

CONNECTGROUPGUIDE

THE PATRIARCHS

Call

Covenant

Cost



Deeply Transformed | Serving Together

INTRO

Genesis 12–35 follows the era of the biblical patriarchs, tracking God's covenant dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It opens with the radical call of Abraham, told to leave his homeland under the promise of becoming a great nation and a universal blessing. Despite repeated threats to this promise—God proves unfailingly loyal to His word. The line successfully moves to Isaac, who re-establishes his father's altars, and then to Jacob, whose turbulent life is defined by deception, exile, and eventual reconciliation with his brother Esau.

This narrative centres on the Divine covenant and the slow, often painful growth of faith. God initiates a relationship with flawed individuals, showing that election is based entirely on grace and not moral perfection. God works through human weakness and contradicts normal expectations to accomplish His plan. Abraham's journey establishes faith as a dynamic life of trust and obedience through huge uncertainty.

Further, the transformation of Jacob into Israel offers a powerful reflection on Divine encounter and human identity. Jacob's lifelong struggle—wrestling first with his brother, then with his father-in-law, and finally with God Himself at Peniel—reveals that blessing often comes through wounding and surrender. Ultimately, Genesis 12–35 reveals a God who is transcendent in His promises and willing to walk alongside fractured families to bring blessing to a broken world. It truly is a story of **Call | Covenant | Cost**.

Some guidelines for Connect Group ...

- Come to the study prepared; preparation will greatly enrich your time together; it is recommended to take notes during the Sunday sermon, and to write down your thoughts as you prepare
- As part of your preparation, why not listen to the sermon again during the week (most sermons are recorded and available on **Apple Podcasts**, and also on the **website**)
- As you prepare, pray that God will speak to you through his word
- Be willing to participate in your group. Your sharing will greatly encourage all the other members as you grow together
- Stick to the topic – this allows everyone to participate on level ground and to go deeper into the Bible
- Be sensitive to others and listen attentively; affirm others, especially those who may feel timid or don't often share
- Your leader won't be lecturing, but helping members to think through the questions. Some of the questions don't have a 'right' answer, especially those that apply the Bible to our lives
- Be careful not to dominate, as it could inhibit others from sharing
- Expect God to teach you through the passage and through other members, and always pray that it will be a profitable time together

THE PATRIARCHS

Call Covenant Cost

August 16	Genesis 12-15	Call and Promise
August 23	Genesis 16-18	Detour and Promise
August 30	Genesis 21-22	Fulfilment and Test
September 6	Genesis 24-25	Passing the Torch
September 13	Genesis 25-27	Family Dysfunction
September 20	Genesis 28-29	The Awakening
September 27	Genesis 32-35	Wounded to be Whole

SUMMARY

God calls us to move before He reveals the final destination.

Abraham's initial obedience, the core covenant promises (land, seed, blessing), and faith counted as righteousness.

INTRO

Someone in the group who has come to live in Australia from another country might like to share their experience.

If you were called to go to a new country, what do you think would be hardest?

Genesis 12

1. Which of the promises made to Abram most resonates with you personally?
2. Which of the promises do you think have the greatest spiritual impact for the rest of the Biblical story?
3. What is the significance of the call of Abraham for the New Testament?

Sermon Notes

Genesis 15

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| <p>4. Do you sometimes doubt God's promises? What does Abram do with his doubt?</p> <p>5. What do you think of God's object lesson to Abram? v.5 Should we expect object lessons from God today?</p> <p>6. v.6 What does it mean to say Abram's faith was credited to him as righteousness?</p> | <p>7. Read Romans 4. How does Paul use Genesis 15:6?</p> <p>8. vv.12-16 (Abram's dream). Where is it that Abram's 'descendants will be strangers in a country not their own'?</p> <p>9. vv.8-11 & 17 is a Covenant Renewal Ceremony**. How does this point us to Christ?</p> |
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- Give thanks that God called Abram to be the foundation of the nation of Israel through whom he would work out his salvation purposes for the world. .
- Pray for those who struggle with doubt
- Thank you that through faith Christ we too have been credited with righteousness

Sermon Notes

*** In Genesis 15, God formalises His promise of land and descendants to Abraham through a solemn covenant ritual involving split animal pieces. As Abraham sleeps, God alone passes between the pieces as a smoking firepot and a flaming torch, taking the absolute oath upon Himself. The Covenant will depend on God's faithfulness not Abraham or his descendants.*

PERSONAL GROWTH PLAN

Spend some time talking about the Personal Growth Plan.
What can you share this week about the steps you are taking?

