God has already  
provided amply to Abraham through his faith.

**The entire life of Abraham  
has been a story of faith.**

**Gen 22:3;** “So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.”

**We have now come full circle to the final testing of Abraham’s faith. That for which he has waited all his life and which has finally been given to him in his old age is to be taken and given to the Lord.**

**Back in Genesis 15:6 we were told that Abraham believed the Lord and it was counted to Him as righteousness. Now we see that faith resulted in a corresponding action on Abraham’s part. Real faith always results in a corresponding action.**

**It is said that if you go on a Parachute jump out of a plane, the hardest part is taking the first step out of the door. After that, everything else is easy.**

**Gen 22:3;** “So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.”

**Notice the action that takes place here.**

**We do not read that Abraham procrastinated.**

He rose up early in the morning to prepare and to begin his journey to the place where God had commanded.

**Where was that place?** It is described back in verse 2 as the **land of Moriah**. Where is the land of Moriah? **The Bible gives the answer.**

Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD **in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah**, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. **(2 Chron 3:1;)**

**Gen 22:3;** “So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.”

**The place where Abraham was sent to sacrifice his son was the same place where the Temple would one day be constructed. It was on the site of today's Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.**

**22:4-5;** “On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you.”

**It took three days for Abraham and his party to arrive. As they finally get to the site where, from a distance, they can see the mountain, Abraham tells the servants who have accompanied him that they are to remain here.**

**Gen 21:5;** “Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you.”

What is happening here? After all,  
**Abraham** has not read **the rest of Genesis 22.**  
**He does not have the hindsight that we have.**

**What Abraham DID have was faith.**  
**He believed the promise of God.**

**“By faith Abraham, when he was tested,**  
**offered up Isaac;** and he who had received the promises  
was offering up his only begotten son;  
it was he to whom it was said, “In Isaac your descendants  
shall be called.” **He considered that God is able**  
**to raise men even from the dead;**  
from which he also received him back as a type.”  
(Hebrews 11:17-19;)

**Gen 21:7;** "Isaac said, "Father?" "Yes, my son," Abraham replied.  
"We have the wood and the fire," said the boy,  
"but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?"

**As Abraham and Isaac continue up the mountain,  
Isaac notices that there is something missing  
from their supplies.**

**They have come to make a burnt offering.  
Accordingly, they have  
a source of fire and they have wood to burn.**

**There is only one thing missing.  
It is the sacrifice. And so, Isaac asks  
the obvious question. Where is the sacrifice?  
It will be provided by God Himself.**



**There is a strange yet prophetic quality to the words of Abraham, for it was in this same area that, 2000 years later, God provided the ultimate sacrifice for sins.**

<b>Isaac</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
<b>To be offered as a sacrifice to God.</b>	<b>Offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.</b>
<b>Taken to Mount Moriah, outside of the ancient city of Jerusalem.</b>	<b>Taken to Golgotha outside the city of Jerusalem.</b>
<b>Carried the wood for the sacrifice up the mountain.</b>	<b>Carried the cross for His crucifixion out to Golgotha.</b>
<b>Isaac was bound and laid on the altar.</b>	<b>Jesus was nailed to the cross.</b>
<b>It took three days for the party to travel to Moriah, the place of death.</b>	<b>Three days after His crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead.</b>

**Gen 21:9;** “Then they came to the place of which God had told him;  
and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood,  
and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.  
And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”

**Abraham and Isaac** finally arrive on the scene  
and go about the work of preparing for the sacrifice.  
**The altar is built. The wood is arranged.**

The passage is strangely quiet about Isaac's  
response as he is taken and bound  
and placed upon the altar.

The passage is strangely quiet about Isaac's  
response as he is taken  
and bound and placed upon the altar.

Did Isaac protest?  
Did Abraham offer any explanation?  
Were there tears?

**Gen 21:9;** “Then they came to the place of which God had told him;  
and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood,  
and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.  
And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”

**We are not told.** And the reason  
that we are not told is because  
**that is not the "big idea"** of the narrative.

We are not meant to come here and look  
**at Abraham's noble sacrifice**  
or Isaac's submissiveness to his father.

**Those points are valid, but if you come here  
and see only those things, then you have  
missed the bigger idea of the passage.**

You are meant to come here  
and see God's substitute.

**Gen 21:9;** “Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”

**“Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and offer him there as a burnt offering.”**

**Seems to contradict God's promises  
Calls upon Abraham to make a choice  
between God and Isaac.**



**Abraham “considered that God is able  
to raise men even from the dead.”  
(Hebrews 11:19;)**

**“In Isaac your seed shall be called.’ That is, those who are  
the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God;  
but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.  
For this is the word of promise: “At this time I will come  
and Sarah shall have a son.” (Romans 9:7-9;)**

**Gen 21:11-12;** “But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” And he said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

**Imagine the scene.** Isaac lies bound upon the altar.  
The wood is ready. The knife is sharp.  
The intended sacrifice is ready to be put to death.  
Abraham raises the instrument of death.  
Suddenly there is an interruption!!!!

Abraham’s purpose was to slay Isaac and the omniscient God of heaven knew that Abraham had figuratively already slain Isaac in his mind.

This was **good enough for the Lord** and so restrained Abraham from going to the end of the awful trial.  
**The Lord said, “for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”**

**Gen 21:12;** “and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

The “**fear**” of God is here **defined as perfect obedience to God’s will**. If Abraham would not have gone through with the trial then **his disobedience** would have been recognized as a **lack of fear (respect)** of God.

