

**English Transcript**  
**Story of the Old Testament**  
**Lesson 3 - Formation of God's Kingdom - The Patriarchs**

Welcome back to The Story of the Old Testament. We will continue with Lesson 3 on page 16. This lesson is called Formation of God's Kingdom: The Patriarchs.

Note the chart at the top of page 16, I have circled the Patriarchs on the middle line of the chart. The story for this period is told in Genesis chapters 12 through 50. Most believe that the poetic book of Job was written during the time of the Patriarchs. The chronological period is 2000 BC to 1500 BC.

In this lesson we will tell the story of how God worked through 4 notable patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Other characters of note are Sarah, Melchizedek, Ishmael, Rebekah, Esau, Rachel and Leah and the Pharaoh in Egypt.

In Lesson 2, I mentioned that the word "generation" or "the account of" is repeated 10 times throughout Genesis. This word means "to give birth" or "new beginning". Each time it appears in Genesis signals a transition to another key event in the story of God's formation of His kingdom. This phrase was used five times in Genesis chapters 1-11. It appears five more times in this lesson.

- Genesis 11:27 – Abram
- Genesis 25:12 – Ishmael
- Genesis 25:29 – Isaac
- Genesis 36:1 – Esau
- Genesis 37:2 - Jacob

We have stated that the Old Testament is the story of the Kingdom of God. Any kingdom requires at least four things.

1. The King
2. People
3. Land
4. Purpose or Rule of Law

We will see each of these four elements introduced in Genesis 12 as God shifts from working in a general way with the world to establish His kingdom and now begins to work in a specific way through a specific group of people that God would call to be His very own.

You will see a map on page 17 that we will reference a few times during this lesson as we tell the story of the Formation of God's Kingdom through the Patriarchs.

One of the pictures I use to tell the story of the Old Testament is on page 18. In this lesson, we will see that when God called Abram to leave his home and go to a land that God would show him, all of the elements of a kingdom were part of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:1-3. God called Abram to go to a distant land. God would be his king. God would give Abram a name and people who would commit to serve the king. God's covenant described

God's unconditional promise to Abram. Abram and the patriarchs trusted in God's promise and the evidence of their faith was demonstrated in their love for God and their obedience.

As a result of sin and rebellion that started in Genesis 3-11, there are now two kingdoms in conflict: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man. As a result of sin, the kingdom of man is separated from God and under God's wrath. As Genesis 12 begins, God decided to shift from working in a general way with the world to establish His kingdom. Instead, God would call Abram and begin to work in a specific way through a specific group of people who will be His very own. God would make Himself known to the world through His chosen people with the intent of drawing the lost nations back into relationship with God.

This is where our story of the Formation of God's kingdom through the Patriarchs begins. Turn with me to page 19. Before we drill down on the life of Abraham, allow me to talk though the box on the right of page 19. We will begin with a high-level timeline of this period.

- Birth of Abram: 2165 BC
- God's covenant promise with Abram: 2090 BC (Abram - age 75)
- Birth of Ishmael: 2079 BC (Abram – age 86)
- God reconfirms covenant with Abraham with circumcision and the promise of Isaac: 2066 BC (Abraham – age 99)
- Birth of Isaac: 2065 BC (Abraham – age 100)
- Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah (God Provides): 2050 BC (Abraham – age 115; Isaac – age 15)
- Sarah's death: 2028 BC (Abraham- age 137; Isaac – age 37)
- Isaac marries Rebekah: 2025 BC (Abraham – age 148; Isaac – age 48)
- Abraham's death: 1990 BC (Abraham – age 175; Isaac – age 75)
- Jacob's family moves to Egypt: 1875 BC
- Jacob's death: 1858 BC (17 years in Egypt)
- Joseph's death: 1804 BC (54 years later)
- Birth of Moses: 1525 BC (280 years after the death of Joseph when nothing was recorded in Scripture)

God's call of Abram up through the birth of Moses spanned 565 years. Let us look first at the story of Abram whose name will later be changed to Abraham.

Refer back to the map on page 17. Abram's family lived in the pagan land of UR of the Chaldeans. This was south of Babylon where God confused the languages after the rebellion of the nations in Genesis 11. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowed through the land of Mesopotamia into the Persian Gulf.

