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Week: One

Topic: Revision

Week: Two

Topic: The call of Abraham

1Content

Bible passages (Genesis 12:1–19)

The call of Abraham, and how he demonstrated his faith and obedience to God. Abraham was the son of Terah. He lived in the town of Haran with his wife Sarai and nephew Lot.

One day, God told Abraham to leave his town (Haran) and his relatives and to go where God would show him. Because Abraham trusted in God and loved to obey him, he left immediately with his wife and Lot and with all they had. Abraham was seventy-five years old when God called him. He had no child at that time. Moreover, his actual name then was Abram. He did not know where God wanted him to go but he obeyed Him by leaving his town and relatives. When Abram arrived Canaan, God told him to live there. God promised Abram that the land of Canaan would belong to him and his descendants.

The importance of answering God's call

If we answer God's call by obeying him, the following things will happen:

1 God will reward us.

2 We will be very happy¹

3. God will keep all the promises He has made to us¹

Week: Three

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Topic: God promised Abraham a son

Content

God promised Abraham a son

Bible passages (Gen: 17:1-8, 15-21, Gen: 22:1-9)

What God promised Abraham

There is a great reward for a man who trusts and obeys God. Because Abraham obeyed God, God changed his name and called him the father of many nations. God promised to make Abram great. His descendants would be countless as the sand of the seashore and stars of heaven. God also promised to give him a son.²

How God blessed Abraham for being obedient

It is good to obey God. We must also obey our parents, teachers, pastors or priests, and those who are older than us. God made Abraham great because Abraham obeyed him. Abraham did not have a child for many decades but God gave him Isaac. He also had many descendants. He became the father of many nations. God blessed Abraham with long life. God said he would give Canaan to Abraham and his descendants. God kept his promise. Abraham and his descendants settled in Canaan. God blessed Abraham with a lot of sheep, cows and goats (cattle), silver and gold. Abraham loved God, so he erected an altar and worshipped the Lord.

When Abraham was 99 years old, while Sarai was 90, God made a promise of a son to them. It was at this point that God decided to change their names. Abram was changed to Abraham, meaning father of many nations. Sarai was changed to Sarah which means princess.

Abraham was given the child Isaac when he was one hundred years old. One day, God wanted to test how much Abraham loved him and could obey him. He told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on mount Moriah. Abraham obeyed and took Isaac to the mountain. He was about to slaughter Isaac as a sacrifice when he heard a voice from heaven. God's angel told him not to touch Isaac. God gave Abraham a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac. God can test our faith and obedience to him in anyway. We must always be ready.

Week: Four

Topic: The family of Jacob

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The family of Jacob

The birth of Jacob

Isaac, Abraham's son was 40 years old when he married Rebecca. After being married for twenty years, Isaac and Rebecca still had no child because Rebecca was barren. So Isaac prayed to God for her and God answered his prayer. Rebecca became pregnant with twins. While she was still pregnant, God told her about the future of the children she was carrying. He told her that the children would fight each other and one of them would be stronger than the other. God also told her that the older child would serve the younger one.

When Rebecca gave birth, the first baby to come out was very hairy. He was named Esau. The second baby came out holding on tight to his brother Esau's heel. He was named Jacob. Jacob cheats his brother and deceive his father When the boys grew up, Esau was outgoing and loved outdoors He became a hunter. Jacob was quiet and liked indoor life. Isaac loved Esau because he was a skilful hunter and always brought good meat home from his hunting trips, while Rebecca loved Jacob. When Isaac became old, he decided to bless his older son Esau because he was not sure of when he would die. He called Esau and instructed him to hunt down some game and prepare a delicious meal with the meat for him to eat so he could bless him. Esau immediately went out to hunt, but Rebecca called Jacob to herself because she had overheard Isaac's instruction to Esau. She told Jacob to go to their farm and bring two young goats so she could use them to prepare a delicious meal that Isaac would eat. When she had cooked the meal, she told Jacob to wear Esau's clothes and then she tied the hairy goat skin around Jacob's hands and neck so that Jacob's skin would feel as hairy as Esau's. Then she sent Jacob to take the food she had prepared to Isaac and to wait for the blessing. Because Isaac was old, his eyes had become weak so he was blind. He could not see that it was Jacob and not Esau who brought the food, although the voice sounded like Jacob's. Isaac wanted to be sure, so he told Jacob to come closer so he could touch him. Jacob went closer, stretched out his hands and his father Isaac felt the hairy goatskin. It felt as hairy as Esau's hands. So Isaac accepted the food and ate it all. Then, to make sure it was Esau and nobody else, Isaac told Jacob to come over and embrace him. When Jacob embraced him, Isaac smelt Esau's scent from the clothes Jacob was wearing and felt convinced that it was Esau after all. Then Isaac

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blessed Jacob with the blessing that was meant for the firstborn son – Esau.