**Solomon said,** “The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge; But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.” (Prov. 1:7;)

**It was a lack of fear (respect) for God that caused Judah to sin against the Lord.** (Jer 5:22-24; 44:10;)

**A true respect and faith in Yahweh God will move the faithful to follow His commandments.**

(John 14:15; Rom 12:1-2;)

**Gen 21:12;** “and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

**Fear and faith** are two of a kind in acceptable service to the Lord. **Abraham had selflessly obeyed God's command in this intense trial and so displayed the obedient character of Jesus.**

When Jesus stared death in the face  
He said to the heavenly Father, “My Father,  
if it be possible, let this cup pass away from  
me: nevertheless, **not as I will, but as You will.**”

**Abraham has passed the test of faithfulness.**  
Notice what is said – you have not withheld your son,  
your only son, from Me. This is not a denial  
of the existence of Ishmael, but it is to say  
that **Isaac was the special son; the son of promise.**

**Gen 21:12;** “and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God,  
since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

**Because Abraham has not withheld the sacrifice  
of his son, his only son, God knows that  
Abraham fears Him and honours Him and loves Him.**

**The good news is that what God has called us to do,  
He has also done Himself.**

**God has not withheld His Son  
- His only Son - from us.  
Because God has passed  
the faithfulness test, we can trust  
in Him and we can trust in His love.**



**Gen 21:13-14;** “Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place, The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**Abraham looks up and saw a ram caught in a thicket - a substitute.** He understands that this substitute is to take the place of his son and so **Isaac is released** and **the ram is sacrificed in his place.**

**Gen 1:4;** And God **saw** that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

**Gen 3:6;** When the woman **saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes.

**Gen 21:13;** “Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns;”

**Gen 12:1;** Now the LORD said to Abram,  
"Go forth from your country, And from your relatives  
And from your father's house, To the land which  
I will **show** you (Literally, "which I will **cause you to see.**")

**1 Samuel 16:7;** “**God sees not as man sees,**  
for man looks at the outward appearance,  
but the LORD looks at the heart.”

That brings us the obvious question:  
**What was it that Abraham saw?**

**Gen 21:13;** “Then Abraham raised his eyes and **looked**, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns;”

Verse 13 says that “**Abraham raised his eyes and looked**”  
The word translated “**looked**” is **Ra’ah**.

It is the same word that is translated  
God “**provided**” **Ra’ah** in the next verse.

STRONGS Numbers **râ’âh pronounced ‘raw-aw’**

**A primitive root;** to **see**, literally or figuratively (in numerous applications, direct and implied, transitively, intransitively and causatively): - advise self, appear, approve, behold, X certainly, consider, **discern**, (make to) enjoy, have experience, gaze, take heed, X indeed, X joyfully, lo, **look** (on, one another, one on another, one upon another, out, up, upon), mark, meet, X be near, perceive, present, provide, regard,

**STRONGS**  
**Numbers**  
**7200[e]**  
**22:13;**

**22:14;**

7200 [e]	<b>וַיַּרְא</b> way-yar	and looked	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConsecImperf-3ms
2009 [e]	<b>וַתִּבְהַל</b> wa-hin-nêh-	and behold	Conj-w   Interjection
3068 [e]	<b>יְהוָה</b> Yah-weh	Yahweh	N-proper-ms
7200 [e]	<b>יִרְאֶה</b> yir-’eh;	will Provide	N-proper-ms

**Gen 21:13;** “Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns;”

**What did Abraham see? and  
what did God say would be seen?**

**We need to look at  
what the Lord will look at  
and what Abraham looked at.**

**It was the ram. He lifted up his eyes and he  
looked at the ram. It was a ram that had been  
provided by God. It was a ram that  
was to serve as a substitute for Isaac.**

**Abraham looked and saw the ram.  
But he did not name the place, “Abraham looked.”  
He instead named it, “The Lord will look / provide.”**

**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**A.V.** “And Abraham called the name of that place  
Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day,  
**In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”**

**Do you see the significance?**

Abraham looks at the picture of the ram  
and **Abraham understands a truth about the future.**

It is a truth that **God is one day**  
**going to provide a substitute** who will die  
in our place and that **GOD WILL LOOK** at that  
**substitutionary sacrifice** and He will be **SATISFIED.**

**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**Why is that so significant?** It is significant  
because **rams and lambs and animal sacrifices**  
do not do anything to satisfy sin. **The blood**  
**of an animal cannot turn a wrong into a right.**

**But the death of God’s promised Saviour**  
**was able to do what no animal could ever do.**

God came to do what no sacrifice could ever do.  
When the blood of goats and bulls and rams and sheep  
was insufficient, **God provided Himself as a sacrifice.**

**The cross was the ultimate act of love.**

**It is given so that we might see.**

**But it was also given so that God Himself could see.**

**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

Isaiah makes mention of this in **Isaiah 53:11;**

“As a result of the anguish of His soul,  
**He will see it and be satisfied;** By His knowledge  
the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify  
the many, As He will bear their iniquities.”

This is the same Hebrew word **Ra’ah**.

It points to the fact that the cross  
was the place where **the Father looked upon  
the Son, the Righteous One, and was satisfied  
that the penalty for sin had been paid in full.**

**Justice was satisfied when God the Judge  
became God the Judged.**

**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**C.S. Lewis** used to say that **unbelievers**  
tend to **think they can put God "in the dock."**  
That is **old English** for **placing someone on trial.**

In an English court, the accused would  
stand on **a raised platform** to be judged  
and that platform was known as the **"dock."**

Lewis pointed out that we,  
as the handiwork of the Creator of all things,  
have no right or ability to put God in the dock.  
**It is we who are in danger of being judged.**



**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**Yet God put Himself in the place of judgment  
in the person of Jesus Christ,  
the righteous One.**

**Not only that, He was judged to be guilty,  
not because of any sins He had committed,  
but He was identified with our sins  
and was judged in our place.**

**God looked upon Jesus and was satisfied.**

**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**What is to be our response? Much the same.  
We are called to look to Jesus.**

**“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses  
surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance,  
and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us  
run with endurance the race that is set before us,  
fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter  
of faith, who for the joy set before Him  
endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down  
at the right hand of the throne of God.”  
(Hebrews 12:1-2;)**

**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**Look to Jesus - fix your eyes upon Him.**

**Are you tired?** Look to Jesus and He  
will give you strength.

**Are you depressed?** Look to Jesus.

**Are you lonely?** Look to the One who loves you  
and gave Himself for you.

**Are you overcome with guilt,** knowing  
that you have not measured up before God  
and despairing that you can never return?

