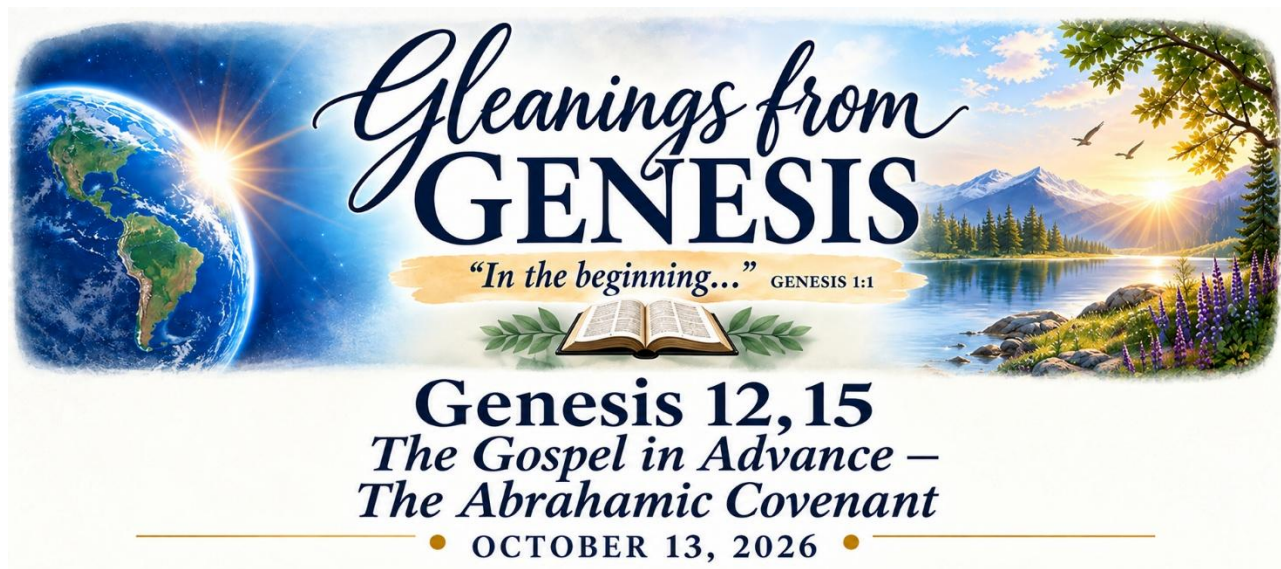




led by Mary Lowman

Who was Abram/Abraham?

Abram/Abraham is the 20th generation from Adam through the lineage of Shem, Noah's son. He was born in Ur of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia, now southern Iraq. Abraham predates the formal establishment of the Jewish nation and the giving of the Torah (the first five books of the Bible).

Jesus reminded the religious rulers of their spiritual state and indicated that they were holding to these traditions but not to the commandments of God.

Mark 7:5–9:

And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"⁶ And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;⁷ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."⁸ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."⁹ And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!"

Abram came from a pagan culture, from a city dedicated to the worship of Nanna, a moon god.

Joshua 24: 2 – 3

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.³ Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many."

Why did God choose Abram?

God specifically chose Abram, a pagan man who had never known or worshiped the true Jehovah God and then equipped him to be what God had called him to be.

Genesis 18:19

For I have chosen him (Abraham), that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

The call of Abram

Genesis 12:1 – 3

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors

you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

God told him to:

- Leave his country, his people, his family and friends—to leave life as he knew it.
- Go to a place he had never been to before, a place that would be shown to him as he went, not before he left!

God promised:

- To make a great nation of him.
- To bless him and make his name great.
- To make him a blessing.
- To bless those who blessed him
- To curse those who dishonored him.
- To bless all families of the earth through him.

Abram was totally unqualified to become the righteous man he became and do what God called him to do. God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called!

1 Corinthians 1:26 - 29

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

How did Abram respond?

Genesis 12:4 – 5:

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

Abram's Fear and God's Promise

Genesis 15:1 - 6

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” ² But 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?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” ⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶ Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

God addresses Abram's fear about his future. And keep in mind that this fear comes after God has given him a great victory.

We are all so prone to fear—and especially to fear the future. What fears do you have today concerning your future?

- Health fears?
- Money fears?
- Career/job fears?
- Marriage fears—either fear of never being married, or fear of a marriage failure, or fear of childlessness?
- Fearful for your children? Will they be saved? Will they follow Christ? Will they succeed?

God responds to Abram “Do not be afraid” and reminds Abram that he is his shield and his very great reward.

God took Abram outside and said, “*Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.*” Your heavenly Father knows how vulnerable you are to fear. In the midst of fear, confess it immediately, and allow God to take you outside of that fear and remind you of all he’s done for you in the past. Look at the stars! Remember God’s promises! Trust God! He knows what he is doing and he has a good plan for you, just as he did for Abram.

Here we see that:

- God makes a promise. A seemingly outrageous and impossible promise.
- Abram questions the promise.
- God reassures him that he is a faithful God.
- Abram decides to trust God. It’s a choice Abram made, not by feelings but by the trustworthiness of his Sovereign Lord.
- God saw his faith and put it on his account as righteousness. Abram was righteous because he chose to believe God. Righteous simply means to do the right thing, to believe the right thing—and that is to believe a righteous God who does all things right.

Abraham was justified by faith alone—faith in the promises of God. Promises which found their fulfillment in Christ.

Romans 4:1 – 2: *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

Galatians 3:7 – 9: *Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

The Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 15:7 - 21

And he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” ⁸ But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” ⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.

¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and you afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

God is saying that he takes full responsibility for the fulfillment of this Covenant. It’s his alone and this Covenant will be fulfilled no matter what.

Genesis 17:1 - 8

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” 3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 4 “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

There are three parts to this Covenant:

1. **Land** - God promised this land to Abram's descendants—to the Israelites who were eventually called Jews.
2. **Descendants** - God promised that this land would be given to Abram's offspring—right down to today.
3. **The world will be blessed** - More than just Israelites would receive the blessing of this Covenant. All nations, all peoples have been blessed because of God's promises to Israel.

You remember what Mary said to Elizabeth as she acknowledged that she, a virgin, would give birth to the promised Messiah. She recalls this Abrahamic Covenant:

“He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.” (Luke 1:54-55a)

And then, after the birth of John the Baptist, Zechariah recalls the same Covenant:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.” (Luke 1:68 - 75)

The understanding of this Covenant is important in understanding what's happening in the world today, in understanding the Holocaust and what happened on October 7, 2023, and all the persecution of Israel since the time of Abraham. But Israel still stands because of the Abrahamic Covenant—not because they deserve it or have earned it or even understand it.

You can be sure that this Covenant has not been discarded or overlooked. It is his Covenant—and because he is a covenant-keeping God, a God who does not lie, who is not deceived, who is totally trustworthy, it will stand until the end of time, and there will be an end of time!