

1. As you read these chapters watch out for evidence that God is in control of every situation - be it the timing of the birth of Isaac or Treaty made with other nations. Note down the evidence that you collect.

Abraham may sometimes have wondered if God's power could really bring about the impossible. Sometimes we too are fearful and forget God is in control.

2. Write down your own fears alongside the evidence that God is all powerful. What happens to your fears as you look at the God who is in command?

**Pray** for any you know who are fearful and pray that you will be able to share with them the hope and confidence which comes from knowing that God is in control.

### **Day 5. Just testing!**

#### **Genesis 22: 1-19**

1. Being a man of faith did not mean instant gratification for every one of Abraham's whims and wishes. Faith grows through being tested and Abraham's faith faced just such a trial. Did God make and keep his promises?
2. Read through these verses a couple of times, seeing it first of all from Abraham's point of view and then from God's angle. In what ways was Abraham's faith strengthened through this testing?
3. Can you think of times when your own faith or that of your church or even the wider Christian fellowship has been tested, yet through it all blessing has resulted? Are you prepared for your own faith to be tested?

**Pray:** Pause to thank God for the way in which he works and pray for any situations you know in which someone is going through a tough patch.

God not only tested Abraham's faith but also demonstrated that to be in a covenant relationship with him required total obedience, whatever the cost.

4. Make a list of all the things and people which are precious to you. Is God more important to you than each of them?

### **Weekend**

Over the weekend find time to read chapters 26 - 36.

As you do so watch out for the ways in which Jacob was like his grandfather, Abraham.

Both were part of God's eternal plan, yet both tried to manipulate God. Both received God's blessing, yet both sinned many times.

Write down your observations.



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### **Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes**

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#### **Week 7: Genesis 12-50 (A bird's-eye view)**

Ancient family trees are fascinating. But frustrating too, for they give only the bare facts about a generation - who married whom and who gave birth to whom. Tragedies and pleasures are lost in the mists of time.

In the next 10 studies we are going to look at the first four generations of the family of Abraham. Fortunately, we are not restricted by a family tree for we have plenty of detail about the personal lives of people in this family. In fact, we have so much, that we can take only a quick bird's-eye view.

But you may be asking, 'What is the value of learning about these ancient men of God?'

Their God is our God even though our understanding of him must be greater since we are living this side of the cross. He deals with us and them in very similar ways. And some of the promises that God made to Abraham are affecting us 4,000 years later!

#### **Day 1. Making a start**

##### **Genesis 12:1 9 & 15:1-7**

Ask God to help you grasp the amazing nature of the promises he made to Abraham.

1. As you read these two passages make a note of the promises God made, and any conditions that accompany them.  
God's people today are descendants of Abraham in that the commitment God made to Abraham he has also made to the church.
2. What are the results of such a commitment on his part?
3. What about times when the church sins or forgets his promises?
4. And what happens when you try to live as though God has no plans for, or interest in, your life?

#### **Note on 'Covenant'**

God had entered into a special relationship with his people, a relationship which was an indispensable part of the covenant he made with them. This was no ordinary business agreement between partners, for God always stated the terms and took the initiative. Its dual purpose was to maintain fellowship between God

and his people and to ensure that they were holy and separate from other nations. Israel did have a responsibility to be faithful to the covenant.

Four distinct covenants are described in the Old Testament: with Noah in Genesis 9, with Abraham in Genesis 15, with Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus 19-24 and with David in 2 Samuel 7. There is also the promise of a new kind of covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

There is not a great deal of information on how covenants were actually made, although descriptions in, for example, Genesis 15 do give us some inkling. It may be helpful to read the article on 'Covenant' in a Bible Dictionary.

It was not enough for Abraham to receive the promises. A response was required.

**Praise & Thanksgiving:** Thank God that his promises still stand even though you yourself, and the church as a whole, sometimes ignore or distort them.

### Day 2. A man of God

#### **Genesis 12:10 –13:18**

Abraham, the man God had chosen to set in motion his plan of salvation for the world, was an outstanding character. This is particularly clear when he is compared with his nephew, Lot (although, as we shall see in the next study, Abraham was not perfect himself).

1. As you read these verse, list any differences you can discern in the character and behaviour of Abraham and Lot.
2. Look at God's promise to Abraham in 13:14-17. What does this tell you about Abraham's relationship with God? How does your experience of God measure up in comparison?

#### **'All nations will be blessed'**

Right from the start God's promises were not just for Abraham and his family (12:3). Israel frequently forgot this - as do we!

3. What are you doing to bring about the fulfilment of this promise made to Abraham 4,000 years ago?

#### **Think & Pray:**

- Can you think of overseas students or people of other nationalities in your town who need to know of a God who makes and keeps promises?
- In what ways are you building up relationships with them?
- And how are you praying for those who have actually left their own country to take the gospel to others?

### Day 3. It's a matter of faith

#### **Genesis 16:1 – 17:27**

Look back to your notes from study 1 to refresh your memory on the conditions that accompanied the promises.

1. As you read chs.16 and 17 notice how the promises of ch.15 were expanded in ch.17. What was Abraham's response to these promises? Jot down your conclusions.
2. Abraham has been heralded throughout the Bible as a man of faith (see Romans 4, for example). What evidence do you see here that he deserved such a title? Write down your observations.

Notice that it was God who declared him righteous - pure and acceptable in the sight of a holy God.

He had done the same for those who have faith in his power and willingness to make anyone righteous.

3. Try to explain in your own words why this business of being 'accepted as righteous' is such an important part of God's dealing with mankind today. Why are we unable to make ourselves acceptable to God?

Do you live as someone whom God has made righteous? In what ways will this show itself?

4. This man of faith and righteousness was still prone to sin, as we read for example in 12:10-20 and ch.16. What were Abraham's failings?
5. Despite such imperfections God still kept his promises to Abraham, although he had to suffer the consequences. (Ishmael's descendants were a 'thorn in the side' of Israel from then on. Look up Genesis 25:18.) How could he have kept himself from sinning?

**Think& Pray:** What about us? How can we guard against falling into sin? You might like to discuss this with others who have been Christians longer than you have. Pray that you will not fall into temptation. (Matt 6:13)

### Day 4. God in control

#### **Genesis 21:1-33**

God's plans are not like castles in the air - unrealistic and highly unlikely to materialize. Having laid his plans, God has the power to see them become reality, although man's waywardness may sometimes appear to alter them. **Pray:** Ask God to reassure you that he is in control of the affairs of this world.