**Look! Look! Look! And know that God  
Himself has looked and has been satisfied.**

**Gen 21:14;** “And Abraham called the name of that place,  
The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day,  
“In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”

**OUR GOD IS FAITHFUL.**

**I would make a nation:-**

**I will give you a seed:-**

**I would give you this Land:-**

# **Summary:- God Tests Abraham:-**

When Abraham was one hundred and Sarah ninety,

**Isaac, the child of promise, was born.**

(Genesis 21:1-3;)

When Isaac was a lad old enough to carry the wood for a sacrifice up Mount Moriah, **the Lord God tested Abraham** by commanding him to offer this darling son, the object of all his hope and the dearest thing on earth to him, as a burnt offering. (Gen 22:1-6;)

(The Lord demanded no more of Abraham than He Himself later did for you and me.)

**When Abraham obeyed,** the Angel of the Lord stopped the aged, faithful patriarch just as he was poised to plunge the knife into his precious son. (22:7-14;)

# **Summary:- God Tests Abraham:-**

Then **God added His oath** by His own Name, the highest name by which He could swear, to the promise and covenant, and **repeated the Nation and Seed promises.** (Gen 22:15-18;)

**The three-fold promise now had  
three-fold divine assurance:  
the Promise, Covenant,  
and Oath of the Lord God Who cannot lie.**

# **Abraham's Faith leads to obedience:-**

**Many Bible teachers call**

**This promise to Abraham "unconditional,"**

**But there was nothing unconditional about it.**

**Abraham had to leave his home and family  
and go where the Lord would direct him.**

**(Genesis 12:1;)**

**"walk before" the Lord, i.e., live in recognition  
he was in the presence of God, and "be blameless."**

**(Genesis 17:1;)**

**be circumcised at age ninety-nine  
and circumcise all the males of his house.**

**(Genesis 17:10-14, 23-24;)**

# **Abraham's Faith leads to obedience:-**

**"command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice."**

**(Genesis 18:17-19;)**

**"Offer his beloved son of promise as a burnt offering.**

**(Genesis 22:1-18;)**

**How would you like to have to keep all those conditions?!**

**"circumcision of all males as the sign of the covenant became a condition to all succeeding generations.**

**(Genesis 17:9-14;)**



# **Abraham's Faith leads to obedience:-**

**These verses should be enough to convince our faith only friends of the necessity of obedience to be a recipient of God's promises.**

**God reiterates the promises that He had initially made to Abraham at Genesis 12 and again in Genesis 15 due to the fact that the promise remained in tact.**

**“I will do this because Abraham listened to me and obeyed all my requirements, commands, regulations, and laws.” Gen 26:5;**

**Abraham's faithful obedience caused the Lord to reiterate the promise to Abraham by the formula, “Because you have obeyed my voice.”**

# **Abraham's Faith leads to obedience:-**

**Yahweh swears by His own name that surely the blessing He has promised Abraham would be his due to his obedience. (Heb 6:13;)**

**That which was dearest to Abraham in this life, Isaac his only son of promise, was not placed before Yahweh God and His commandments.**

**God was the zenith of Abraham's interest because he knew that his relationship with God was far more important than any earthly object.**

# **Abraham's Faith leads to obedience:-**

**Abraham goes** from deceiving Abimelech and handing over his wife in cowardice **to perfect obedience to Gods will.**

**(Gen chap 21-22;)**

**Paul** describes **the struggle** of trying to do the things we know to be right we often fall due to weakness of the flesh. **(Rom 7;)**

**The mark of a true disciple of Christ is the ability to rebound from sin.**  
**(repenting of it and asking the Lord's forgiveness in humble submission.)**

# **Abraham Offers Isaac.**

**Now I know you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.**

**Offered up the ram in the thicket.  
The Lord Will Provide.**

## **Reiteration of the Promises:-**

**Greatly bless you.**

**Greatly multiply you.**

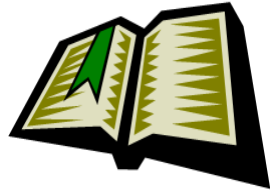
**Seed shall possess gate of their enemies.**

**In your seed all the nations of the earth  
shall be blessed.**

**Because you have obeyed My voice.**

## **Genesis 22:16-19;**

**“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD,  
because you have done this thing,  
and have not withheld your son,  
your only son —blessing I will bless you,  
and multiplying I will multiply your  
descendants as the stars of the heaven  
and as the sand which is on the seashore;  
and your descendants shall possess  
the gate of their enemies. In your seed all  
the nations of the earth shall be blessed,  
because you have obeyed My voice.”**



**The Offering as a Type.**

**God offering his Son Jesus.  
Jesus giving His life on the cross.**

**Resurrection** from the Dead.

**Redemption** of the first-born after the Exodus.  
(Exodus 13:11-15;)

**The role of obedience in our justification.  
(James 2:18-26;)**

# **How God Tests Us.**

**God's Testing is not Temptation.**

**Tests come when we are prepared.**

**Tests are difficult, but for our own good.**

**Tests can be unexpected.**

**Tests often seem illogical to us.**

**Tests help us grow where we need to.**

## **News from Nahor's Family.**

**Abraham received news concerning his brother's family. (22:20-24;)**

**Milcah (Abraham's niece)  
had borne children to Nahor.**

**8 sons of Milcah and 4 sons  
of his concubine are mentioned.**

**One of Milcah's sons stands out,  
Bethuel, the father of Rebekah.**



**Gen 22:19-20;** “So Abraham returned unto his young men,  
and they rose up and went together to Beer-Sheba.

And Abraham dwelt at Beer-Sheba. And it came to pass  
after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold,  
Milcah, she also has borne children to your brother Nahor.”

**Gen 22:21-23;** “Uz his first-born, and Buz his brother,  
and Kemuel the father of Aram, and Chesed,  
and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.  
And **Bethuel begat Rebekah.**”

**Gen 22:24;** “These **eight** did **Milcah** bear to **Nahor**,  
Abraham's brother. And **his concubine**,  
whose name was **Reumah**, she also bare  
Tebah, and Gaham, and Tahash, and Maacah.”

