

Genesis



a journey through Genesis

Part 2 :: Genesis 12 - 17

5 studies for individuals or groups

© 2012 Trinity Mount Barker



“Genesis - beginnings part 2” is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License. You are free to share, copy, distribute, transmit or adapt this work, under the following conditions:

This work is identified as the source.

You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

For full licence terms and more information about Creative Commons, please visit www.creativecommons.org

Welcome to Genesis - beginnings, part 2

This series of studies accompanies the teaching series on Genesis at Trinity Mount Barker's 9 AM and 11 AM gatherings in May & June 2012.

These studies are intended to be done before the sermon on the same passage, although of course, you can do them any way that is helpful to you!

If you're using these studies in a Bible Study Group, try to make sure you've read the passage and done your preparation before you meet. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but also to the other members of your group.

If you're a Bible Study Group Leader please don't feel that you need to work your way through each question in every study. With such a wide variety of ages and personalities in our church, we have included a number of different types of questions, including some which reflect on the same points, just from a slightly different perspective. Please choose the questions most appropriate for your group.

If you're doing these studies individually, why not let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with prayer, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recommended Reading:

Salvation Begins: Reading Genesis Today

Genesis - Tyndale OT Commentary

The Message of Genesis (The Bible Speaks Today)

How to Read Genesis

Andrew Reid

Derek Kidner

David Atkinson

Tremper Longman

Promises, Promises

Genesis 12:1 - 20

How did you feel when you moved out of home for the first time?

Have you ever had a phone call from someone who didn't identify themselves, but expected you to know who they were? How did you work out who was calling?

When you hear people use the word "blessing" what do you understand them to mean?

Read Genesis 12:1 - 20

Summarise the four promises that God makes to Abram.

-

-

-

-

How do the promises made to Abram picture a return to the good world of Genesis 1 - 3?

How does chapter 12 contrast with the story of the Tower of Babel in 11:1 - 9?

Although Abram heard God's promises and obeyed his commands, in what ways does his conduct in Egypt show a lack of faith in the promises God had made?

Skim through the rest of the story of Genesis. How do you see God's promises to Abram being fulfilled (in part or in full)?

At which points in the story of Genesis does it look like the promises are not going to be fulfilled?

“The key theological themes of Genesis 12 – 50, indeed of the whole Pentateuch, are set out in Genesis 12:1–3.”

In your understanding of Genesis and the other four books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy), how accurate is that statement?

Where would you turn in the New Testament to see these promises reaching their fulfilment?

See Romans 4, 2 Corinthians 1:20 & Galatians 3:15 - 18 to help you answer this question.

In what ways can these promises only ever be ultimately fulfilled in Jesus?

In what circumstances do you find it most difficult to trust God's promises?

For which of God's blessings to you are you most thankful?

A Whole Lot of Trouble

Genesis 13:1 - 14:24

In your family, did you tend to be the one who rescued the other family members when they got into trouble, or the one who needed rescuing?

How good are you at waiting? Are you happy for things to be a long time coming or do you need everything right now? What challenges does your particular approach to waiting create for you?

Read Genesis 13:1 - 18

How are the promises of Genesis 12:1 - 3 moving towards fulfilment in this section?

The author sets up two deliberate contrasts of characters in these two chapters. The first is between Abram and Lot. Make a list with some comments about everything we learn about each of Abram and Lot in chapter 13.

Why do you think the author tells us in verse 13 about the sinfulness of the people of Sodom?

What details are added to the promises that God made in chapter 12?

Read Genesis 14:1 - 24

The second great contrast in these two chapters is between the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, king of Salem (probably Jerusalem). Make a list of everything we learn about these two kings.

What lesson do you think the author wants us to learn from the experience and actions of Melchizedek?

What do you think Abram's response to the king of Sodom demonstrates about living in faith in response to the promises of God?

How do Abram's actions in this section contrast to the lack of faith he displayed in Egypt in chapter 12?

Read Hebrews 7:1 - 22

How does the author of the letter to the Hebrews use the story of Melchizedek to teach his readers about Jesus?

Specifically, what are the characteristics of Melchizedek that make him a “type” or a shadow of Jesus?

What does Hebrews 7 teach us about the blessings that can be ours through Jesus?

How are the promises of Genesis 12:1 - 3 working out by the end of chapter 14?

By the end of chapter 14, Abram is pictured as man of faith, living out his trust in God in a broken world. What are the challenges of living out your faith in Jesus in a broken world today?

Someone asks you “Do you want the good news first or the bad news?” Which do you choose? Why?

Have you ever believed a promise that seemed too good to be true? Was it? How did it turn out?