LIVING TO LOVE JESUS

#Christ-centred

#Bible-based

Deeply Transformed

How will I fuel my love for Jesus and intentionally grow as a disciple of Jesus?

LIVING TO PROCLAIM JESUS

#Spirit-led

#Mission-shaped

Serving Together

How will I develop my servant heart and make a difference in the world?

SUMMARY

Human shortcuts always compromise Divine promises.

God establishes the covenant with Abraham, but waiting brought doubt.

This highlights God's grace despite human manipulation and fear.

INTRO

Share a time when you've had a struggle believing a promise that has been made to you.

How did you respond?

Genesis 16

1. How does Genesis 16 illustrate the human struggle with trusting God's promises?
2. Why does Hagar begin to despise Sarai? How do their reactions reflect human nature?
3. What do you think of Abraham's handling of the situation? What could he have done differently?

Sermon Notes

4. How does the birth of Ishmael serve as a turning point in Abram's family story?

Genesis 17

5. In v.1 God reveals himself as 'El Shaddai'. What does that reveal about his character, and how can that impact your faith in his promises?
6. Discuss the significance of circumcision as the sign of the covenant. What does it represent?

7. 17:15ff How do Abraham's reactions of laughter and doubt reflect ourselves?

Genesis 18

8. How does Abraham's hospitality towards the three visitors challenge your attitude to strangers?
9. What does the Lord's response to Sarah's laughter reveal about his character?



- Give thanks for God's covenant faithfulness despite human waywardness
- Pray together about the personal challenges shared in discussion
- Thank God for his promises and pray that for each other to hold on, to stay encouraged, and to trust in God's faithfulness

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SUMMARY

God's promise is fulfilled, but then he asks the impossible.

He provides when we surrender what we love most.

The testing of Abraham on Mount Moriah, foreshadowing Christ, and the confirmation of the covenant through radical trust.

INTRO

What is something you've had to wait a long time for?
What helped you during that time of waiting?

Genesis 21:1-20

1. God has fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah. How does the text specifically emphasise that it was God who brought this about?
2. Compare Genesis 18:9-12. How has Sarah's laughter and attitude changed? Can you relate to the joy of seeing God's faithfulness?

Sermon Notes

3. God's gift of a son doesn't immediately make Abraham's life simple. What tensions and consequences do you see in this story?

Genesis 22

4. In a most troubling passage of scripture, what was God testing in Abraham? What makes this text so difficult for Abraham and for us?

5. What do you notice about Abraham's responses to God? What does he say and do?

6. What troubles you most about this chapter? What questions stick with you?

7. Christians believe that Yahweh is the same God revealed in Jesus. What connections do you see between Genesis 22 and Jesus?

8. The God who tests Abraham is the same God who stops Abraham. Read Romans 8:32 and Hebrews 11:17-19. What do these verses tell us of God's character, and the difference between Isaac and Jesus?



- Praise God for his faithfulness.
- Ask God to help us trust him when we don't understand what he is doing, and to follow him faithfully through difficult tests and seasons of waiting.

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SUMMARY

God's faithfulness outlives a single human lifetime.

A wife is found for Isaac, Abraham dies, Rebekah has twins.

INTRO

What is something important you've received from someone who went before you? What marked the handover, transition, or "passing of the torch"?

Genesis 24:1-4, 10-27, 50-51, 62-67

1. How does God fulfil his promises to Abraham in this passage?
2. What do you notice about Abraham's servant's prayer? And how does the servant respond when God answer his prayer?
3. What do we see of Rebekah's character? Why might it be significant that Genesis gives us such a strong picture of Rebekah's character in a largely patriarchal narrative?

Sermon Notes

Genesis 25:7-11, 21-26

4. When Abraham dies, what happens to God's promises to him?
5. Rebekah and Isaac are blessed, but it isn't all smooth sailing. Like Abram and Sarai, Isaac and Rebekah do not immediately have children. How do Isaac and Rebekah respond to their childlessness, and how does this compare with Abram and Sarai?
6. God's promise passes to subsequent generations. How do we see God's promise continuing through the whole Bible, and ultimately being fulfilled in Jesus?
7. What precious promises of God do you hold closest to your heart? How do they help you trust God when you can't yet see how he will fulfil them?