**Abraham's brother Nahor also had 12 sons  
like Jacob and Ishmael.**

# **Death of Sarah 23:1-20;**

**The Death and Burial of Sarah.**

**Sarah died at 127 in Hebron.**

**Abraham mourned and wept for her.**

**He bought the cave of Machpelah  
and buried her.**

**Gen 23:1-2;** “When Sarah was 127 years old, she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.”

**While Sarah’s death is not recorded until Genesis 23, the previous chapter has prepared Abraham and us for the events of our death.**

**The “sacrifice” of Isaac on Mount Moriah brought Abraham to a confidence in God’s power to raise the dead. (Hebrews 11:19;)**

**A willingness to put Isaac to death enabled Abraham to accept the passing of his wife Sarah.**

**Gen 23:1-2;** “When Sarah was 127 years old, she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.”

Furthermore, the last verses of chapter 22 records an incident which would bear upon the future: “And **Bethuel become the father of Rebekah;**” Genesis 22:24;

**In the providence of God a wife for Isaac had already been provided long before the need had arisen.**

**God ‘s providential care is there for all of us.**  
As someone said, “**The ram is already in the bush.**” (22:13;)

**Gen 23:1-2;** “When Sarah was 127 years old, she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.”

Beyond this, the report summarized in 22:20-24; **reminded Abraham that his homeland and family were far away.**

No doubt the news from “**home**” pulled at Abraham’s emotional heartstrings.

When **Sarah died** there would be **strong emotional reasons for taking her body “home”** to bury it.

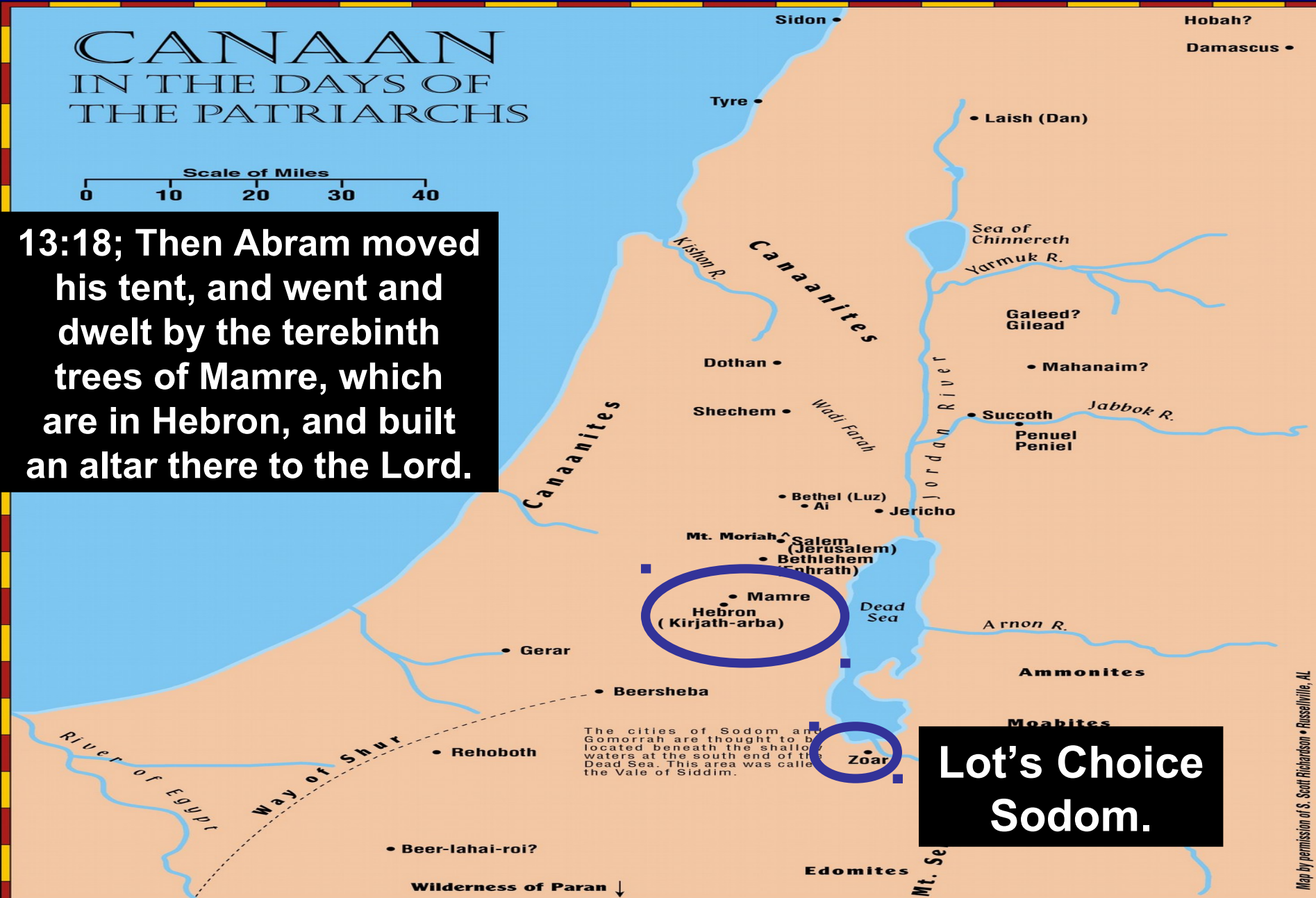
These verses, then, remind us of the strong ties that still remained at Mesopotamia and **the significance of Abraham’s decision to bury his wife in Canaan.**

# Abraham in Canaan.

## CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles  
0 10 20 30 40

13:18; Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the Lord.



Lot's Choice  
Sodom.

**Gen 23:1-2;** “When Sarah was 127 years old, she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.”

While **our faith is not to be based upon our feelings**, neither should it be divorced from our emotions.

These **first two verses** provide the **background** to our chapter and also **describe** the **grief** of the patriarch:

As commentators over the centuries have noted, **Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age is revealed.**

One hundred twenty seven years is a ripe old age, but the death of Sarah would have seemed untimely because of her youthfulness.

