

SHAPED BY SCRIPTURE

And God Said to Abraham

# GENESIS

12-27

ALEX VARUGHESE

Copyright © 2020 by The Foundry Publishing  
The Foundry Publishing  
PO Box 419527  
Kansas City, MO 64141  
thefoundrypublishing.com

978-0-8341-3819-3

Printed in the  
United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.










Cover Design: J.R. Caines  
Interior Design: J.R. Caines  
Layout: Sharon Page

The *Holy Bible: New International Version*® (NIV®). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com).

The internet addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers in this book are accurate at the time of publication. They are provided as a resource. The Foundry Publishing does not endorse them or vouch for their content or permanence.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## Contents

	Introduction to the <i>Shaped by Scripture</i> Series	4
	Introduction to the Book of Genesis	7
	Week One: God Calls Abraham (Genesis 12:1–9)	14
	Week Two: Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13)	28
	Week Three: The Covenant (Genesis 15)	42
	Week Four: Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis 21:1–21)	55
	Week Five: God Tests Abraham (Genesis 22:1–19)	71
	Week Six: Isaac and Abimelek (Genesis 26:1–33)	85
	Week Seven: Jacob Steals Esau’s Blessing (Genesis 27:1–45)	99



## Introduction

# THE *SHAPED BY* *SCRIPTURE* SERIES

The first step of an organized study of the Bible is the selection of a biblical book, which isn't always an easy task. Often people pick a book they are already familiar with, or books they think will be easy to understand, or books that, according to popular opinion, seem to have more relevance to Christians today than other books of the Bible. However, it is important to recognize the truth that God's Word is not limited to just a few books. All the biblical books, both individually and collectively, communicate God's Word to us. As Paul affirms in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." We interpret the term "God-breathed" to mean inspired by God. If Christians are going to take 2 Timothy 3:16 seriously, then we should all set the goal of encountering God's Word as communicated through all sixty-six books of the Bible. New Christians or those with little to no prior knowledge of the Bible might find it best to start with a New Testament book like 1 John, James, or the Gospel of John.

4

By picking up this volume, you have chosen to study the book of Genesis. You've made a great choice because this first book of the Bible lays a foundation for the rest of the story of God. Because the goal of this series is to illustrate an appropriate method of studying the Bible, instead of a comprehensive study of the entire book, our study will be limited to a few select passages in Genesis. In the first volume, we focused on seven stories taken from chapters 1–11. We will take up another set of seven stories from chapters 12–27 in this second volume of our study of Genesis.

## How This Study Works

This Bible study is intended for a period of seven weeks. We have chosen a specific passage for each week's study. This study can be done individually or with a small group.

For individual study, we recommend a five-day study each week, following the guidelines given below:

- 1 On the first day of the study, read the relevant passage several times until you become fully familiar with the verses, words, and phrases.
- 2 On the second day, we will review the setting and organization of the passage.
- 3 On the third day, we will observe some of the realities portrayed in the passage.
- 4 On the fourth day, we will investigate the relationship of the individual passage to the larger story of God in the Bible.
- 5 On the fifth day, we will reflect on the function of the story as we hear it today, the invitation it extends to us, and our response to God, who speaks through God's Word.

5

If this Bible study is done as a group activity, we recommend that members of the group meet together on the sixth day to share and discuss what they have learned from God's Word and how it has transformed their lives.

---

You may want to have a study Bible to give you additional insights as we work through the book of Genesis. Another helpful resource is *Discovering the Old Testament*, available from The Foundry Publishing.

---

## Literary Forms in the Bible

There are several literary forms represented throughout the Bible. The divinely inspired writers used various techniques to communicate God's Word to their ancient audiences. The major literary forms (also known as genres) of the Bible are:

- narratives
- laws
- history
- Wisdom literature (in the form of dialogues and proverbial statements)
- poetry (consisting of poems of praise, lament, trust in God, and more)
- prophecy
- discourses
- parables
- miracle stories
- letters (also known as epistles)
- exhortations
- apocalyptic writings

Within each of these forms, one may find subgenres. Each volume in the *Shaped by Scripture* series will briefly overview the genres found in the book of the Bible that is the subject of that study.

