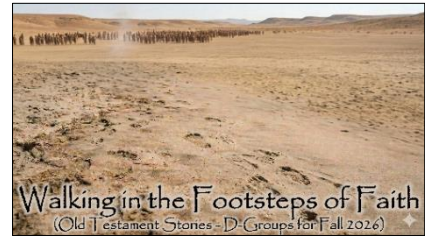


“Walking in the Footsteps of Faith”

OT Stories - Fall 2026 D-Groups

For Wednesday, September 16
ABRAHAM (Genesis 12-25)



The Big Picture - Where We Are in the OT Timeline

Appropriately, our first character in our look at the OT* is known as the “father” - **ABRAHAM**.** He’s not only the father of the Israelites as a whole, but also, the father of faith even for us in Christ (see Galatians 3, especially 3:26-29 and Romans 4). There’s even a song many of us sang about him as kids ... granted, I’m not sure any of us got the point or connection that *“I am one of them, and so are you”* while we waved our arms, lifted our feet, nodded our heads or turned around and sat down!

Abraham’s story appears after the events of Babel which had led to the God-ordained spread of humanity across the world (Genesis 11). Within the sprawling peoples, the Biblical story zooms in on this single man whom the Lord calls and to whom He makes a significant promise - one that, as we’ll see, is intended to provide a broad map for God’s intended purposes. **At the heart of Abraham’s response to God is FAITH.** In fact, that’s why he becomes so significant in the NT with Paul’s teaching about being justified/made right with God “by faith” - as Abraham was (see Genesis 15:6). We are saved by following in Abraham’s footsteps and believing the promise that God makes to us in and through Christ. That’s an important connection to recognize as those who put our faith in Jesus.

Yet, before we get to that, we want to see Abraham’s broader place in the story as a whole. From the very start, he receives a great promise from God (Genesis 12:1-3 ... as we have through Christ). That promise, though, is *never* intended to be only for him and his own genetic descendants. Instead, a foundational part of it all is the place Abraham would have as the ancestor of the very Messiah through whom God’s broader purposes for humanity would be fulfilled; it’s even what is at the heart of our faith as followers of Jesus! It all connects back to Genesis 1-3. The “(very) good” creation that God made to bring blessing to the people He created came to be under a curse because of human sin. Yet, even from there, God’s redeeming purpose centers around His plan to restore His blessings to all people. In Genesis 12, Abraham takes center stage in that overall story.

* *There are certainly significant foundations in Genesis 1-11 that we could have included. However, for the sake of this specific series, we’re starting our focus where the specific story of OT Israel begins. In the end, we only have room for 10 stories.*

** *In the story, he originally is named “Abram.” He’s far better known by the name he would later receive in Genesis 17. Both names have a connection to “father,” as in the Aramaic word “Abba” which Jesus would use to refer to our God. Specifically, “Abram” means “high or exalted father” while “Abraham” means “father of many” - a name that is particularly significant given the promise he would receive.*

The Close-Up for Today, September 16 - Genesis 12:1-25:10

READ the TEXT: GENESIS 12:1-25:10 with a focus on 12:1-9; 15:1-18:15; 21:1-7 and 22:1-19
(make sure to read the text, focusing on the broader narrative progression; in other words, “don’t miss the forest for the trees”)

Some notes on the overall flow of the story with emphasis on the key sections listed above:

12:1-9 ... This is the initial “call” and promise (12:1-3). It’s hard to overstate the importance of these verses to the overall storyline of Scripture, not to mention the foundational purpose for the OT people of God as Abraham’s descendants. In the end, it wasn’t *just* about Abraham becoming a great nation and the father of many peoples; rather, it was about “*all families on earth [being] blessed through him.*” Reading from this side of Jesus with His global mission to bring salvation to all nations and peoples, it’s easy to see how He fulfills this promise. Yet, again, let’s not dismiss the FAITH Abraham demonstrates by choosing to pack up and leave.

15:1-18:15 ... The story has some twists and turns here, but don’t miss the thread throughout: **God’s foundational promise to Abraham.** Fundamentally, that *requires* an initial child; after all, he cannot become a father to “many” without first having a first. God makes a covenant promise to Abraham, repeating this idea of “many descendants” (as numerous as the stars in the sky - 15:5). Yet, there is this central challenge of Abraham and Sarah’s age coupled with their lack of a child. In fact, in this section, we see this disastrous choice by Abraham and Sarah to take things into their own hands. They foolishly try to accomplish God’s plan through Hagar which leads to the birth of Ishmael. It’s a good reminder that being a person of faith doesn’t mean we’ll never falter along the way. Chapters 17-18 bring things back to the same promise of a son, even in their old age. God kept promising He would do it!

21:1-7 and 22:1-19 ... *Finally*, Isaac arrives - the son of the promise, so foundational to the whole purpose revealed in 12:1-3. The fulfillment of a great nation with many descendants seems much more plausible with his birth. Then, of course, there comes one more challenge with this hard-to-understand scene in chapter 22. Ultimately, Abraham continues to trust God’s promise, believing that God could be trusted to do as He said (remember Hebrews 11:17-19 packages this scene ... the words of 11:8ff are significant overall in his story as well).

Two Key Reminders throughout This Semester

1. God is ultimately the HERO of these stories; remember, as part of Scripture, God is *revealing* Himself to us. *So, what do we learn about Him through this story? What can we learn from the human characters about putting our faith/trust in Him?*
2. We read these stories through a Christ-lens. *So, how do we read this story differently in light of Jesus and being His followers?* Consider Romans 4 and Galatians 3 - especially the way that Abraham becomes the example of faith.

Some Additional Questions for Reflection

- *As you reflect on Abraham’s story - including the part of the story from chapter 16 - what stands out about a response of faith to God and His promise? In your own story, when it comes to both your initial faith in Jesus and your ongoing life of faith, what does Abraham’s story teach us about trusting Him?*
- *How have you experienced challenges in waiting to see God move in your story? What can we learn from Abraham’s story - both good encouragements and cautions?*
- *How does Abraham’s story remind us to see God’s broader purposes - what goes beyond just His purposes for us to what He might want to do through us for others?*