Even at the age of ninety **she was a woman attractive enough to catch the eye of Abimelech. (20:1 2;)**

**Gen 23:1-2;** “When Sarah was 127 years old, she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.”

Sarah must have appeared to have found the fountain of youth. **Her youthfulness and beauty may have concealed the fact that death was coming upon her.**

Abraham seems to have been elsewhere at the time of Sarah's death. While some interesting explanations exist for this fact, it would be most easily explained by Abraham being out with his flocks or something similar.

When he learned of the death of his wife **he came to her side to mourn for her.**



**Gen 23:1-2;** “When Sarah was 127 years old, she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.”

We know that **Abraham expressed** the **grief** common to those who face the death of a loved one.

Faith is not always evidenced by a stoic, stainless steel attitude toward death. Some years ago **Jackie Kennedy** was applauded for her “**faith**” when she “**stood up so well**” during the death of her husband.

**History has pretty well provided evidence** that Jackie’s lack of emotion at the funeral may have been **due to a lack of feeling for her husband.**

We only need to remember that **Jesus wept** **at the grave of Lazarus.** (John 11:35;)

**Gen 23:3-4;** “Then, leaving her body, he went to the Hittite elders and said,  
“Here I am, a stranger in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife.  
Please let me have a piece of land for a burial plot.”

The **emphasis of this chapter** is not  
on the **grief of Abraham** for out of the **20 verses**  
only **two** deal with this, the **other 18 verses**  
**deal with the purchase of the burial plot!**

**Sarah’s death** brought **Abraham**  
to a point of decision. **The practical matter** was:-  
**“Where shall I bury Sarah?”**

**The principal issue, however, was:**  
**“Where shall I be buried?”**

**Gen 23:3-4;** “Then, leaving her body, he went to the Hittite elders and said,  
"Here I am, a stranger in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife.  
Please let me have a piece of land for a burial plot.”

Most often when **a burial plot** is purchased  
for the first partner another is bought alongside  
for the surviving partner, and frequently  
**a whole family plot is secured simultaneously.**

**When Abraham decided upon the burial place  
for Sarah, he also determined the place  
of his burial and of his descendants.**

**Abraham therefore approached the Hittites  
to purchase a burial plot  
for himself and his family.**

**Gen 23:3-4;** “Then, leaving her body, he went to the Hittite elders and said,  
“Here I am, a stranger in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife.  
Please let me have a piece of land for a burial plot.”

**How strange it must have been for  
Abraham to ask the Hittites for a burial place  
in light of the often repeated promise of God:-**

“On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram,  
saying, ‘To your descendants I have given this land,  
from the river of Egypt as far as the great river,  
the river Euphrates: the Kenite and the Kenizzite  
and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite  
and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite  
and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.’ (Genesis 15:18-21;)

**It is also interesting to note that the Hittites, up until the mid  
1900 were often described as a Bible mistake. Many critics  
said that Hittites never existed, until archaeologists dug up  
their remains which are now exhibited in the British Museum.**

**Gen 23:3-4;** “Then, leaving her body, he went to the Hittite elders and said,  
"Here I am, a stranger in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife.  
Please let me have a piece of land for a burial plot.”

**Abraham was compelled to buy a portion of the land  
God had promised to give him and his descendants.**

Furthermore, he was **to purchase the land** from  
a people that **God was going to give into his hand.**

**How ironic that Abraham  
should humbly bow before these people  
and petition them for a piece of ground.**

**Gen 23:3-4;** “Then, leaving her body, he went to the Hittite elders and said,  
“Here I am, a stranger in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife.  
Please let me have a piece of land for a burial plot.”

As we see, **the majority of chapter 23**  
is devoted to the **description of a legal transaction**  
involving **the purchase of a burial plot in Canaan.**

Only in the light of that culture and time can we grasp  
the transaction fully. **It was a legal process that**  
**followed the practices of the Hittites precisely.**

The terms of the agreement were determined  
by a sequence of **negotiations fully within**  
**the customs and culture of the day.**

It may seem **“foreign”** to us, and so it is,  
but not to Abraham or the Hittites. **Abraham’s dealings**  
**are a model of dignity and fair play.**

**Gen 23:3-4;** “Then, leaving her body, he went to the Hittite elders and said,  
“Here I am, a stranger in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife.  
Please let me have a piece of land for a burial plot.”

**Abraham** had requested the sons of Heth (verse 3;),  
the Hittites (verse 10;), **to provide him a place to bury Sarah.**  
He acknowledged that **his problem** was his status  
as a “**stranger and sojourner**” among them. (verse 4;)

At the bottom line this meant that **he was not  
a property owner and had no permanent burial plot.**

**It seemed as though Abraham  
was only asking for the use of a burial place.**

**A man of his station  
was not to be refused such a request.**

**Gen 23:5-6;** “The Hittites replied to Abraham,  
“Certainly, for you are an honoured prince among us. It will be a privilege  
to have you choose the finest of our tombs so you can bury her there.”

**Abraham** was considered a “**prince of God.**”

These **Canaanites** recognized **the hand of God upon this man**  
and were inclined to treat him favourably, **even as**  
**Abimelech had expressed previously.** (21:22ff;)

If Abraham wished **the use of a burial place,**  
anyone would **gladly loan him** the best they had.