When biblical writers utilized a particular literary form, they intended for it to have a specific effect on their audience. This concept can be understood by examining genres that are familiar to us in our contemporary setting. For example, novels that are comedies inspire good and happy feelings in their readers; tragedies, on the other hand, are meant to induce sorrow. What is true of the intended effect of literary forms in contemporary literature is also true of literary forms found in the Bible.



# THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The message of the biblical books, though it originates with God, comes to us through individuals whom God inspired to communicate his word to humanity. They fulfilled their task by utilizing their literary skill as speakers and writers of God's message. This message came to these individuals in particular circumstances in the history of God's people—the Israelites in the Old Testament period, and the early Christian church in the first century AD. In addition, biblical books communicate certain clearly developed understandings about God, humanity, sin, judgment, salvation, human hope, and more. Bible studies should be done with an awareness of the theological themes in a particular book. So, prior to our engagement with the actual text of Genesis, we shall briefly summarize what we know about the authorship of Genesis, literary forms found in the book, the historical setting of the book and that of its writing, the literary structure of the book, and its major theological themes.

### Who Wrote Genesis?

7

The book of Genesis belongs to a collection of five biblical books that are known as the Pentateuch in the Jewish tradition. They can also be called the Five Books, the Five Scrolls, the Law, or the Torah. In addition to Genesis, the collection includes Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Some scholars hold to the ancient Jewish and Christian view of these books as the work of Moses, but others think it is possible that they have multiple authors. Genesis is a collection of Israel's oral traditions about creation and the beginning of human history; and about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the three foremost ancestors of the people group that later came to be called Israel. Though the authorship of Genesis and many other biblical books is frequently debated among Christians, we believe in the integrity of the biblical books as we find them in the Bible today.

### Literary Form

The book of Genesis is considered narrative. It is written mostly in prose and is made up of stories. In chapters 1–11, the narrative focus is on creation and humanity as a whole. From chapters 12–50, we read the stories of the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These stories deal with events that have taken place in the history of this family and the interactions of its various members with those within their

family as well as outsiders. As a result of this familial focus, most of the stories in chapters 12–50 belong to a subcategory called *family stories*—in which a prominent individual plays a key role as the main character. In addition to the stories, Genesis also contains genealogical lists (in chapters 5, 10, 25, 36, and 46) that indicate the ancestries of various groups of people who once lived in the ancient world.

## Entering the Story

Stories in Genesis (and in the rest of the Bible) are intended to draw readers into the various scenes portrayed in them. In other words, biblical stories are never meant to remain ancient stories, and readers are never meant to be detached from them. Reading a Genesis story is like being in a stadium and watching an exciting game. Very rarely do we see people at sporting events remain in the bleachers, unemotional and detached from the game. Most sports fans see themselves as part of the team, cheering victories and yelling at the players when they fail to execute the game plan. Likewise, the writers of Genesis invite us to enter into the story and become part of it. When we do, we soon discover that most of the narratives portray realities very much like those that exist in our world today. We find in the biblical characters reflections of our imperfect relationships, our doubts, our mistrust of God or others, our pride, our self-reliance, our violence, our family quarrels and rivalries, our cheating and deception, our hatred or mistreatment of others who are not like us. Even the few individuals we find in Genesis who demonstrate great personal integrity have character flaws.

Entering into a Genesis story and seeing ourselves and our own world through the lens of that story does not mean that the intended effect of the story has been accomplished entirely. Most of the Genesis stories relate to some crisis. In Genesis, we often find God entering into the midst of human crisis and addressing the characters in order to give instructions for resolving the crisis. When God's involvement is not directly reported in a particular story, we usually find it in preceding stories about the same character. Just like the people we know in real life, some of the characters in Genesis respond to God's voice and resolve their crisis; others do not.

