



# WHERE ARE WE GOING?

## THE BOOK OF GENESIS

*"I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you." -- Genesis 12:3*

Date: February 2, 2025

Message: THE PROMISE, PART 2

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Passage: Genesis 15:1-20:18

The Big Idea: The power of a promise relies on three things: (1) Is the promise-maker trustworthy, and (2) Is the promise-maker able to come through, and (3) Is the promise itself good. In the book of Genesis, as the world begins to take shape and people do as they please across the globe, God makes a promise about how all things will turn out. We just have to decide if the promise meets these three criteria.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 15:1-21) God's Covenant with Abram

1. How do you reassure someone that your word is good? (cross your heart and hope to die, handshake, involve a lawyer, scout's honor, swear on your mother's grave)?
2. What does Abram fear the most? (15:1-3, 8) Why does he feel that God may not come through?
3. What's wrong with wanting a little reassurance?
4. In adopting his servant Eliezer, was Abram being faithless or faithful?
5. What did God think of Abram's plan? (15:4)
6. If God said it one (12:2-3, 7) and even twice (13:14-17) why remind Abram again?
7. How has God already been Abram's shield and great reward? (Genesis 12-14)
8. How is faith related to righteousness? (15:6, Romans 4:18-22, Galatians 3:6-9) Which comes first? Which comes from God? Which is indispensable to a right relationship with God? (Hebrews 11:6)
9. What is the significance of cutting these animals in two, the torch, and passing in between? Who has a note in their study Bible?
10. What part of Abram's dream (15:12-16) and the cutting ceremony (15:18-20) is comforting? Discomforting?
11. Why does God initiate such a legal contract?
12. Why the land grant without obedience?
13. Where in your life do you need God to say, "Do not be afraid"? (I am your shield and reward)
14. The LORD spoke frequently to Abram. How does he speak to you?
15. Where in your life are you seeking certainty?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 16:1-16) Hagar and Ishmael

1. How long did you wait before having kids? Why?
2. Of the three characters in this story (Abram, Sarai, Hagar) Which do you like the most? The least? Why?
3. What might change your opinion of Abram and Sarai? (this was a common practice for a childless couple to have a child by their servant, or knowing their attitudes and motives were right before God, or that barren Sarai was 75 now with little hope of pregnancy, or knowing it had been 10 years since God promised them a son)?
4. What if anything might justify surrogate motherhood?
5. As a modern husband, even though the wife said it was ok, do you not see that this is a setup for trouble down the road?
6. Why does God reject the plan? How does God comfort Hagar? (16:9-10)
7. Why does God require Hagar to submit to Sarai's authority?
8. What does this chapter teach us about God? Angels? Human nature?
9. Where have you been waiting 10 years for God to come through?
10. How do you cope with delays?
11. From what are you feeling tempted to run?
12. Where have you seen God lately? Or where have you seen him working lately?
13. Are you on board with Hagar's name for God? (16:13) Do you sense that God sees you?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 17:1-27) It's Time for Covenant Fulfillment

1. What is the most serious contract you have signed? How did you confirm it?
2. After 13 years of silence, Abram must think that Ishmael is the promised heir (17:17). How does God show him otherwise?
3. Without getting too much into the "sign of the covenant," what does it demonstrate? (see 15:7, 17:1, Romans 4:9-12). How important is it now? (Galatians 5:6) What is faith to you?
4. In promising certain privileges, protection, and provision to Abraham, what does that imply for us, too?
5. In what way is this promise an everlasting covenant? (17:19)
6. What ceremonial ritual do we have today in Christian circles? (Are you in or out?)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 18:1-15) The Three Visitors

1. How does Abraham go overboard in showing hospitality to these guests?
2. What is the point of the Lord's visit to Abraham? Or the Lord's rebuke of Sarah?
3. Why did Sarah laugh? How is her laugh different than Abraham's laugh? (18:12, 17:17) Or does it?
4. Why does God rebuke Sarah but did not rebuke Abraham?
5. Where in your life is God telling you, "It's never too late"?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 18:16-33) Abraham Pleads for Sodom

1. How can Abraham be so daring with God, to bargain the way he did?
2. Do you think Abraham influenced God in one way or another? Do you think we can bargain with God in this way?
3. In Abraham's intercession, what do you admire enough to imitate?
4. In God's responses, what do you find most comforting?
5. How has God shown his patience toward you?

6. What can we learn about showing patience to other people?
7. For whom is God calling you to intercede?

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 19:1-29) God Destroys Sodom and Gomorrah

1. Lot's choice of living in Sodom is unfortunate, but the New Testament calls Lot righteous (2 Peter 2:7). Why is that?
2. How do you explain his decision to offer his daughters to the mob of men outside of his door?
3. Why does Lot hesitate to leave this condemned world?
4. What warrants the deliverance of these three pitiful people from such destruction?
5. What do we learn about God's justice and mercy?
6. How does our culture compare to that of Sodom?
7. What do you think has prevented the total destruction of our society?
8. Was there a time when you looked back at the destructive life you were living?
9. What examples does Lot give us to follow, and which to avoid in trying to live a godly life in a fallen world?

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 19:30-38) Lot and His Daughters

1. Here is another reason to question why Lot is called righteous. From this story, how do you describe Lot? His daughters? Lot's grandchildren?
2. What bothers you most about this story? (The drinking? The incest? The deception?)
3. Sexual dysfunction and alcohol abuse have caused a lot of damage to families. The older daughter gave justification for her actions (19:32). What justifications have you heard for family problems or dysfunction?
4. What about Lot's story or yours that moves you toward prayer?

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY 5 (Genesis 20:1-18) Abraham and Abimelech

1. Why do you think this story was inserted into the Genesis narrative at this point? (Suspense? Will Abraham succeed in jeopardizing God's promise after all? Which man fears God more? After rescuing Lot from harm, who needs to be rescued now? Was it a case of déjà vu?)
2. Where have we seen this before? (12:10-20, that visit to Egypt)
3. Why does God not scrap plan A in favor of a more faithful father of a great nation?
4. How does God remain faithful to his covenant? To Abraham? To Sarah? To Abimelech?
5. How might we identify with Abraham? (His all-too-human relapse? His repeated fib? His unwitting test of God's promise? The irony of the rescuer needing to be rescued?)
6. Who in your life is (or has been) your Abimelech? (One who bravely sets you straight)
7. Where might God be calling you to be an Abimelech?