

Term 2 Sermon Series

# COVENANT

Genesis 12-23

Land  
People  
Blessing



*'...and all peoples on earth*

*will be blessed through you.'*

GENESIS 12-23

STUDIES 1-9

Bible Studies: Term 2 2021



# GENESIS 12-23

# COVENANT

*‘...and all peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you.’*

Bruce Waltke on Genesis 12:1-3: *The gracious God’s broad new strokes to bless the earth come suddenly and brilliantly upon the canvas of sacred history. The Lord has not spoken to his saints since his covenant with Noah, in which he resolved to bless the earth and never again to treat it with contempt (8:20–9:17). Now suddenly his creative word to bless the tribes and nations—which he has scattered—redirects the course of history. This word of benediction counterbalances his words of malediction against the tower builders.*

Waltke, B.K. Waltke on Genesis: A Commentary (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2001) p204.

In this series of studies we look at further foundational chapters in the story of God’s working with human beings

Throughout these there is much for us to learn about the world we live in, the Lord God we serve, our salvation, our fellow human beings, our neighbors and ourselves.

May God grant us his grace (demonstrated throughout these chapters) so that we can ‘read, mark, learn and inwardly digest\*’ what he is saying to us and so live lives in better service to Him.

Greg Holmes - APRIL 2021

\*From the Book of Common Prayer, 1662, Collect for 2nd Sunday in Advent

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### THE STUDIES

Week Ending	Study	Passage	Title	Page No
Sun 25 Apr	<b>1</b>	<b>Genesis 11:27-12:9</b>	Call and Covenant	6
Sun 2 May	<b>2</b>	<b>Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18</b>	Lies in Egypt and Again	9
Sun 9 May	<b>3</b>	<b>Genesis 13</b>	Partings	12
Sun 16 May	<b>4</b>	<b>Genesis 14</b>	Rescue	15
Sun 23 May		Pentecost Sunday		
Sun 30 May	<b>5</b>	<b>Genesis 15 / 17</b>	Covenant	18
Sun 6 Jun	<b>6</b>	<b>Genesis 16; 18:1-15</b>	A Son??	21
Sun 13 Jun	<b>7</b>	<b>Genesis 18:16-19:38</b>	Sodom and Gomorrah	24
Sun 20 Jun	<b>8</b>	<b>Genesis 21</b>	A True Son	27
Sun 27 Jun	<b>9</b>	<b>Genesis 22-23</b>	Abrahams Test	30

Studies 2 and 5 pick up later references to the same sin or the renewal of the 12:1-3 covenant.

### Helpful References:

Kidner, D. Genesis (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries) (Leicester, IVP, 1967)  
(*An Oldy but a Goody*)

Reid, A. Genesis: Salvation Begins (Sydney South, Aquila, 2000) (*A newish Australian perspective- thoroughly recommended.*)

Wenham, G.J. "Genesis" in Carson, D.A., France, R.T., Motyer, J.A., Wenham, G.J. (Eds) NEW BIBLE COMMENTARY : 21st Century Edition (LEICESTER, IVP, 1994)

Longman, T(III). Genesis (The Story of God Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2016).

And the Mark Dever sermon on Genesis at

<http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/>

The outline of Genesis on the Bible Project website:

<https://thebibleproject.com/all-videos/>

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Some Background Notes:

#### Abraham

From Fee, G, Stuart, D. How to read the Bible Book by Book (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2002)

#### **Genesis 11:27–25:11 *The Account of Terah***

You can hardly miss seeing that Terah's son, Abraham, dominates this family story. Here you can watch how skillfully the narrative is presented. It introduces Abraham's family, who have moved partway to Canaan (11:27–32), with a special note about Sarah's barrenness (11:30). The key moments are in 12:1–9, where God calls Abraham to leave Haran and "go to the land I will show you" (12:1) and promises to make him "into a great nation" and to bless "all peoples on earth" through him (vv. 2–3). After obediently traveling to the land inhabited by Canaanites (vv. 4–5), Abraham traverses the whole land and then is promised, "To your offspring [seed] I will give this land" (vv. 6–7), whereupon "he built an altar there to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD" (vv. 8–9). In the rest of the narrative, you will see these several themes played out in one form or another: The *promised land* will be given to the *promised seed*, who will become a *great nation* and thus a *blessing to the nations*—even though the Canaanites now possess the land and Sarah is barren!—and so Abraham *trusts* and *worships* the God who has promised this.