The stories in Genesis accomplish their intended effect when readers respond to the invitation, or the challenge, they encounter inside the stories. The characters we meet in Genesis and their interactions with a faithful God motivate us to think of or imagine the alternative to our own crisis-ridden lives. How would a Genesis story change if the characters listened to God and took action to promote the healing of broken relationships and the well-being of others around them? How would our world look today if we did the same?

Genesis stories invite us to enter into and embrace the world God intended for us to live when God brought forth creation. We find the perfect model for such existence



in the life of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels. By following the example of Jesus, and through our faith in him, we become God's new creation in the world. When we do this, and become what God originally created us to be, then we can say that the Genesis stories have had their intended effect. Personal transformation is the final effect intended by the stories in Genesis. In this way of reading and studying, we see the stories in Genesis extending beyond their ancient context and becoming God's living Word to us today!

This is the method of reading and studying the Bible we will follow in this book. We admit that this method is somewhat different from many popular Bible study materials and methods found in the marketplace today. Most of them seek to lay out theological, moral, ethical principles that can be derived from the stories and then applied to our life situations today. Without denying the merit of these types of resources, we suggest instead that life transformation, instead of life application, should be the goal of a Bible study—and transformation is, therefore, our goal in the *Shaped by Scripture* series.

## Historical Context

We deal with two important and separate but related issues when we investigate the date and the historical context of Genesis (this is true of an investigation of all the biblical books). First, we examine the time and the particular context (historical, political, cultural, social, and religious) in which the stories of Genesis took place. Second, we examine the date and the context in which the book was actually composed by its editors/compiler. Both of these issues are important for us to consider. The former helps us to place specific stories in their particular setting, which is critical to our understanding of the realities portrayed in the stories. The latter helps us to discover how later generations would have heard and understood these stories.

9

## Context of the Events in Genesis

Unfortunately, we cannot place the events in Genesis chapters 1–11 in a specific historical period because the events reported in them come from a period long before the documenting of history and civilization by humans began. We can only say that these events belong to the earliest period of human history and reflect the widely held beliefs of the Israelites about the origin of the world and humanity. They also set the context for the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in chapters 12–50.

The stories in chapters 4–11 are filled with gaps. Though they are put together in a seamless fashion, we think the writers preserved only major incidents that changed the course of human history. For example, the writers cover the creation of the world through approximately 2000 BC in only eleven chapters. However, it takes them thir-

ty-nine chapters (12–50) to tell the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the three great ancestors of the people who would later become the Israelites. This difference clearly suggests that the primary goal of the writers was to tell their own story.

Most scholars agree that these stories belong to the period of the Amorite civilization in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine (roughly 2000–1700 BC). Scholars also believe that Abraham was part of a migratory movement of the Amorites from Mesopotamia into the Syria-Canaan region (see Genesis 11:27–32). The ancestors of the Israelites lived as seminomadic people who pitched their tents in places where they found pasture for their flock. They were not part of an organized religious group. They worshiped God by setting up altars and offering sacrifices. The head of the household carried out the priestly tasks.

Though Abraham himself once belonged to the polytheistic religion of the Amorites, his encounter with God led him to his belief in one true God, whom he called “Most High, Creator of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14:22). Scholars consider Abraham to be the founder of monotheism—belief in one God. Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob worshiped God by setting up altars in the places where God appeared to them during their travels.

Other than these sketchy details, we do not know much about the setting of the stories found in chapters 12–50.

10

## Context of the Writing of Genesis

Most scholars believe that Genesis in its present form was written in the sixth century BC, when the Jewish people were living in exile in Babylon, after the Babylonians conquered Judah and brought an end to their political freedom in 586 BC. The exile threatened the future of the Jewish people and their identity as the covenant people of God in the world.

It is possible that the writer(s) of Genesis collected and compiled the oral stories from the past and put them together in written form with two goals in mind: (1) to provide the Jews in Babylon and future generations a foundational understanding of Israel’s God as the creator and sustainer of the world; (2) to give the Jewish community a clear understanding of their identity and mission in the world—which is that, though they are exiles, living away from the land God promised to their ancestors, they continue to be God’s people. They belong to the family of Abraham, and they are a people with a mission to the world. The mission God gave to Abraham to be an instrument of God’s blessing to all peoples on earth is their same, continued mission.

