

A study of Genesis 1–12

FAMILY TREE

Successful NFL coaches often trace their roots back to other successful coaches. Coaching trees trace the influence of head coaches who were former assistants. One of the largest and most successful coaching trees is that of legendary coach Bill Walsh. However, generations before Walsh we find the virtual head of almost every great coach, Sid Gillman.

Genesis 1–11 traced a lot of family trees from Adam to Noah and beyond. As the generation of former Egyptian slaves wander in the wilderness, Noah's family tree helps to explain the different people groups found in the land of Canaan, aka, the Promised Land. However, one line stands out. Noah is a little like Sid Gillman, but as we open Genesis 12, we meet Bill Walsh.

Abram, later renamed "Abraham," headed up the family tree that dominates the rest of the Bible. Yes, fantastic biblical figures like Joseph, King David, the prophet Isaiah, and even the Apostle Paul descend from Noah, but they're seen as children of Abraham. Why? Because it was through Abraham's faith that his family became the family of promise. The one through whom the world would meet its Savior, Jesus Christ.

GENESIS 12:1–9

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father's household to the land that I will show you." ² Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, so that you will exemplify divine blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, so that all the families of the earth may receive blessing through you." ⁴ So Abram left, just as the LORD had told him to do, and Lot went with him. (Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.) ⁵ And Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they left for the land of Canaan. They entered the land of Canaan.

⁶ Abram traveled through the land as far as the oak tree of Moreh at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ Then he moved from there to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and worshiped the LORD. ⁹ Abram continually journeyed by stages down to the Negev.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Abraham's story occurred approximately 4,000 years ago. Moses recorded the story approximately 3,500 years ago. Many of us struggle to imagine what life was like when our grandparents were growing up, much less a man who lived thousands of years ago in a place thousands of miles away. All that to say, Abraham had incredible faith. Check out the QR code to get a little more detail on Abraham's journey that took an incredible amount of faith.



DISCUSSION

What is one thing you're hoping will be different next semester than it is now?

1. God told Abram to leave where/who and go to where? (1)

2. What did God promise to Abram regarding...
Land? (1, 7)

Seed? (2)

Blessing? (3)

3. What did Abram do and at what age? (4)

4. Why do you think God called this man?

5. Based on our study of Genesis 1–12 how is God calling you?

Perhaps something has been bothering you. Maybe you've felt unsettled through this study about something, a holy discontent. It's not too late, talk to your coach today.

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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STUDY NOTES IN THE BEGINNING

Genesis 1–11 covers more time than the entire rest of the Bible combined. In many ways, Genesis 1–11 stand as a prologue for the rest of the Bible. Genesis 1 literally describes the beginning of time itself whereas Genesis 12 slams the brakes and focuses in on one man and one family. Ironically, however, the events of Genesis 12 happened over 500 years before Genesis 1 was written. Although God revealed the beginning of time to Moses, it was to Moses' distant ancestor that God revealed himself, and made a promise.

The plot of the whole Bible begins like this, ***“Now the LORD said to Abram.”*** Abram lived *beyond the Euphrates River* and *worshiped other gods* (Joshua 24:2). He basically worked, minding his own business, until one day he got tapped on the shoulder from some unknown God. This wasn't one of his family's gods. Instead, this God was real. He spoke. He issued a command, ***“Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father's household to the land that I will show you.”***

Today, many people travel and live far from home. Perhaps you plan to head to college far from your parents' house. In Abram's day, that wasn't done. There were no bank accounts, no motorized transportation, and no protection of any kind. If you left your family and your people, you had to take everything you had and you risked losing it all. If you get in trouble today, you can hop on a plane and be anywhere in the world in 24 hours or less. Trouble back then meant death and despair. So, why should Abram leave?

GOD IS PERSONAL

God promised Abram that if he obeyed, God would give him ***the land that I will show you*** (land), he would make Abram ***into a great nation*** (seed), ***and I will bless you*** (blessing). We refer to this three-fold promise (land, seed, and blessing), as the Abrahamic Covenant. Abram had the promise of the Creator, ***“I will bless those who bless you, the one who treats you lightly I must curse, so that all the families of the earth may receive blessing through you.”*** For his obedience, the whole world would be blessed. However, the potential cost was great.

Without hesitation or fanfare, the Bible records Abram's response, ***Abram left, just as the LORD had told him to do. Abram was 75***, childless, but wealthy with many ***possessions and people***. When he arrived at the right place, ***the LORD appeared***

to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” From the north of the Promised Land Abram walked, eventually ending at its southernmost tip in ***the Negev***. All the land through which Abram journeyed would belong to his descendants.

GOD PERSONALLY CALLS US

Abram (Abraham) is a central figure in the Bible. God made the promise of land, seed, and blessing, yet Romans 4 makes clear that Abraham's response to that promise mattered. Abraham responded in faith. God said “go,” and despite the danger, Abraham went—that's faith. Faith means taking God at his word. It's trusting in God's provision.

God said he would protect Abraham, that those who treated him well would be blessed, but those who didn't would be cursed. Catch this, God's promise to Abraham even extends to us—***the families of the earth may receive blessing through you***. Some of us may be direct descendants of Abraham, others of us maybe not. However, the world has indeed been blessed through Abraham.

The Gospel of Matthew opens with ***the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*** (Matthew 1:1). Although Abraham lived approximately 2,000 years before Jesus, he is a “son,” a direct heir, and the one to fulfill the promise to bless the whole world. Through Christ, even those outside of the family of Abraham can have a personal relationship with God.

As we wrap up our study of Genesis 1–12, let this be the guiding principle with which you leave. For all that we've studied, nothing is more important than having a relationship with God through Jesus. I'm not talking about cultural Christianity, or showing up to church on Christmas and Easter, or #blessed. I'm talking about a willingness to have the faith to leave everything behind like Abraham, to be mocked and ridiculed like Noah, to walk with God like Enoch, and to experience redemption from the sin of Adam.

Statistically, many of you doing this study, who “walk” with God in high school, will not be walking with God in 5–10 years. Don't be a statistic. Be different. Be a rebel. We've seen clearly that those who are faithful, who faithfully obey, exist in the extreme minority. For the thousands of people who would have lived and died during the time covered in Genesis 1–12, only a few were faithful. God is calling you personally—to live on purpose, to live dangerously, to change the world through the powerful name of Jesus Christ.