

Session Three Responses – PATRIARCHS



Sacrifice of Isaac by Caravaggio

1. *Mankind has been scattered and their languages confused after they tried to build a name for themselves rather than calling on the name of the Lord. What is God's first step toward restoring them to himself? (See Genesis 12:1-3.)*

God's first step toward restoring his scattered people to himself is to call one man, Abram, to leave everything behind in Ur (interestingly, this is near the location of the Tower of Babel and, even today, is known for the remains of its *ziggurats*) and follow him to a new land. The restoration God will accomplish for his people is implicit in the blessing he gives Abram, by whom "all the families of the earth will bless themselves" (Genesis 12:3).

2. *Patriarchs means literally "fathers" in the same sense we use the terms "forefathers" or "Founding Fathers." This period tells of the patriarchs—the "founding fathers"—of the nation of Israel. Who are they?*

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the main patriarchs of Israel. Some also consider Jacob's sons to be patriarchs—particularly Joseph, whose story takes up the final third of the book of Genesis.

3. *Why is the color burgundy used to represent this time period?*

Burgundy is the color of blood, the blood that sealed the covenant God made with Abraham.

4. *Read Genesis 12:1-3. What promises does God make to Abraham?*

Genesis 12:1-3 says, "Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.'"

This promise can be divided into three parts: (1) a promise of land for Abram's many descendants; (2) a promise of a nation and a great name; and (3) a promise of worldwide blessing. The "Abrahamic Covenant"

box on the *Timeline Chart* lists the second promise as a promise of “royal kingdom” because later in Genesis, God tells Abraham that this is his plan for the nation.

5. *To whom do the promises pass in the following generations?*

The promises of God passed down from Abraham to his son (by Sarah) Isaac; to Isaac’s son Jacob; and from Jacob to his twelve sons, with particular emphasis on Judah and Joseph (through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh). Eventually, the promise would extend to all mankind.

6. *God’s three covenant promises to Abraham are elaborated in Genesis 15, 17, and 22. In this three-part covenant (also called the “Abrahamic Covenant”), God promises to give Abraham’s descendants a land, to establish them as a kingdom, and to make them a source of worldwide blessing. This covenant gives us a blueprint for understanding the rest of the Bible, which is basically the story of God making good on those promises. Look at the Patriarchs period on your Chart to get an idea of where the story is headed. Each time God fulfills one of the promises, he makes yet another covenant with his people. Find the “Abrahamic Covenant” box on your Chart, and identify the people through whom God will make future covenants with his people and fulfill the three promises he made to Abraham.*

Land Promise: Moses

Kingdom Promise: David

Promise of Worldwide Blessing: Jesus Christ

7. *Throughout salvation history, God repeatedly poses the same question to mankind: “Will you trust me?” What does trust in God look like, as demonstrated in the life of Abraham?*

Those who trust God act on his promises. Abraham is known as our “father in faith.” Jeff explains how Abraham’s faith is shown when God takes him outside to look at the stars, and again when he offers up Isaac. Consider the following passages from Hebrews 11:8-12 and 17-19:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. ...By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your descendants be named.” He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence he did receive him back and this was a symbol.

8. *How might God be calling you to trust in him today?*

Answers will vary.

Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: **EGYPT AND EXODUS** Approximate dates: 1800–1446 BC

Period color: Red Color meaning: The Red Sea

Supplemental book for this period: Leviticus

What key person does God send?: Moses

Name a current event in secular history: Building projects of Pharaohs Seti I & Ramses II,
Code of Hammurabi, First urban civilization in China, Greek language first written

Period name: **DESERT WANDERINGS** Approximate dates: 1446 –1406 BC

Period color: Tan Color meaning: The color of the desert

List two key events: Covenant in Moab, Twelve spies sent out, Aaron's rod,
Moses strikes the rock, Bronze serpent

Narrative book for this period: Numbers