Investigating the context in which the books of the Bible were written is important when we hear God's Word today. Although the circumstances may differ, God's Word speaks today in our own life situations. So, although the details are different, we are able to experience Scripture in fresh and new ways. As we listen to the story of God in the Bible, we can experience God's Word as God's "living word" today.

## Literary Structure

The fifty chapters in Genesis are organized under two major sections: chapters 1–11 contain several stories that deal with humanity as a whole. This section begins with two stories about God's creation of the world and humankind (chapters 1–2), followed by the story of humankind's first sin and the consequences that followed (chapter 3). The story of chapter 4 shows that violence has become a way of life in the world. Chapter 5 is a genealogical list that traces the ancestry of Noah, who is the main character in the story of the flood and who represents a new beginning for humanity in chapters 6–9. Chapter 10 is another genealogy that identifies the descendants of the three sons of Noah. Chapter 11 begins with another story of human rebellion against God and the consequence that followed, and ends with another genealogy that traces the ancestral line from Noah (through his son Shem) down to Terah and his better-known son Abraham (still known as Abram at this point).

Genesis chapters 12–50 contain the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham stories are found from 12:1–25:18. Though Isaac's family is introduced in 25:19–34, we find him as the main hero only in the stories in chapter 26. The rest of the stories in Genesis (chapters 27–50) center on Jacob, who becomes the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Though Joseph stories dominate chapters 37–50, Jacob remains in the background and plays a key role in the journey of the family from Canaan to Egypt, where they settle after the deaths of Jacob and Joseph. Thus, the stories in chapters 37–50 serve to set the scene for the book of Exodus, which begins with the story of Israel's centuries-long enslavement in Egypt.

## Major Theological Themes

Genesis, though mostly filled with stories of families and individuals, contains many significant theological themes. The fact that Genesis begins with the account of God's creation of the world and everything in it leads us to surmise that the creation theme has a central place in the book. The following list shows how the various other themes in Genesis are connected to the creation theme.



### **Creation testifies to God's nature as a relational God.**

Through God's creation activities, God entered into a faithful relationship with God's creation (1:1-2:4).



### **Blessing is a fundamental way God relates to God's creation.**

God's blessing is the source of the growth and well-being of creation (1:22, 28; 2:3).



**The God-given mission of human beings is to be God's image in the world.** We do this through faithful relationship with God and with the rest of creation (1:26-28).



**We are designated caretakers of creation.** The authority God grants to humans is that of shepherds, not of despotic, exploitive, destructive rulers (1:26-28).



**God created Sabbath rest.** God's rest on the seventh day of creation models a work-rest rhythm for creation's existence (2:2-3).



**Living in obedience to God is critical to faithful relationship with God** (2:15-17).



**Human beings failed to be God's image in the world.** This failure resulted in a disruption of our relationship with God and with the rest of creation (3:1-24).



**Sin through disobedience and rebellion against God became a destructive and pervasive reality in the world.** God's judgment was the inevitable consequence of human sin (4:1-7:24).



**In the midst of the judgment of the flood, God remained gracious and created a new beginning for humanity through Noah and his family** (6:9-9:17).



**Noah's descendants resisted God's mandate to spread over the entire earth.** As a result, God's judgment came upon them (11:1-9; see also 1:28; 9:1).



**God entered into a special covenant relationship with Abraham.** God promised to bless Abraham with numerous descendants and a land as their inheritance from God (12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-27).



**God's promise of blessing to Abraham and his family (and all other human families) is an extension of God's blessing on creation** (see 1:22, 28).



**God promised to bless "all peoples on earth" through Abraham** (12:3). The mission of the covenant family was to be an instrument of God's blessing to others.



**Isaac and Jacob became the recipients of God's covenant promises to Abraham** (26:1-6; 28:10-22).



**The future of Abraham and his family was shaped not only by the promises of God but also by their obedience to God** (several stories in chapters 12-50 illustrate the obedient response of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to God's commands).