Thus the first narrative, which is about Abram's failure in Egypt (12:10–20), has to do with God's protecting the *promised seed*. The first Lot cycle (chs. 13–14) focuses on *great nation* and *promised land* while introducing Sodom and Gomorrah, and indicating Abraham's considerable significance in the land. The back-to-back narratives of chapters 15–16 come back to the *promised seed* from a *barren woman*, while the centerpiece narrative of chapter 17 focuses on all the themes together. The next narrative focuses again on the promised seed from a barren woman (18:1–15), which is picked up again in the series of three narratives in chapters 20 and 21 (Abimelech, the birth of Isaac, the expulsion of Ishmael). These narratives bookend the second Lot cycle (18:16–19:38), which begins with the great nation that will be a blessing on the nations (18:18). Here the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the incestuous conception of Moab and Ammon stand in contrast to Abraham's trust in God for the promised land, a theme picked up again in 21:22–34.

Four crucial narratives then conclude the family story of Terah. First comes the testing of Abraham as to whether he would be willing to give up to God his firstborn son (ch. 22). In this crucial narrative, be sure to note

- (1) the renewal of the promises (vv. 15–18),
- (2) Abraham's obedience and implicit trust in God throughout,
- (3) God's provision of a sacrifice in place of Isaac.

Taken together, the deaths of Sarah (ch. 23) and of Abraham (25:7–11) complete the promised-land motif—a piece of the future promised land is purchased so that their bodies can rest there, waiting for the future to be fulfilled! These enclose the story of Isaac's marriage, which is included in the Abraham series because it continues the promised-seed motif, as does the introduction to the narrative of Abraham's death (25:1–6).

Note finally that unwise choices made in moments of shaky faith do not thwart God's purposes (the Pharaoh and Abimelech stories in chs. 12 and 20, and Hagar in ch. 16), while Abraham in his turn "believed the LORD, and [the LORD] credited it to him as righteousness" (15:6, a text that becomes especially important in Paul's letters). Thus Abraham's regular response to God is *worship* and *obedience* (12:7–8; 13:4, 18; 14:17–20; 22:1–19).

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 1: GENESIS 11:27-12:9

### **Call and Covenant**

#### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 11:27-32	Gen. 12:1-3	Gen. 12:4-9	Heb 11:8-16	John 8:48-59

**Briefly go back over the events of Genesis 1-11.**

**Listen to the Story:** Read Genesis 11:27-12:9

#### **Explain the Story**

1. Whose family are we now (in 11:27-32) given an account of?
2. From 12:1 which member of Terah's family does the account focus on?
3. What does the LORD direct Abram to do? What does Abram do?
4. What promises does the LORD make to Abram?
5. What does Abram then proceed to do?

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Explore the Story





1. Unpack the exact character of each of the promises made to Abram. Land? People? Blessing?
2. Why are these promises so important for the rest of the 'story' of the Bible?
3. Read Hebrews 11:8-16. What does this tell us about Abraham?
4. Waltke: *"The call of God to Abraham is the sneak preview for the rest of the Bible. It is a story of God bringing salvation to all tribes and nations through this holy nation."* Discuss. Note Gen 26:24; 28:13-15; 49:8-12; Ex 3:6-8; Deut 34:4; Deut 33; Acts 3:25; Gal 3:8.

### Live the Story

1. How does each of the promises made to Abram apply to you, here and now, in 21<sup>st</sup> century Kiama?
2. What does Abram leave behind? What do we need to 'leave behind' in order to obey Jesus, the LORD, and to enter into covenant relationship with him?

### For Next Week: Genesis 12:10-20 and Chapter 20

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<b><i>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</i></b>		<b><i>1</i></b>
<b><u>Genesis 11:27-12:9</u></b> <b><u>Call and Covenant</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		



## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 2: GENESIS 12:10 -20; 20:1-18

### **Lies in Egypt and again**

#### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 12:10-16	Gen. 12:16-20	Gen. 20:1-7	Gen. 20:8-18	XXX

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 12:10 -20; 20:1-18

This study looks at two occasions that Abram/Abraham felt the need to hide his relationship to Sarai/Sarah.

#### **Explain the Story**

1. Where is Abram in this account (12:1-10)? Why are he and his household there?
2. What happened in Egypt in regard to Sarai? With what consequence?
3. Read 20:1-18. What happened in Abimelech's territory? With what consequence?

#### **Explore the Story**

1. What similarities and what differences can you see in these two stories?

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT





2. What, in the end, is Abram/Abraham's sin on both these incidents?
3. Is Abram/Abraham a bit 'thick'? (I mean, same thing, twice!)
4. Where is the LORD in all of this?