However, **a borrowed grave** was **not acceptable** to Abraham.  
There is really nothing wrong with a borrowed grave;  
our Lord was buried in one you recall. (Matthew 27:60;)

But **Jesus** only needed **His grave for three days,**  
whereas **Abraham needed his site for posterity.**  
(Gen 25:9; 50:13;) **Nothing less than**  
**a permanent possession would satisfy Abraham.**



# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

## **A clarification. (Gen 23:7-9;)**

**“Then Abraham bowed low before them and said,**

**"Since this is how you feel, be so kind as to ask Ephron son of Zohar to let me have the cave of Machpelah, down at the end of his field. I want to pay the full price, of course, whatever is publicly agreed upon, so I may have a permanent burial place for my family."**

**Abraham desired a permanent possession, not a borrowed tomb. This land of Canaan was to be his home, not a mere stopping off place.**

**Consequently, Abraham asked the people to urge Ephron to sell him the cave of Machpelah, which was at the end of his field. This was not to be a gift but a purchase at full value of the property.**

# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

## **A modification. (Gen 23:10-11;)**

**“Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered Abraham as the others listened, speaking publicly before all the elders of the town. “No, sir,” he said to Abraham, “please listen to me. I will give you the cave and the field. Here in the presence of my people, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead.”**

**Ephron, who was sitting among the city’s leaders, responded to Abraham’s request.**

**The significant item is not the offer to give the land to Abraham, for this seems to have been a mere formality; it was not an insincere offer so much as one which no one would accept with honour.**

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**The modification is in the quantity of land to be deeded over. Abraham asked only for the cave at the end of Ephron's field, but Ephron specified that the deal was to be a package, the field and the cave. The significance of this will be suggested later.**

### **An anticipated response. (Gen 23:12-13;)**

**"Abraham bowed again to the people of the land, and he replied to Ephron as everyone listened.**

**"No, listen to me," he insisted. "I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there."**

**As expected, Abraham refused the offer of the gift, but did accept the alteration of the agreement, and so the sale is well under way.**

**The field with the cave will be sold to Abraham, and only the price needs to be established.**

**The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**The price set and met. (Gen 23:14-16;)**

"Well," Ephron answered, "the land is worth four hundred pieces of silver, but what is that between friends? Go ahead and bury your dead."

So Abraham paid Ephron the amount he had suggested, four hundred pieces of silver, as was publicly agreed.

**We need to appreciate the beauty of the near eastern culture to enjoy this final act of negotiation.**

**Ephron was nobody's fool. He persists in his offer to give Abraham the land free of charge, but he also places a value on the "gift" that is offered.**

This accomplishes two things: **it names the price,** yet in a very generous way, and it **makes it almost impossible for Abraham to bargain over the price.**

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**If Ephron is so generous as to offer to give the land to Abraham, how could Abraham be so small as to barter over the price?**

**Abraham paid the price, and both men went away with what they had hoped for.**

# Hebron.



# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**A final summary. (Gen 23:17-20;)**

**“He bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah, near Mamre. This included the field, the cave that was in it, and all the trees nearby.”**

**“They became Abraham's permanent possession by the agreement made in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate.”**

**So Abraham buried Sarah there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, which is at Hebron.**

**The field and the cave were sold to Abraham by the Hittites as a permanent burial place.”**



# Cave of Machpelah (Tomb of Patriarchs) in Hebron.





## **The Machpelah: Tomb of the Patriarchs.**

Genesis 23 records the purchase by Abraham of a plot of ground in Hebron for a burial cave for his wife Sarah.

**Later Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah** were all buried here.

**Herod the Great** apparently **built the enclosure** (haram) **around the cave to remember the patriarchs' tomb.**

“A variety of evidence indicates the presence of **several shaft tombs**, dating to the Middle Bronze Age and perhaps also the Iron Age, beneath the Haram and in its environs. **No systematic examination of the remains under the building has ever been possible”**  
(Ofer 1993: 607.)

# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**A final summary. (Gen 23:17-20;)**

Again in what seems to be very **technical** and **legal terminology**, the **transaction** is outlined.

As was the custom, **even the trees** are mentioned in the deeding of the property.  
(23:17;)

**A burial site was thus procured,  
and Abraham proceeded  
to lay his wife's body to rest.**

# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**For Abraham the purchase of the cave of Machpelah was an expression of his faith in God.**

**The writer to the Hebrews alluded to this when he wrote:-**

**“All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.”**

**“For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.”**

**“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”**

**(Hebrews 11:13-16;)**

# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

By determining that Sarah, and later he and his descendants, would be buried in Canaan, **Abraham “staked his claim” in the land which God had promised.**

The land where he would be buried was to be the home-land of his descendants. **The place that God had promised him was the place where he must be buried**

**Jeremiah expressed a similar faith** when he purchased the **field of Anathoth.** (Jeremiah 32:6ff;) While **God was to judge His people for their sins by driving them out of the promised land,** so He would bring them back when they repented.

**The purchase of the field of Anathoth showed Jeremiah’s conviction that God would do as He had promised.** (Jeremiah 32:9-15;)

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**Abraham's purchase** not only exemplified  
**his hope** for a better country, **a heavenly one.**  
(Hebrews 11:16;)

**It also involved him more deeply in the present world in which he lived as a stranger and sojourner.**

**Sojourners didn't own property, but now Abraham did, of necessity. Strangers and sojourners do not have as great an involvement or obligation as do citizens and property owners.**

**Abraham's purchase gave him a “dual citizenship,” so to speak. Let us look at how this could be:-**

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

We are told that according to **Hittite law Abraham** would not have been **obligated** to the king **had he only purchased the cave at Machpelah** rather than **the field and the cave.**

**By acquiring property** as he did, **Abraham** thus **deepened his commitment of faith in God** but also **extended** his worldly obligations.

The situation is clarified by the **Hittite law code** found at **Hettueas, Bogaskoi**, in Asia Minor, which throws considerable light on the transaction.

**Law 46** stipulates that the holder of **an entire field** shall render **the feudal obligations**, but **not he** who holds **only a small part.**

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**A later version** stipulates that notice of the sale be made to the king and **only those feudal services stipulated at that time** are to be given.

According to **Law 47** lands held as gifts from the king **do not** incur feudal obligations, while sale of **all a craftsman's lands do carry it.**

On the other hand, if the larger portion of his holding is sold, the obligation passes to the buyer. **One who usurps a field or is given a field by the people bears the obligation.**

**“By these various conditions it is seen that the land itself bears the obligation which passes to the new buyer.”**

Harold G. Stigers, A Commentary on Genesis.  
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, p. 193.

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

By acquiring property as he did, Abraham thus deepened his commitment of faith in God but also extended his worldly obligations.

I think this is significant. In his first letter **Peter instructs Christians** on their **attitude and conduct** toward this present world in light of the fact that **we are strangers and pilgrims.**  
**I Peter 2:11-17; :-**

“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.”