When Esau returned and found out that he had been cheated, he was very angry with Jacob and began to hate him. He also decided to kill Jacob after their father's death. Rebecca heard of Esau's plan and arranged for Jacob to travel away from their home in Beersheba to stay with her brother in Haran until Esau was no longer angry.

Jacob's dream at Bethel

As Jacob travelled, he arrived at a good spot in the evening and decided to stop and camp there for the night. While he slept, he dreamt of a ladder that reached from earth to heaven, and he saw God's angels climbing up and down the ladder. At the top of the ladder, he saw

God standing there and God said to him, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; I will give the land you are lying down on to you and your descendants; your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth and they will cover the land from the east to the west, and from the north to the south. All the families of the earth shall be blessed through you and your descendants. I will be with you and protect you wherever you go. And one day, I will bring you back safely to this land. I will be with you until I give you everything I have promised you.'

When Jacob woke up, he took the stone, which he had used as a pillow, poured oil on it and called the place Bethel, which means 'the house of God.'

Jacob's sons

When Jacob got to his uncle Laban in Haran, he worked for him for many years and married his two daughters, Leah and Rachael. Jacob from the beginning, wanted to marry Rachael; but because his uncle, Laban deceived him, he was forced to marry Leah first. Leah was Rachael's older sister.

Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter. The names of his twelve sons were:

1 Reuben 2 Simeon 3 Levi 4 Judah 5 Dan 6 Naphtali 7 Gad 8 Asher 9 Issachar 10 Zebulun 11 Joseph 12 Benjamin

Week: Five

Topic: Jacob's family in Egypt

Content

Jacob's family in Egypt.

Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob was also called Israel. The name of Joseph's mother was Rachael. Joseph helped his brothers in shepherding their father's animals. Joseph's parents loved him very much. His father loved him more than his other children because he had him in his old age. He, therefore, made a special dress for him. Joseph's brothers hated him because their father loved him in a special way. They also hated him because he would always tell their father about the bad things they did. Their hatred for him increased when he had dreams and told them. The dreams meant that he would rule over his brothers in future.

Joseph's dreams

Joseph told his brothers that he dreamt they were in a field gathering sheaves. His own sheaf stood upright, his brothers' sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to it. His brothers were not happy about the dream. They therefore asked him whether it meant that he would rule them in future. The dream made them hate him much more than they did before. Joseph had another dream and also told his brothers about it. The dream was that he saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing down to him. The sun stood for his father; the moon stood for his mother while the eleven stars stood for his eleven brothers. When he told his father about the dream, he rebuked him and asked if he meant that himself, his mother and his brothers would bow down to him. Joseph's brothers got more jealous of him but his father kept the dreams in his mind.

One day Joseph's father sent him to see how his brothers were taking care of the animals in the field. His brothers did something very wicked they sold him to slave traders for twenty shekels of silver and lied to their father that wild animals ate him up.

The slave traders that bought Joseph sold him in Egypt to Portiphar, an army officer. Joseph was 17 years old at that time. Joseph's faithfulness in Portiphar's house. God loved Joseph and was with him in Portiphar's house. He made everything Joseph did go well. When Portiphar noticed that, he told Joseph to be in charge of his family things. Joseph was obedient to his master Portiphar and was hardworking. Joseph was handsome and because of it, Portiphar's wife started asking him to sleep with her. Joseph refused because he feared God and did not want to do bad things in his master's house. He also did not want to hurt his master.

One day Joseph was working in the house, Mrs Portiphar wanted to force him to sleep with her but Joseph refused and ran out of the house.

Mrs Portiphar felt ashamed and insulted. She therefore screamed and lied to her husband that Joseph wanted to rape her. Portiphar put Joseph in prison because of the lie his wife told him. God was with Joseph in prison. God's love for Joseph made the prison keeper put him in charge of other prisoners. 5

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Week: Six

Topic: Moses the liberator

Content

Moses the Liberator

Bible passages (Exodus 2:1–12, Exodus 3:1–26)

The birth of Moses

A new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph arose in Egypt. When he saw that the number of male Israelites was increasing in the land of Egypt, he became afraid that one day they might fight a war against them and win. He instructed the midwives to kill all baby boys immediately they were born, but because the midwives feared God, they did not do it. He therefore commanded all Egyptians that they should throw every son born to the Israelites into the River Nile. It was at this time that Moses was born by parents who were from the tribe of Levi. The mother tried to hide him for three months, but when she could no longer hide him, she made a basket of bulrushes, placed the baby in it and put it by the river bank. Moses' sister stood far away to see what would happen to the child. Pharaoh's daughter went to the river to bathe; she saw the basket among the reeds and asked her maids to bring it to her. When she opened it, she saw a child in it. She had pity on him because she knew that the baby must have been one of the Hebrew children. Moses' sister went over to her and offered to look for a nurse for the baby. Moses' sister brought the mother of Moses, who nursed the child and was paid by Pharaoh's daughter. When the woman finished nursing the child, she handed him to Pharaoh's daughter who named him Moses, for she said, 'I drew him out of water.' Pharaoh's daughter by the river, with baby Moses in her hands