Read Genesis 15:1 - 21

What significance do you see in God's greeting in verse 1?

What new promises or details are added to what God has already promised Abram?

What parts of the promises already made are repeated here? Why do you think some details are repeated and some are not?

What is the significance of verse 6?

Discuss the relationship between promise, faith and righteousness.

How do you think Abram might have felt as he realised the time-frame for God's promises was a very long one (v 13 - 16, etc)?

Is it wrong to ask God for assurance of his promises (cf v 8)?

If Abram, as he's presented in this section, was our sole model for how to live in response to God's Word, what would we know about living a faithful life?

Consider the promises that God has made to Abraham. Make a note of the ways in which you see each of them fulfilled in these three different contexts.

**Life of Abram &
His Descendants**

Life of Christ

**Christ's Eternal
Kingdom**

Nation

Blessing

Land

Offspring

Read Romans 9:1 - 16

What theological point is Paul illustrating with his reference to God's promise to Abraham?

How is Paul's point emphasised by what he goes on to say in verses 10 - 16?

A Christian friend says to you, "Nothing has come of God's promises in the last 2000 years. I don't think it's worth waiting any longer."

How do you respond?

A False Start

Genesis 16:1 - 16

If you're a parent: What do you think is the hardest thing about being a parent?

If you're not a parent: What do you expect would be the most difficult aspect of parenting?

Do you find that you're happy to learn from others' experience or do you prefer to see things for yourself?

When do you find it hardest to trust in God's promises?

Read Genesis 16:1 - 16

The kind of "surrogacy" Sarai suggests in this section was a regular practice in ancient Near-Eastern cultures, but how is it presented by the author of Genesis?

What is the message that God sends to Abram & Sarai through this episode?

Why do you think the angel instructs Hagar to return to Sarai?

How would you describe Hagar's understanding of God by the end of this episode?

At what points in this story do you see human sinfulness and unbelief being demonstrated?

How are God's grace and mercy displayed in this section, even in the face of human folly and unbelief?

Can you think of other examples in the Scriptures when God's sovereign mercy triumphs over human sinfulness?

How does this episode encourage you when you find it difficult to trust in God's promises?

As Christians we believe the Bible to be one unfolding story of God's plan that centres on Jesus Christ.

How does this story fit into the larger story of Christ, and what is its purpose in that broader narrative?

Imagine you have a friend whom you long to come to the understanding that God cares for people in unlikely and unexpected situations. How would you use this episode and passages like Psalm 139:1 - 12 to help them?

Is there a promise of God that you have been waiting a long time to see fulfilled?

How often do you go back to the Bible to reassure yourself that God did in fact really make that promise?

The Covenant Confirmed

Genesis 17:1 - 27

Have you ever wished you could change your name?
What would you have changed it to?

What is the greatest promise anyone has ever made to you?
(If you're married, don't include your wedding vows - think of something else!!)

Read Genesis 17:1 - 27

What is God "confirming" (v 2)?

Is the new name that God gives Abram just a case of playing semantics? Why or why not?

What is the purpose of circumcision for Abraham and his household and descendants?

Why did God command that those in Abraham's family be circumcised, including Ishmael, rather than allowing those young men to choose to be circumcised later on, when they chose to?

How can a covenant demonstrated "in the flesh" (v 14) be an everlasting covenant?

What new information is added to the promises to Abraham?

What do we learn from verse 18 about Abraham's understanding of God's promises?

Think of the story of Abraham up to this point. What are the conditions Abraham must fulfil in order to receive the blessings of the covenant and the promises of God?

What do we learn about God's plans and purposes from the covenant language used here?

In what ways do the introductory promises (verses 2 - 6) look forward primarily to a fulfilment wider than just national Israel?

If you had to choose a key verse from this section that unlocks the meaning of the whole, which verse would you choose?

This section contains five sections of speech from God: verses 1 – 2, 4 – 8, 9 – 14, 15 – 16 and 19 – 21. After his chapter divine speeches are significantly less common. What do you think might be the significance of this turning point?

What are the signs today that someone belongs among God's people?

A preacher once exhorted his congregation to "Find your Ishmael - the person you long to live under God's blessing."

While such a statement recognises the burden we have for loved ones who don't know Jesus, how is it at odds with the purpose of this section and also the broader story of Scripture?

Trinity
Mount Barker 
a Trinity Network Church

Office: 5/2 Cameron Rd

Mount Barker

South Australia 5251

08 8398 2827

info@trinitymountbarker.org.au

facebook.com/TrinityMountBarker

www.trinitymountbarker.org.au