### **Live the Story**

1. To what extent is Abram/Abraham simply a victim of his own circumstances and societal position?
2. When are you tempted to take things into your own hands and not trust God?

### **For Next Week: Genesis 13:1-18**

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<b><i>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</i></b>		<b>2</b>
<b><u>Genesis 12:10 -20; 20:1-18</u></b> <b><u>Lies in Egypt and again</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 3: GENESIS 13:1-18

#### **Partings**

##### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 13:1-9	Gen. 13:10-13	Gen. 13:14-18	Jam 3:13-18	Matt 5:1-10

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 13:1-18

#### **Explain the Story**

1. Where do Abram and those with him travel to now?
2. What 'glitch' arises? What is Abram's solution?
3. What choice does Lot make? Why?
4. What is Abram left with?

#### **Explore the Story**

1. What do we note from verse 2 about Abram's lifestyle?

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2. Note Matthew 5:9 and James 3:18. What does this have to say about Abram's behaviour?
3. What element of 'pilgrimage' can you see in Abram's 'wanderings'?
4. What is the 'sequel' for both these men?

### Live the Story

1. Where are the promises of Land, People, Blessing up to now?
2. Dissension seems to be a characteristic of God's people in all their history. What can we learn from Abram's example?

### For Next Week: Genesis 14:1-24

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<i>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</i>		<b>3</b>
<b><u>Study 3: Genesis 13:1-18</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
<b><u>Partings</u></b>		
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 4: GENESIS 14:1-24

#### **Rescue**

##### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 14:1-12	Gen. 14:13-16	Gen. 14:17-24	Heb 6:19-7:17	Psalms 110

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 14:1-24

#### **Explain the Story**

1. Read v1-12. What happens here? Why does it involve Abram?
2. Read v13-16. How is Lot 'saved'?
3. Read v17-24. What happens here?

#### **Explore the Story**

1. Note the amount of historical and geographical detail here. How does this help us in being confident in the scriptures?

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2. Who is Melchizedek? How does he relate to Abram and Abram to him?
3. Read Hebrews 6:19-7:17. What does this have to say about Melchizedek and Jesus?
4. What do you discern about the characters of Abram, Melchizedek and the King of Sodom from this account?





### **Live the Story**

1. What does this account teach us about Abram's commitment to family?
2. Where can you discern the 'hidden' hand of the LORD in this account of conquest, war and victory?

### **For Next Week: Genesis 15:1-18 and 17:1-27**



## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<i><b>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</b></i>		<b>4</b>
<b><u>Study 4: Genesis 14:1-24</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
<b><u>Rescue</u></b>		
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 5: GENESIS 15:1-18 AND 17:1-27

### COVENANT

#### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 15:1-7	Gen. 15:8-18	Gen. 17:1-14	Gen. 17:15-27	Rom 4:1-12

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 15:1-18 and 17:1-27

In this study we look at the two major instances of covenant renewal in Abram/Abraham's story.

#### **Explain the Story**

##### **From Chapter 15:**

1. What is Abram's 'complaint'?
2. How does God answer it? (Outline the events.)
3. What is the prediction in v13-14 all about?

##### **From Chapter 17:**

4. What are God's promises here?
5. What is to be (now) Abraham's response?

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Explore the Story





1. Note 15:6. What is so important about this verse?  
(See Romans 4:22-25; James 2:18-24)
2. What is signified by the 'bizarre' ceremony toward the end of chapter 15?
3. Circumcision (17:10-14) is a sign of the covenant. What other covenant signs are there? What covenant sign do we have as Christians?
4. After 2 significant 'fails' before chapter 15 and another in chapter 16, what is God's response to Abram/Abraham's frailty?

### Live the Story

1. "I am your shield and your great reward." What comfort is that to 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians in a seemingly lost and hostile world?
2. Do you have faith? Where is it placed?

### For Next Week: Genesis 16:1-15 and 18:1-15

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<b><i>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</i></b>		<b><i>5</i></b>
<b><u>Genesis 15:1-18 and 17:1-27</u></b> <b><u>Covenant</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 6: GENESIS 16:1-15 AND 18:1-15.

#### **A Son??**

##### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 16:1-6	Gen. 16:7-15	Gen. 18:1-15	Gal 4:21-31	Rom 4: 16-25

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 16:1-15 and 18:1-15

In this study we look at the birth of a 'substitute' son for Abram and Sarai and then at the further direct promise of a son and God himself visits Abraham.

#### **Explain the Story**

##### **From Genesis 16**

1. What is Sarai's solution to the problem of no son arriving yet?
2. What is the result of this? What is the problem that creates?
3. What is the significance of the interaction between the LORD and Hagar?