In Genesis 11:27-32 we read about Terah's family. Terah was Abram's father. We learn that Abram married Sarai and she was barren. They had no children. We learn that Lot was Abram's nephew. We also learn that Terah intended to move his family to Canaan. But when they arrived in Harran, which is north of Syria on the map, Terah settled in Harran and never left. Terah died at the age of 205 in Harran.

This is the context for God's calling of Abram in Genesis 12:1-5

*"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there."*

This is an unconditional promise that God made with Abram. God called Abram to go to a promised land, God would make Abram a great nation, and as Abram lives under God's covenant blessing, God's blessing would overflow to all the nations of the earth. Here we see the components of a kingdom: a king, a people, a land and a rule of life.

This covenant with Abram looks all the way into the future to Jesus as the Messiah who will establish His eternal kingdom. God's plan has always been for all of the nations to have the opportunity to turn to Him in faith and repentance to receive forgiveness of sin and a renewed relationship with God.

God established a special place in the land of Canaan – The Promised Land  
God was calling a special group to be His people – Israel  
God established a special promise – Eternal blessing through God as king

The covenant between God and Abram ultimately is focused on a special person – The Lord Jesus Christ.

The map shows the journey of Abram and his family from Harran to Canaan, the land promised to Abram. Abram crossed the Jordan River and settled in Shechem. Abram built an altar and worshiped the Lord. Everywhere Abram went in the land he sets up an altar to worship the Lord. He traveled as far as Egypt for a period of time and Abram acquired much wealth while in Egypt. Eventually he returned to Canaan. After some time, there was a quarrel with his nephew Lot over the lack of land to graze their flocks. Lot chose to live in the fertile plains near Sodom and Gomorrah. Once Lot left, God told Abram that his offspring would be more numerous than the dust of the earth. This reinforced the promise that God had already made with Abram a few years earlier.

This must have been challenging for Abram to believe. He was 75 years old when God first called him to leave his land. Sarai was 65 years and childless because she was barren. How would they give birth to a large nation? This is where we see the faith of Abram. He believed God is the face of the impossible.

As we review the story of God through the life of Moses, please note the faithfulness of God. Repeatedly, God reconfirmed His covenant promise with Abram. God is a promise keeping, faithful God.

In Genesis chapter 15, we see the faith of Abram in response to God's covenant call. God appears to Abram and says, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, your reward shall be very great." Abram seemed to be having doubts as to how God would fulfill His promise of a large nation.

Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus? You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

God reassured Abram that his servant would not be his heir. God promised that he son would be born to him in his old age. And God brought Abram outside and said, look towards the heaven and number the stars, if you're able to number them. Then he said to him, so shall your offspring be.

What followed may be one of the most important verses in the entire Bible. In Genesis 15:6, we are told that Abram believed God and God credited it to him as righteousness. God's righteousness was imputed to Abram not because of his good works but because of God's grace and Abram's faith. This is the message of the gospel.

This passage makes it clear that people have always been saved by grace through faith. Even in the Old Testament. Old Testament believers were saved by grace through faith in the promise of the deliverer, the promise of a Messiah to come. After the Jesus's resurrection, believers are saved by grace through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus. Salvation has always been by grace through faith, not by works. This passage is another Red Thread of Jesus. The grace of the gospel is birthed in Old Testament!

Genesis chapter 16 is a reminder of how difficult it can be to wait on the Lord even when you love the Lord and have great faith. Ten years had passed since Abram left his home to follow the Lord. God reconfirmed His covenant promise in chapter 15 and Abram believed God and God imputed His righteousness to Abram. This did not mean that Abram was perfect and would never sin or have doubts. Chapter 16 revealed the weakness of humanity. Sarai had not had a baby after 10 years of waiting on God. She may have begun to think that it may be time to help God by taking things into her own hands. Sarai and her maidservant Hagar agreed with Abram that this promised son might come through Abram and Hagar. Hagar became pregnant and she gave birth to Ishmael. God would soon make it clear to Abram that Ishmael was not the child of the promise.

From Ishmael would come the 12 Arab nations. A great nation would come out of Ishmael, but God had even greater plans for Abram and Sarai as He had already promised. After another 13 years had passed, it was now 2066 BC. Abram was 99 years old and Sarai was 89. God appears to Abram and reconfirmed His covenant promise once again in chapter 17:1-8.