“Keep your behaviour excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”



## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.”**

**“For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond slaves of God. Honour all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.”**

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

Christians are citizens in two worlds, not just one.

**While our inheritance is in heaven,**

**“imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away”**

**(I Peter 1:4;)**

**we have obligations in this present world.**

We must submit to earthly authorities and institutions.

**(I Peter 2:11ff;)**

We must also obey the laws of the land and pay our taxes.

**(Romans 13:1-7;)**

**Christians have often been accused of being**

**“so heavenly minded, they are of no earthly good.”**

If I understand the Bible correctly, **our heavenly mind is what makes us useful in the present.**

# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

Abraham lived in the present in the light of the future.

**His future inheritance did not lessen  
his present obligations; it established his priorities.**

The fact that he would **inherit the land of Canaan**  
and **“possess the gates of his enemies.”**  
(Genesis 22:17;)

Did not mean he would be kept from purchasing  
property and bowing before constituted authority.  
(cf. 23:7,12;)

And this at the very gates of those whom  
God would later put under his authority. (15:20;)

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**Abraham's purchase of a burial plot provided Israel with roots in the promised land.**

**Jacob, who died in Egypt, was buried in the cave which Abraham purchased. (Genesis 50:1 14;)**

**When the Israelites were freed from Egyptian bondage, where else would they return but to their homeland?**

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**Interestingly, the land of Canaan  
had not yet been possessed  
when this book (Genesis) was written.**

**But those who received it from the hand of Moses  
were those who looked forward to its conquest.**

**None other than Caleb was given the privilege  
of taking the land which Abraham had purchased  
as an “earnest of his inheritance.” (Joshua 14:13;)**

**What a motivation this story must have provided  
for the armies of Israel  
as they marched into Canaan to possess it!**

# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**For us today** this event out of ancient biblical history **has numerous implications:-**

It indicates that in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament **the grave is the symbol of hope** to a true believer in God.

The **cave of Machpelah** stood for centuries as a monument to the faith of **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

The **empty tomb** of our Lord **guarantees to the Christian** that **the grave** is not our final resting place **but an abode for the body** until **Christ returns** for His own.  
(I Corinthians 15; I Thessalonians 4;)

## **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**What does the grave mean to us? Is it the end or only the beginning? Our relationship to the God of Abraham and to His Son, Jesus Christ, makes all the difference.**

**Where we invest our money can demonstrate where we plan to spend our future.**

**One of the five men martyred for his faith in Ecuador, Jim Elliot, once said:=**

**“He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”**

**Abraham believed that God's promises were true. Abraham's investment in Canaan was the best purchase he ever made.**

# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**In New Testament terminology  
he “laid up his treasures in heaven.”  
(Matthew 6:19-20;)**

**The way we spend our money  
may indicate the reality of our faith.**

**Our covenant with God should be the basis  
for our actions and decisions.**

**Abraham’s faith was in God, but it was not a nebulous,  
groundless faith. He believed in the covenant  
which God had made and had often reiterated.**

**It was Abraham’s faith in God’s ability to keep  
His covenant which prompted his purchase  
of the plot where he was to be buried.**



# **The Purchase of a Plot. Gen 23:7-30;**

**Often people ask us - why we remember the Lord's table every week.**

**The answer is at least two-fold.**

**First, this is what our Lord commanded and the early church practiced.**

**(Luke 22:14 20; I Corinthians 11:23ff; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7;)**

**Second, this is a weekly reminder of the covenant which our Lord has made with us, the new covenant in His blood. (Luke 22:20;)**

# **Abraham's Journey of Faith.**

## **The Growth of Faith:-**

**Fearing men:** Telling only half-truths. Gen 12:10-20;

## **Trying to out-think God:-**

Hagar and Ishmael. Gen 15 and 16;

## **Accepting God's Arrangement:-**

Sarah is promised a child. Gen 18:1-15;

## **Fearing God:-**

Offering Isaac. Gen 22:1-14;

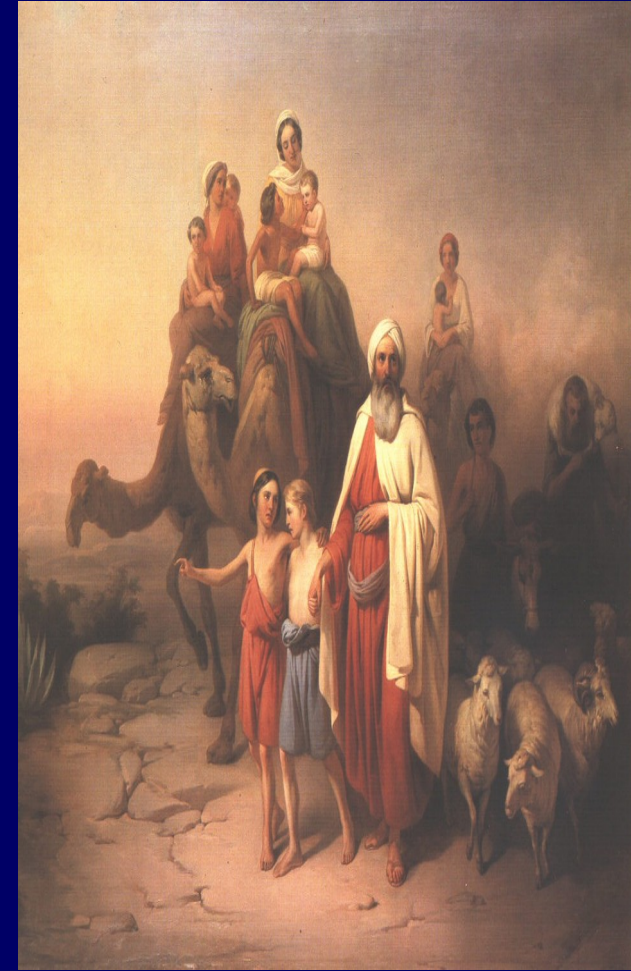
# Abraham's Journey of Faith.