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- Thank God that we can trust his promises.
 - Pray for the next generations, that as we pass on our faith they would grow, take up the baton. May they, filled with the Spirit, winsomely, and generously point others to Jesus.

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SUMMARY

God accomplishes His sovereign purposes despite family dysfunction.

The rivalry between Jacob and Esau plays out through a stolen birthright, and stolen blessing.

INTRO

Reflect on a time when personal desires influenced your decisions in a bad way?

Genesis 25

1. What can we learn from the family dynamics of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob about handling conflicts within our own families?
2. In what ways can the account of Esau and Jacob's birthright challenge us to value our spiritual inheritance today?

Genesis 26

3. How does parental favouritism affect family dynamics?

Sermon Notes

4. What does Esau's decision to sell his birthright show about his character and priorities? What can we learn from this?

5. How do Esau's marriages to Hittite women reflect his attitude towards his family's covenant with God? What can we learn about the importance of spiritual compatibility in relationships?

Genesis 27

6. How does the theme of deception play out in this chapter? How does it impact those involved?

7. Read Hebrews 11:20 and Romans 9:10-14. How do these reflections on Isaac's blessing deepen our understanding of faith and God's purposes?

8. How did Esau's reaction to the loss of his blessing shape his future?

9. How would you handle feelings of betrayal if you were in Esau's position?



- Pray for any in your group, or others you may know, who are feeling betrayed
- Pray for family conflicts you are aware of – that God would bring humility and healing

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SUMMARY

God meets us in our isolation, even when we are running from our consequences.

Jacob's dream at Bethel and his experience of being deceived by Laban. God uses life's seasons of injustice and hardship to reshape our character.

INTRO

Recall a time in your life when you had to persevere in order to achieve a worthwhile goal.

Genesis 28

1. What is the significance of the formula for God in v.13, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac."?
2. Who has received the promise of descendants before this? Why is this significant?"

Sermon Notes

Genesis 29

3. Recall a significant time of worship for you when the Lord's presence was very real, where you could say like Jacob, "surely the Lord was in this place."?
4. Laban played a trick on Jacob. This could be described as poetic justice for Jacob and his trickery. Recall the times when Jacob was full of tricks.
5. In v.22 Jacob throws a great feast and at the end he gives Leah to Jacob without him realising. What can we assume happened to Jacob at the feast?
6. In this story, why is the issue of having children so much bigger than simply personal desire?



- Give thanks that God reassured Jacob of the patriarchal promises
- Give thanks for the significant encounters with God you have experienced that reassure you of his promises
- Pray for perseverance to remain faithful to God's promises

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Wounded to be Whole

Genesis 32-35

SUMMARY

True blessing comes when we stop running and let God break us.

Jacob wrestles with God, reconnects with Esau, returns to Bethel and is renamed Israel,

INTRO

What is a significant event you have personally experienced that has changed your outlook on life?

Genesis 32

1. v.26 Jacob was left alone to wrestle with a man (later identified as God) through the night. Jacob refuses to let go until he received a blessing. What does this teach us about perseverance in prayer?
2. Jacob is given the new name Israel. The name Jacob can mean 'heel grabber'. It is linked to the idea of deceiving. The name Israel conveys the idea of striving, struggling, or contending with God. God is giving Jacob a new identity. What is the significance of this for us who belong to Christ?

Sermon Notes

3. Jacob is defeated in his wrestling with God, yet he comes away blessed. What does this tell us about a relationship with God?;

Genesis 33

4. vv.1-3. In what way does this passage show us that Jacob's encounter with God did, and did not, change him?
5. In what ways is Esau's response to Jacob in v.4 a Gospel response?

Genesis 35

6. vv.2-5 Jacob tells the people to get rid of their foreign gods. What are the foreign gods we as Christians are tempted by?
6. vv.9-13 Recall where these promises have been given previously to Abraham and Isaac. Why is it important to keep repeating the promises?



Lord, please help me persevere in prayer, to wrestle with you all night if necessary, in order to truly know you.
Holy Spirit write God's promises on my heart, that I might faithfully serve you.

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