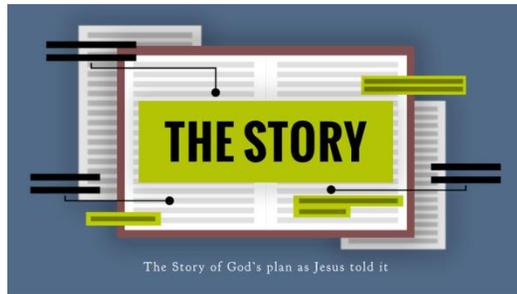


## Follow-Up for Gospel Communities Week of Oct 7



Key passage: Gen 12:1-7

### The Overall Plan: Abraham

The Story of God's plan, that Jesus on the road to Emmaus, begins with Abraham and his family. The Apostles following his example also begin with Abraham when they tell the story in Acts, because it is through Abraham's family that God reveals and promises to advance his plan.

Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of many nations. He was born in the Mesopotamian city of Ur. So our story starts in Ur. God told him to leave Ur to go to a place that God would show him. So Abraham leaves Ur with his family: his wife Sarah, his father Terah, and his nephew Lot. So the four main characters are Abraham, Sarah, Terah and Lot. They leave and travel up the Euphrates River, which was the main trade route, until they reach the town of Haran, where they live for 23 years and become very rich. Terah dies in Haran. Then Abraham, Sarah, and Lot go South West to the Land of Canaan and settle there. It is there that God promises three things to Abraham: Land (basically Israel today), Descendants (a great nation will come from his line), and Blessing (through Abraham's seed God will eventually bless all nations of the world).

Even though Abraham's wife Sarah is unable to have children, Abraham trusts in God's promise and is declared righteous by God. Abraham made many mistakes but eventually is given two sons, Ishmael and Isaac: Ishmael by Sara's servant, and the promised child Isaac born in Sarah's old age. God tests Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac and just before Abraham follows through with it God provides a ram as a substitute. Isaac,

the son born of God's promise, later has two sons of his own: Jacob and Esau. After much dysfunctional family drama Jacob ends up with 12 sons whose descendants became the 12 tribes of Israel. The second to the youngest was Joseph.

It is through Joseph that God will begin to fulfill his promise to Abraham and his descendants - to make them into a great nation. This comes about in an unusual way through the life of Joseph, who was willing to follow God's plan.

Joseph was favored by his father Jacob who gave him a coat of many colors. Jacob's older brothers all were jealous and hated him and sold him into slavery. He eventually wound up in Egypt, a slave to the house of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard. There here Joseph rose to be manager over Potiphar's house, where Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him but failed. So she lied and got Joseph thrown into prison. In prison Joseph continued to humbly serve and eventually rose to be in charge of all the prisoners. In time he is brought before the Pharaoh to interpret a dream that warned of coming famine. Joseph is put in charge of Pharaoh's house and made second in command over all of Egypt. Then through a number of circumstances, Joseph brings his family down to Egypt, saving them from seven years famine where they live and grow in numbers. Jacob in his old age blesses his sons before he dies.

Even though Joseph was sold into slavery and wrongfully imprisoned he rose to become second in command over all of Egypt (the most powerful nation in the world at that time). What was his key to success? We learn from his closing words to his brothers, "you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." Joseph recognized that God was acting through Joseph to preserve Abraham's family, and to grow Israel into a great nation just like he promised.

But after Joseph dies a new pharaoh becomes king who did not know Joseph. This new pharaoh is afraid of the now estimated 2.5 million Israelites living in Egypt so he puts them into slavery beginning 400 years of Egyptian captivity.

## Review and Learn the main points of the story:

(Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daYd\\_Rtaklo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daYd_Rtaklo))

The story starts in what town? (start the car) **Ur**

Our four main Characters are? (count off 4 fingers)

**Abraham, Sarah, Terah, and Lot**

God tells them to leave so they go up the **river** (wiggle hand moving SW) **Euphrates** because it was the main trade route

Until they come to what town? (stroke hair) **Haran** where they become **rich** before Terah dies.

They then leave Haran and go to the (walk SW) to the land of **Canaan**

Where God promises Abraham three things (count off three fingers): **Land, Descendants, and Blessing** for all nations

Abraham has two sons (two I's point to eyes) **Ishmael and Isaac**

Isaac the son born of God's promise has two sons of his own (hold up two fingers): **Jacob and Esau**

How many sons does Jacob have? (hands on either side of head count off fingers and ears) **12**

And the second youngest is **Joseph** (wiggle ring finger)

Joseph was favored by his father but hated by his brothers and **sold into slavery** (walk with hands bound) in the country of **Egypt** to the house of Potiphar

After being thrown into prison Joseph rises to be (salute) **second in command** over all of Egypt

There Joseph and his family live and grow into a **great nation** (spread arms bigger and bigger) Approximately How many people? (use fingers) **2.5million**

Joseph dies and a new Pharaoh takes over and the Israelites are **enslaved** (bound hands) for **400 years**,

### Questions:

**Is there evidence of God's promise to Abraham shaping the events of human history? (Real people, places, events that fit God's promise)**

**If this story turns out to be true, what are some things it calls us to believe? How do these things challenge your current beliefs?**

*For example: one thing it calls us to believe that God is actually involved in shaping human history. We often tend to view history as being shaped solely by human decision and culture.*