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."*

*Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will*

*make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”*

To affirm this covenant promise, God changed Abram’s name which meant “exalted father” to Abraham which meant “father of many”. God also changed Sarai name to Sarah which meant “princess”. God also clarified His promise when He said this in 17:19-21,

*“Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.”*

In response, Abraham circumcises himself, Ishmael, and all of the male servants in his household in obedience to God. This act of obedience did not save Abraham. His faith was declared in Genesis 15:6. This act obedience was a demonstration of his faith in God and His covenant promise.

Because God is a promise keeping, faithful God, Sarah gave birth to the promised son, Isaac, one year later in Genesis 21:1-8. Abraham waited 25 years for this promise to be fulfilled. Back in Genesis 15, God told Abraham that the promise to possess the promised land would not be fulfilled for another 400 years. This would take place after Abraham’s people would be mistreated in a foreign land for more than four generations. What does God require as we wait on His timing to fulfill what He has promised? He calls each of us to walk in obedience as a demonstration of our faith as partakers in God’s covenant promise.

Abraham and Sarah loved Isaac. When Isaac was close to 15 years old, God once again tested Abraham’s faith and his love for his covenant keeping God. In Genesis chapter 22, God told Abraham, I know you love Isaac. I am calling you now to go to the mountain that I will show you and sacrifice your son, your only begotten son. This is a significant test for Abraham. God wanted to see if Abraham loved Him more than anything else. Even his promised son, Isaac.

Abraham obeyed God. He got up the next day and went with his servants and his son, Isaac, and they went to the mountain that God showed them. Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac to the Lord. Hebrews 11:17-19 reveals the content of Abraham’s faith in this moment of testing.

*“By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.”*

Abraham knew that Isaac was the promised son. God's promise of the kingdom would flow through Isaac. If God was telling Abraham to sacrifice his son, God must plan to raise him from the dead. And just as Abraham was ready to offer up Isaac to God, the Angel of the Lord called out, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Do not lay your hand on the boy." God was saying, I know that you love me more than even your son. You passed the test.

And God provided the ram for the sacrifice as the substitute for Isaac. God revealed Himself as Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides. This is also another Red Thread in the Old Testament. Jesus is our substitute. He is the lamb who would take away the sins of the world. You know, the father was sacrificing his son for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.

There is another Red Thread earlier in Genesis chapter 14 that I will just mention briefly. You can see this on page 19 in your handout.

After Abraham returned from rescuing his nephew Lot from the five kings, we read that the king of Salem, Melchizedek came out to meet him with bread and wine. Melchizedek was a king and a priest of the Most High God. In Hebrews chapter 7 we also learn that Melchizedek's name meant "King of Righteousness". As King of Salem, he was also known as the "King of Peace". Not much was known about the genealogy of Melchizedek similar to that of Jesus. Melchizedek was not a descendant of Levi which would become a requirement to serve as a priest in Israel. Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi either. In Genesis 14 we read that Abraham honored Melchizedek and gave him a tenth of all the plunder from his military victory. Of Jesus, it is said that He is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

Stop for a moment and focus your worship on Jesus as our **King of righteousness** and **Prince of Peace**. He is the **King or kings**. He is also our **Great High Priest** in the order of Melchizedek. There are many things we do not know about Melchizedek but we do know that God's Word tells us that Melchizedek is a type of Jesus in the Old Testament.

As God continues to form His Kingdom, the covenant promise extends beyond Abraham to the son of the promise, Isaac. In Genesis 26:2-5, God's covenant promise was confirmed with Isaac. In 2025, at the age of 40, Isaac married Rebekah. Rebekah gave birth to twin sons, Esau and Jacob.

God's covenant promise continued through Jacob, the younger son of Isaac. In Genesis 28:10-19, God confirmed His promise with Jacob at Bethel. Jacob fled from Esau and went to Harran, the homeland of Abraham, to find a wife. In chapters 29-33 we read of the years that Jacob worked for his uncle Laban to first marry Leah and then his true love, Rachel. By God's grace, 12 sons are born to Jacob and these sons become the 12 tribes of Israel.

- Sons born through Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun
- Sons born through Bilhah (Rachel's maidservant): Dan, Naphtali
- Sons born through Zilpah (Leah's maidservant): Gad, Asher
- Son's born through Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin

Ultimately, Judah, one of the sons would be the tribe from which Jesus, the promised Messiah would come. This is revealed when God later makes a covenant promise with king David who was also from the line of Judah.