##### **From Genesis 18:1-15**

4. Who are the visitors? How are they described?

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5. What is the 'news' they bring and what is Sarah's reaction?

### Explore the Story





1. What is the problem with Sarai's solution to the problem of 'no son yet'?
2. How does Ishmael's arrival work with the promises God has made?
3. What do you think is the significance of the visit of the 'strangers'?

### Live the Story

1. What do we learn from Sarai/Sarah's actions in these passages?
2. Trusting God to do the things he has said he will do can be hard. Can you think of any examples in your life?

### For Next Week: Genesis 18:16-19:38

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<i><b>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</b></i>		<b>6</b>
<b><u>Genesis 16:1-15 and 18:1-15.</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
<b>A Son ??</b>		
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 7: GENESIS 18:16-19:38.

### **Sodom and Gomorrah**

#### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 18:16-33	Gen. 19:1-14	Gen. 19:15-29	Gen 19:30-38	Luke 17:22-37

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 18:16-19:38

#### **Explain the Story**

1. Note the discussion between the LORD and Abraham in 18:16-33. What is its outcome? Is this boldness, presumptuousness or an expression of faith?
2. Note 19:1-14? Is there anything to learn from this appalling story?
3. How are Lot and his daughters rescued?
4. Note 19:30-38. Are things getting better or worse?



## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Explore the Story





1. So does Abraham's debate with God have any effect in the end?
2. What is Lot's wife's fate? What can we learn from this?
3. What is the point of the discussion in v18-22?
4. Compare and contrast Abraham's (18:1-7) and Lot's (19:1-3) first encounters with the 'strangers'.

### Live the Story

1. What do learn about relating to God in prayer from this passage?
2. What does this passage tell us about God's attitude to our sins?

### For Next Week: Genesis 21:1-34

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<b><i>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</i></b>		<b><i>7</i></b>
<b><u>Genesis 18:16-19:38.</u></b> <b><u>Sodom and Gomorrah</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 8: GENESIS 21:1-34

#### **A True Son**

##### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 21:1-7	Gen. 21:8-16	Gen. 21:17-21	Gen. 21:22-34	Rom 9:1-9

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 21:1-34

#### **Explain the Story**

1. What finally happens in 21:1-7?
2. What are Abraham and Sarah's reactions?
3. Why are Hagar and Ishmael (21:8-21) 'sent away'? How does God involve himself in this?
4. Note 21:22-34. For both sides what is the motivation for this treaty?

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Explore the Story





1. What is Abraham and Sarah's son named? Why?
2. What is the connection of the Tamarisk tree with the treaty made with Abimelech?
3. What is the status of the elements of the 12:1-3 promises at this stage of the story?

### Live the Story

1. Note 21:17a. What does this tell us about our God? What does this mean for your relationship with him?
2. Are you impatient with God?

### For Next Week: Genesis 22-23

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

<i>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</i>		8
<b><u>Study 8: Genesis 21:1-34</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
<b><u>A True Son</u></b>		
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

### Study 9: GENESIS 22-23.

### **Abraham's Test**

#### *A Reading Guide:*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gen. 22:1-8	Gen. 22:9-14	Gen. 22:15-24	Gen 23:1-20	Heb. 11:17-19

#### **Listen to the Story**

Read Genesis 22-23

#### **Explain the Story.**

1. In 22:1-2 what task does God ask Abraham to undertake? How does God describe the boy?
2. In 22:3-8 what is Abraham's response?
3. What happens on top of the mountain? (22:9-14)
4. What is the LORD's response to Abraham? (22:15-18)

#### **Explore the Story.**

1. 22:1 is essentially a spoiler. What does it mean that God 'tested' Abraham?

## GENESIS 12-23 - COVENANT

2. What is the significance of this 'sacrifice' story? (Note 22:8,13,14 and also Hebrews 11:17-19.)
3. In 22:1-10 God is called God (Elohim) and in v11ff he is referred to as LORD (Yahweh). Can you see any significance in this?
4. What things does 22:20-23:20 tell us about the progress of God's promises to Abraham (12:1-3)?




### **Live the Story.**

1. What limits would you place on your obedience to God's requirements?
2. What have you learned from Abram/Abraham about being a man or woman of God?

### **For Next Week: Genesis 24fff**

To see the end of the story or the end of the beginning of the story...

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<i>Genesis 12-23: Covenant</i>		<b>9</b>
<b><u>Genesis 22-23.</u></b> <b><u>Abraham's Test</u></b>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 