# Abrahams Journey of Faith.

## The Character of Faith:-

<b>Obedient.</b>	<b>Heb 11:8; Jam 2:21;</b>
<b>Courageous.</b>	<b>Gen 14: 12-17;</b>
<b>Humble.</b>	<b>Gen 14:18-25;</b>
<b>Unwavering.</b>	<b>Rom 4:19-22;</b>



## The Result and Reward of Faith:-

<b>His Faith was counted for righteousness.</b>	<b>Rom 4:1-3;</b>
<b>God assured him of eternal blessing.</b>	<b>Gen 22:15-18;</b>
<b>Abraham saw the saviour by Faith.</b>	<b>John 8:56; Gal 3:8;</b>



# **Abraham Described as:-**

**Abram: Exalted father.**

**Gen 11:11-13,17;**

**Abraham:**

**The father of Multitudes.**

**Gen 17:5;**

**The Friend of God.**

**Isa 41:8; James 2:23;**

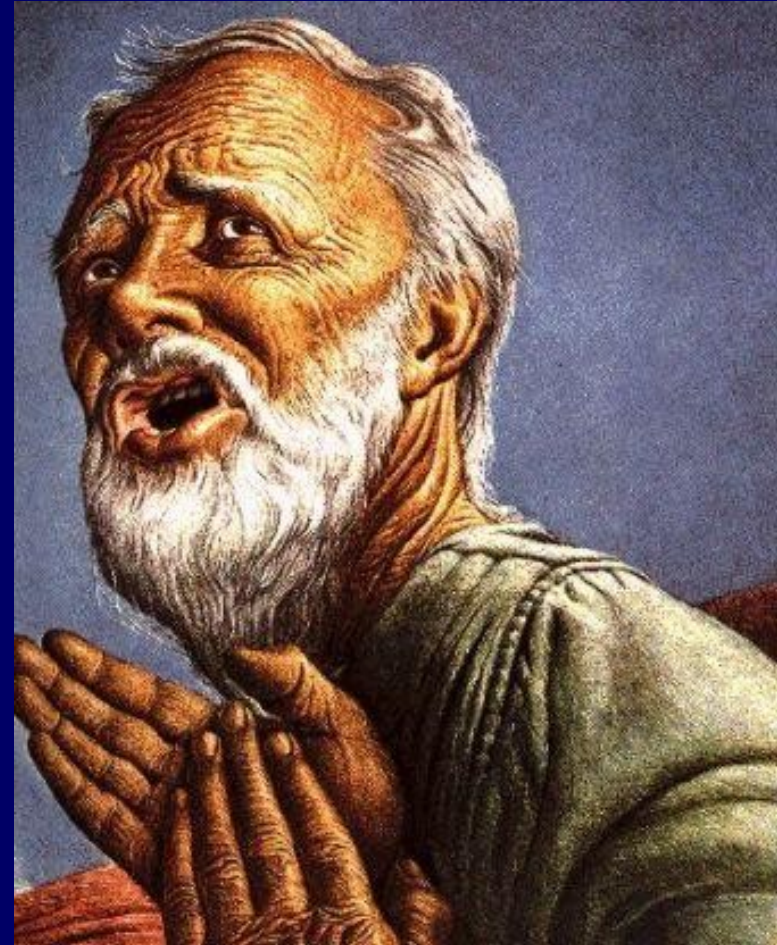
**2 Chron 20:7;**

**Faithful Abraham.**

**Gal 3:9;**

**Father of faith / Father of us all.**

**Rom 4:11,16;**



# Summary of LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

<b>Receives call</b>	from God in Ur of the Chaldeans.
<b>Takes family</b>	and moves from Ur to Haran.
<b>Leaves Haran</b>	with Lot to follow God to Canaan.
<b>Goes to Egypt</b>	during a famine.
<b>Permits Lot</b>	to choose the best land for himself.
<b>Rescues Lot</b>	from captivity after the battle of the kings.
<b>Meets Melchizedek</b>	, king of Salem & priest of God Most High.
<b>Proposes to God</b>	that his chief servant be his heir.
<b>Sees in a</b>	terrifying vision the future of his descendants.
<b>Fathers Ishmael</b>	by his wife's maid, Hagar.
<b>Sends Hagar</b>	and Ishmael away at Sarah's insistence.
<b>Fathers Isaac</b>	by his wife Sarah.
<b>Prepares to offer</b>	up Isaac as a sacrifice.
<b>Changes name</b>	to Abraham & circumcises his household.

# Summary of LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

- Negotiates with**
  - the Lord to spare the righteous in Sodom.
- Misleads Abimelech**
  - by claiming Sarah was only his sister.
- Sends his servant**
  - back to Mesopotamia to find Isaac a wife.
- Purchases his**
  - only piece of land in order to bury Sarah.
- Fathers many**
  - other children with Keturah.
- Dies at a ripe old age,**
  - and is buried by Isaac and Ishmael.

# **Summary of LIFE OF ABRAHAM.**

**Abraham is a model of faith to us today because:-**

**He always tried to obey God in his life.**

**Over the course of his life,  
his faith grew to trust God completely.**

**God chose Abraham to initiate his plan to save mankind.**

**With his special, covenant relationship with God, Abraham  
at times suffered fear, discouragement, and disappointment.**

**He stood boldly for truth in the face of potential opposition.**

**He understood what God's will for him was.**



**Is there a lesson for us? Of Course there is!**

**How Great is OUR faith.**

**Are we willing to obey God  
in the same way that Abraham did?**

**What are WE offering to God in sacrifice?**

**Are WE coming out of (UR, of the Chaldean Sin?)**

**Can WE be called:  
THE NEW FRIENDS OF GOD?**

**Can WE say that we are:  
RIGHTEOUS LIKE ABRAHAM?**

**Abraham's life teaches us  
that when we disobey God, He will:-**

**Forsake all His promises to us?**

**Protect us from any resulting harm,  
if we only turn back to Him?**

**Let us suffer the consequences,  
while still accomplishing His plan?**

**Genesis  
chapters 20 to 23;  
Isaac and Sarah.  
Graeme Morrison**

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**Next in the series:-**

**Genesis chapter 24; Isaac and Rebekah.**