In this lesson, we have been telling the story of how God began to form His kingdom through a special group of people of His very own. He worked through Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. It should be clear why God is often referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

From Genesis chapter 37 through 50, the focus shifted to Joseph. The son who was born through Jacob's true love, Rachel. Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob. As a result of this favoritism, Joseph was hated by his brothers. God gave Joseph two dreams that revealed a time when his brothers and even his parents would bow down to him.

Eventually, Joseph's brother attempted to kill him but instead he was sold into slavery and taken to Egypt. Joseph may have been 17 years old at this time. After more than 13 years of as a slave in Egypt and years in prison, God exalted Joseph to be second in command under Pharaoh. During those 13 years, Joseph continued to walk with God, obey God, and God was with Him throughout his life.

You can read the events of Joseph's life on the right side of page 19. God was working through Joseph to form His kingdom. When the famine that was foretold by God in Pharaoh's dream came to pass, people from all over the world would come to Egypt to buy the grain from Joseph.

God placed Joseph in Egypt to sustain Israel, to sustain Jacob's family, to continue to prepare for God's kingdom to come. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain and through a series of events, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. They were reconciled and Jacob's entire family, 75 people in total, moved to Egypt just as God foretold Abraham in Genesis chapter 15.

God removed His people from the land of Canaan where they would have been tempted to intermarry with the Canaanites. God moved them to Egypt where the Egyptians prohibited marriage across ethnic lines. This was all part of the God's sovereign plan for preserving His people as He was forming His kingdom.

Jacob died in 1858 BC and Joseph returned to the Canaan to bury his father in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When Joseph and the family returned to Egypt, he gathered his brothers and assured them that they had nothing to fear now that their father had died.

Joseph told them, "You intended this for evil, but God intended this for good. And it would lead to the saving of many people." Over the next 300 hundred years, God continued to multiply His people as He formed His Kingdom. Joseph died in 1804 at the age of 110. He made his family commit to bury his bones in the land of Canaan when God brought them back to the land as He promised. Joseph believed what God had promised to his father, grandfather and great grandfather.

280 years after the death of Joseph, God raised up a deliverer to lead His people out of Egypt and back to the Promised Land. We will continue with this story in Lesson 4 with the birth of Moses and the Birth of The Nation.

There is an interesting chart on page 20 that compares the life of Joseph with the life of Jesus. Some think that Joseph may be a type of Christ. A type is something that's introduced in the Old Testament that is also confirmed in the New Testament. We do not see Jesus and Joseph linked in this way in the Scriptures. But we can at least make observations regarding the similarities between their lives and this should cause us to focus our thoughts and worship on the Lord Jesus.

The other chart on page 20 is a genealogy from Noah down through the 12 sons of Jacob. Noah had three sons, Ham, Shem, and Jephthah, and the promise of God was going to flow through Shem.

This continued through Terah. Terah had three sons, Haran, Abram, and Nahor. Haran had a son Lot, and Lot had children, Moab, Benami, and Ammon. They became the heads of the Moabites and the Ammonites, who were archenemies of the nation of Israel.

Abraham had a son through Hagar, named Ishmael. The Arab nations came out of Ishmael. Abraham and Sarah's son of the promise was Isaac. Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Out of Esau, the Edomites are formed. The Edomites become an archenemy of the nation of Israel as well.

Jacob had 12 sons, and God's promise of His eternal kingdom would flow through Judah.

This is an amazing story of God's faithfulness, power, and sovereignty. God was beginning to form His kingdom during this time of the patriarchs. You can read a summary of Genesis on page 21. This part of the Story of the Old Testament is filled with Red Threads of Jesus.

As we consider the life of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, we learn that when God leads us to unknown places, when His promises take many years to be fulfilled, and when He asks us to make extreme sacrifices, we should not be surprised or confused. This is normal in the kingdom of God.

This is how God grows our trust, develops our perseverance, and equips us for significant kingdom purposes. He did this in the life of Abraham. He continues to do this in our lives as well. He counted Abraham's faith as righteousness. Abraham, entered an eternal relationship with God by grace through faith.

This story of active, saving faith continues throughout the Old Testament and even into the New Testament. When we continue with Lesson 4, we will survey the books of Exodus through Joshua. We will see how God's kingdom continues to expand with the birth of the nation of Israel, from the Exodus in Egypt all the way to Joshua leading God's nation into the Promised Land. This all fulfilled the promises that God made to Abraham more than 400 year before.