**God remained faithful to Joseph, a member of the covenant family, and surrounded him with God's presence during his trouble-filled days in Egypt** (39:1-23).



## Week One: God Calls Abraham

# GENESIS 12:1-9

Genesis 12 marks the beginning of the second major segment of the story of Genesis. Here we find the beginning of the story of Israel. This story begins with God's command and promises to Abraham, the great ancestor of the people of Israel. The story of Abraham (chapters 12–25) is followed by the stories of Abraham's son Isaac (chapter 26), Isaac's son Jacob (chapters 27–36), and Jacob's twelve sons (chapters 37–50). Compared with the rather fragmentary stories of chapters 1–11, the details in Genesis 12–27 and 28–50 indicate that the author's primary goal was to tell the story of Israel's ancestors. Chapters 1–11 provide the universal setting of the stories of chapters 12–50. The story of Abraham in 12:1–9 is set in the larger context of God's scattering of the descendants of Noah following the Tower of Babel incident (11:1–9).

## **WEEK 1, DAY 1**

Listen to the story in Genesis 12:1–9 by reading it aloud several times until you become familiar with its verses, words, and phrases. Enjoy the experience of imagining the story in your mind, picturing each event as it unfolds.

## WEEK 1, DAY 2

### The Setting

In Genesis 11:27–32 we find the historical setting of one of the most important events in the second part of Genesis: Abraham’s encounter with God. Scholars place the story of Abraham in the early part of the second millennium—a time when the Amorites, a Semitic people group, controlled most of Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine (2000–1700 B.C.). Verse 27 identifies Abraham as one of the three sons of Terah, who was a descendant of Shem, who in turn was one of the three sons of Noah. Verse 31 tells us that Abraham came from Ur, an urban center in the southern part of Mesopotamia. Additionally, he belonged to the Amorite/Aramean ethnic group (see Deuteronomy 26:5); the Hebrews may have lived as a subculture within this group (see Genesis 14:13).

The writer may mention Terah and his family’s migration from Ur (11:31) to show that they were part of the scattered people of Babel (11:9). Eventually, Terah’s family (which includes Abraham and Sarah\*) decided to set out for Canaan, about 1,200 miles from Ur. However, once they made it to Haran (an approximate halfway point on the journey to Canaan), they decided to settle there instead. Genesis 11 ends with Terah’s death in Haran (verse 32). We can infer that, after his father’s death, Abraham assumed responsibility for the family and its future. The family established strong roots in Haran—Abraham refers to this area as his “country” and his “native land” in Genesis 24:4, 7.

Genesis 11:27–32 tells us very little about Abraham, except that his wife, Sarah, was barren. However, it is possible to see the reference to Sarah’s barrenness as another context for the story of 12:1–9—Abraham and Sarah were not only a part of the scattered human family, but because of their childlessness, they were also living without any hope for their future. In that sense, God’s words to Abraham in 12:1–3 were meant to give him hope for the future.

Keeping in mind the overview above, as well as the larger story of God’s creation, human sin, and human resistance to God’s creational purpose (see Genesis 1–11), we will now dive into Genesis 12:1–9—the story of Abraham’s encounter with God.

---

\*Abraham and Sarah are called Abram and Sarai until their names change in Genesis 17. For simplicity’s sake, we will call them only Abraham and Sarah throughout this study.



## The Plot

Now let's look carefully at how the writer organizes the story of 12:1–9—the plot will become clear as we examine the various parts of this story. Based on the transitions we notice in these verses, we can break 12:1–9 into five smaller paragraphs. Let's examine each of those five paragraphs one at a time. **Beneath each grouping of verses, write the primary idea or theme they communicate (follow the pattern provided for 12:1, 2–3, and 4–5).**

### 1. Genesis 12:1

God commands Abraham to leave his country and go to the land that God will show him.

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 2. Genesis 12:2–3

God makes several promises to Abraham.

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 3. Genesis 12:4–5

Abraham obeys God and leaves Haran with his family and possessions and arrives in the land of Canaan.

