

**E100 Section 2.1 Abraham -- Call and Promise.
HC&FS Gonerby, January 2011**

Explain E100

Slide 1 Review of Section 1

The Bible got off to a great start with the miracle of creation and the beauty of the Garden of Eden. But, as you've read, once sin entered the world everything took a turn for the worse. After less than a dozen chapters in Genesis, God has already had to punish humankind by nearly wiping them out with a flood and then scattering them because of their pride at the Tower of Babel.

The world was unravelling and the biggest problem was that people couldn't do anything about it. Their only hope was for God to do something -and quick!

Slide 2 God's Plan of Salvation

That's why our next five readings, in block two, are so important. They show us what God did, taking the first step to save us. His plan was to create a great nation - Israel - and then through them to bless the whole world with a Saviour.

Slide 3 Abraham Isaac and Jacob

His first step was to choose Abraham

Abraham, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob (name change >>Israel), are sometimes referred to as the Patriarchs.

They were the first building blocks in God's great family. As you'll see, they weren't perfect. They had weaknesses: they resisted God, they sinned.

-- It is a sort of swords and sandals soap.

Except if this was an East Enders script you would think it wasn't realistic

-- too sordid, too grubby.

But God still used them.

That should be an encouragement to us.

God's plan isn't thwarted by our mistakes.

We may wonder why God did it. Why did he go to the trouble of reconciling himself to us? Why not just have another huge flood and be done with it? There can be only one answer. As C S Lewis (Narnia) wrote

in *The Screwtape Letters*, 'He really loves the hairless bipeds He has created'

Slide 4 -- Abraham -- The Call

Abraham stands as the greatest figure to be found in the ancient world. Three world religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—revere him as the father of their faiths.

Archeologists have explored the city of his origin, traced his journeys, probed the ruins of towns mentioned in Genesis, and have reconstructed a striking portrait of life 2,000 years BC that in detail after detail confirms the accuracy of the Old Testament account.

But what makes Abraham important - 2 things

1. Through Abraham God reveals His purpose and His goal for the world. In promises to Abram, God revealed that He had a plan!
2. Abram is today a prime model of saving faith

Slide 5 - Map of Abraham's journeys.

Think back to this morning -- you are lying in bed -- nice and warm (bedsocks).

What are your first thoughts on reaching consciousness, upon waking up.

Are they --groan, do I have to get up?

Or are they " it's a new day -- I wonder what magnificent possibilities it holds -- better not waste any time in getting up"

Catchphrase -- "today is the first day of the rest of your life".

You never know what will happen.

Certainly when Abraham woke up one-day he was in for a surprise.

Genesis 12:1 "Leave your country, your family and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you...."

Explain the map -- eastern Mediterranean -- Abraham's Father takes his family to HARAN from his birthplace UR (modern Iraq). (500 miles)
Abraham is called to go to Canaan (modern Israel). (300 miles)

And Abraham trusts God and obeys him, in this Abraham's first great step of faith.

That's the main thing Abraham got right. He didn't know why God had picked him, he didn't know where God was sending him, and he certainly didn't know what God's plan was. All he knew was that God said 'Leave home' and so he did.

Trusting God with your life is what faith is all about. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul explains that Abraham's example pointed to a bigger step of faith - believing in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (Romans 4:16-25). Have you taken that step of faith yet?

Slide 6 The Promise

God not only gives Abraham a call, he gives him a promise.
Verse 2 -- I will bless you and make your descendants into a great nation.
You will become famous and be a blessing to others.
Everyone on earth will be blessed because of you.

I will make you a great nation

From Abraham, Arab and Jew alike trace their origin.
More than one nation now calls Abraham "father."
All this, even though when the promise was given Abraham didn't have any children.

I will bless you and make your name great

The reverence of millions in the three great monotheistic faiths has more that fulfilled this promise.

I will make you a blessing and In you will all the families of the earth be blessed

From Abraham came the people of Israel.
From Israel came both our Scriptures and our Saviour.

God's choice of Abraham and his children was not designed to exclude others.

From the very beginning God's choice of Israel was intended for the benefit of all mankind.

And in Jesus, the fullness of God's who blessing is extended to all peoples. (That we cover from July !!)

There is a final promise, one added after Abraham had responded in faith and left Haran, finally entering the land of Canaan.

The Lord appeared and said: To your descendants I will give THIS land
The purposes of God, and the future of Israel, are focused on a particular place: a land, Palestine, where in our own day we've seen the planting once again of a Jewish state.

Conclusion

We don't know what the year ahead holds for us -- good or bad but we do know that we can choose to trust God and His promises - just as Abraham did.

EXTRA – NOT USED

The Genesis promises stand.

The idea that God chose Israel and made certain promises to her that reveal His eternal purpose, dominates the Old Testament.

And because God's purposes as expressed in the promise are unchangeable, it is to the Old Testament we must look for a key to understand many of our day's current events.

The concept of this covenant also helps us in the study of the rest of Genesis. The stories of two of the patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, are not told simply because they were "interesting" men. Or even because they were believers, through whose experiences we can learn about walking with God. No, Isaac and Jacob are significant in Genesis because these men are inheritors of the divine promise.

In them we see the preservation of the promise, and to them Israel traces the title deed to Palestine and its identity as the people of God.

Later, as a mob of millions struggled out of Egyptian slavery, Moses would remind Israel of her origin and destiny. The children of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob/Israel, would become a nation: a nation called to reveal God to a world that lived without understanding, and without hope.