Moses identified himself with his people

Moses grew up in Pharaoh's house. He knew that he was a Hebrew that had been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. He noticed the bad treatment of his people by the Egyptians. He thought of what to do about it. One day, when he went out he saw an Egyptian fighting with a Hebrew. When he saw that no Egyptian was around, he killed the Egyptian. On the second day, he saw two Hebrews fighting. As he moved closer and advised them not to fight each other, one of the Hebrews said to him, 'Who made you

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a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed an Egyptian?’ When Moses heard this statement, he ran away from Egypt.⁷

Week: Seven

Topic: Moses before Pharaoh

Content

Moses before Pharaoh

Moses and the burning bush

One day Moses was taking care of the sheep of his father-in-law, Jethro the priest of Midian. When he came to Mount Horeb, an angel appeared to him in the flame of fire out of the bush. Moses noticed that the fire was burning but the bush did not get burnt. As he moved closer, God called him out of the bush, ‘Moses!, Moses do not come near. Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is a holy ground.’ God also said he had heard the cry of Israelites and so he would send Moses to deliver them from Pharaoh. Moses made a lot of excuses to God but God said he would be with him and help him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt into the promised land.

Moses asked for the release of his people

Moses took the rod of God in his hand, left Midian and went to Egypt. He went with his brother Aaron to deliver the message from God, saying, ‘Let my people go that they may serve me.’ Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 when they went to Pharaoh. When they got before Pharaoh Aaron threw his rod on the ground and the rod became a snake. Pharaoh called his magicians to do the same by their secret art. Their rods also turned to snakes. Aaron’s rod however, swallowed their rods. The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so he refused to release the children of Israel but instead punished them the more by asking the taskmasters to increase their work. God sent many plagues to Egypt before Pharaoh agreed

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to release the children of Israel. These included turning their water to blood, infection by lice and boils, sending of swarms of locusts and flies, and, finally, killing of all firstborn of both man and animals in one night.⁸

Week: Eight

Topic: Deliverance from bondage

Content

Deliverance from bondage

The exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea Immediately after the death of the firstborn in Egypt, Pharaoh released the children of Israel from bondage. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt into the wilderness towards the Red Sea. God went with them as a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. When Pharaoh heard that the Israelites had left Egypt, he changed his mind. He asked his army to pursue them. Pharaoh's army pursued them until they got to the sea. When the children of Israel saw the Egyptian army, they became afraid. They began to blame Moses for taking them to the wilderness to die. Moses called on God. God asked him to stretch out the rod in his hand over the sea to divide it; he did as God told him and the sea divided immediately and the children of Israel walked through on dry ground. The army of Egypt went after them on dry ground to the middle of the sea. The Lord instructed Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea, Moses did so, and the sea returned and covered the chariots and horsemen of Egypt, and they all died in the Red Sea.

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Week: Nine

Topic: Judges as leaders

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Judges as leaders

Bible passages (Judges 1:10–20, 3 and 1 Samuel 7:7–16)

Explanation of the term, judges

Judges are the ones chosen to take decisions over cases, that is, quarrels or conflicts that are in court. In our country today, we have High Court Judges, Magistrates Appeal Court Judges, and Supreme Court Judges.

In Old Testament times, there were some judges in Israel. Not only did they judge cases, they also led the country and their names are recorded in the Bible

Names of judges in the Bible

When the people of Israel got to the land God promised them, after the death of Joshua, God raised judges as leaders for them.

The names of some of these judges are:

1 Othniel 2 Ehud 3 Deborah 4 Gideon 5 Jephtha 6 Samson 7 Samuel and his sons

Roles of judges as religious and political leaders in the Bible

Judges in the Bible were the people chosen by God to lead Israel to war against their enemies. God saved his people through the judges. They also helped in settling quarrels or conflicts among the people.

Some that also served as seers, prophets and priests, helped to guide and advise the people of Israel on how to serve and worship God. For example, Samuel was a judge in Israel. He led Israel to war against the Philistines. He also served as a priest, a seer and a prophet to the people of Israel.

How God used judges to save the people as recorded in the Bible (Judges 1:10–20, 3; and 1 Samuel 7:7–16)

In the above stated Bible passages are some stories of how God used the judges to save Israel from their enemies. 9

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