---

---

---

---

---

---

**4. Genesis 12:6-7**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**5. Genesis 12:8-9**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## WEEK 1, DAY 3

### What’s Happening in the Story?

As we notice certain circumstances in the story, we will begin to see how they are similar to or different from the realities of our world. The story will become the lens through which we see the world in which we live today. In our study today, you may encounter words and/or phrases that are unfamiliar to you. Some of the particular words and translation choices for them have been explained in more detail in the **Word Study Notes**. If you are interested in even more help or detail, you can supplement this study with a Bible dictionary or other Bible study resource.

#### 1. Genesis 12:1

Abraham’s story begins with words from the LORD.<sup>1</sup> God begins his speech by commanding Abraham to “go”<sup>2</sup> from his country and family relations—to separate himself from everyone he knows, from the less intimate (“country”) to the more intimate (“father’s household”). This emphasis on separation indicates that God is aware of the difficulty Abraham will experience in obeying. What’s more, God doesn’t give Abraham a specific destination for his journey; he simply calls it “the land I will show you.”<sup>3</sup> In order to obey, then, Abraham must step out in faith—he must follow God’s guidance and trust God to reveal the destination.

#### 2. Genesis 12:2–3

God makes a series of promises to Abraham, each beginning with “I will,” which expresses God’s personal commitment to carry out his promises. God’s promises begin with his commitment to make the childless Abraham “into a great nation.”<sup>1</sup> His descendants will increase in number and become a nation among other nations in the world. God also promises to “bless”<sup>2</sup> Abraham and make his “name great.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, God commands Abraham not just to receive blessings but also to be a blessing to others.<sup>4</sup>

#### WORD STUDY NOTES #1

<sup>1</sup> The Bible has not recorded a speech from God to humans since his speech to Noah (see Genesis 9:1–17). For that reason, this divine speech to Abraham marks an important turning point in God’s relationship with humankind.

<sup>2</sup> The command “go” in Hebrew is a command to separate oneself from familiar surroundings.

<sup>3</sup> See a similar phrase, “on a mountain I will show you,” in Genesis 22:2.]

#### WORD STUDY NOTES #2

<sup>1</sup> God’s blessings promised to Abraham in this story are an extension of God’s creational blessing in Genesis 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew root *brk* or *barak* (meaning “to bless”) is found five times in these verses, which indicates the importance of blessing in God’s promises to Abraham. In the Old Testament, *brk* often conveys the idea of material and physical prosperity and fruitfulness.

<sup>3</sup> A great name means fame and renown in the world. This promise indicates that God alone can make individuals and nations great.

<sup>4</sup> “You will be a blessing” in Hebrew is a command, indicated by the imperative verb form.

**WORD STUDY NOTES #3**

<sup>1</sup> Abraham became the guardian of Lot after Terah's death in Haran (see 11:27–31).

<sup>2</sup> The reference to Canaan implies that it was “the land” God had promised to show Abraham.

**WORD STUDY NOTES #4**

<sup>1</sup> Abraham and his family would have traveled nearly 500 miles to arrive at Shechem from Haran.

<sup>2</sup> “Canaanites” here is an umbrella term for the native inhabitants of Canaan, most likely made up of several ethnic groups.

God makes it clear that Abraham is not the only one who will receive blessings; he promises to bless all who bless Abraham. God also promises to “curse” those who curse Abraham. God thus promises to deal with the people in the land where Abraham is going according to the way they treat Abraham.

God ends his promises with the announcement that, through Abraham, he will bless “all peoples on earth.” This indicates that God’s ultimate purpose in blessing Abraham is to extend his blessings and reach others in the world. In proclaiming this, God assigns Abraham the role of a mediator—he will be the person God will work through in his plan to bless the world.

**Practice the above pattern to write a short description of the world portrayed in verses 4–9.**

3. Genesis 12:4–5<sup>1, 2</sup>

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

4. Genesis 12:6–7<sup>1, 2</sup>

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## 5. Genesis 12:8–9<sup>1, 2</sup>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### WORD STUDY NOTES #5

<sup>1</sup>The phrase “called on the name of the LORD” in the Bible indicates the worship of God.

<sup>2</sup> Negev, which means “dry land,” extends from the southern part of the Judean hills all the way down to Kadesh. Scholars consider the Negev to be the area where Abraham lived his nomadic life in Canaan.

---

### Discoveries

Let’s summarize some of our discoveries from Genesis 12:1–9.

1. God commanded Abraham to leave everything he knew behind and embark on a journey under his direction.
2. God did not give Abraham a destination for his journey; the fact that Abraham obeyed indicates that he trusted God for guidance.
3. God followed his command to Abraham by promising to bless him with descendants and give him honor and reputation in the world.
4. God commanded Abraham to be a blessing to others in the world.
5. God promised to bless those who honored Abraham, and to withhold his providential care from those who mistreated him.
6. God promised to bless all peoples on earth through Abraham.
7. Abraham obeyed God’s command without questioning or hesitation.
8. Abraham built an altar as a sign of his trust in God and worshiped him at the place where God appeared to him.
9. Abraham continued his travels to the desert region called Negev.

## WEEK 1, DAY 4

### The Call of Abraham and the Story of God

---

If you have a study Bible, you will notice that there are marginal references that point to other biblical texts. You may want to look up some of those Scriptures to help you understand how the whole story of God ties together!

---

22

When we read a biblical text, it is important to ask how it relates to the rest of the Bible. Genesis 12:1–9 outlines the first of the four major events through which God brought Israel, his covenant people, into existence. The other three events are as follows: 1) God delivers Israel from slavery in Egypt and makes a covenant with them at Mount Sinai; 2) God provides for Israel in the wilderness for forty years; and 3) God brings Israel into the land of Canaan. Abraham’s obedience and faith in this story remain a source of inspiration to all who trace their physical or spiritual heritage back to him.

Abraham’s story continues with more stories of God appearing to him and issuing commands, and Abraham faithfully responding to God. These encounters include God’s covenant with Abraham (chapter 17) and God’s command for Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (chapter 22). Abraham’s relationship with God was continued by his son Isaac, and later, by Isaac’s son Jacob. God entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’s descendants and called them to be mediators of his blessings to the world (Exodus 19:5–6). The covenant people’s failure to do so forms the context for God sending his son Jesus into the world. It is important to note that both Matthew and Luke identify Jesus, who God used to fulfill his salvation plan, as a physical descendant of Abraham (Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–34).

The biblical story is filled with echoes of Genesis 12:1–9—God’s promises to Abraham, and Abraham’s faith in God.

Let’s consider some biblical passages that are directly or indirectly related to this story or its themes. **In the space provided below, write a short summary of how various elements of this story are reflected in each passage.**

#### 1. Genesis 13:14–17

---

---

---

---

---

**2. Genesis 15:2-5**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**3. 2 Samuel 7:9**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**4. Psalm 72:17**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**5. Acts 7:1-5**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**6. Hebrews 11:8-9**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# WEEK 1, DAY 5

## Genesis and Our World Today

When we enter into the intriguing narrative of Genesis 12:1–9, the story becomes the lens through which we see ourselves, our world, and God’s action in our world today.

**1. What does the Genesis story of God calling Abraham say to us about ourselves, our world, and God’s action in our world today?**

God continues to call us to follow him and obey his directions for our lives. God’s call to follow him may come to us in the midst of our hopelessness and life apart from him. God may speak to us when we least expect to hear his voice.

Describe below what prevents us from hearing God’s voice today.

---

---

---

---

---

**2. How would you react to an unexpected call from God to leave everything behind and embark on a journey with him?**

---

---

---

---

**3. What are the things that are most difficult for us to be separated from, if God would ask us to leave everything behind and follow his directions for our lives?**

---

---

---

---



---

God is aware of the difficulty  
Abraham will experience in  
obeying God's command.  
Abraham must follow God's  
guidance and trust God to  
reveal the destination.

---