Sunday January 29, 2023 Abraham, Called to a Life of Faith



The Good News Story – Tracing the Scarlet Thread of Redemption from Genesis to Revelation

Jesus is the Central Character in God's good News Story. He is The Scarlet thread of Redemption that holds all things together!

In Genesis — Jesus is the Word of God, creating the heavens and the earth; He is the promised Seed of the woman. He is symbolized by the shedding of blood necessary to provide animal skins that covered the sin and shame of Adam & Eve. Christ's mercy and redemption is shown in the 'Mark of Cain' to protect him. The birth of Enosh is a symbol of God's plan to provide an unbroken thread of generation protection as he is the ancestor of Noah, Abraham, Judah, David, and eventually to Jesus Christ.

In Noah's Ark we see a pre-type of salvation and redemption. In Noah's animal sacrifice worship offering after the flood, we see the reinforcing of the blood sacrifice that is needed. In the covenant sign of the rainbow, we see a symbolic and visual portrait of the promise of redemption. The first color of the rainbow is Crimson or Red. It is the color that is 'over' all the others, in a sense providing a 'covering' of red to all the others. Today we see in the story of Abraham and the covenant that God made with him is a continuing reminder that God is providing a way of hope for His people.

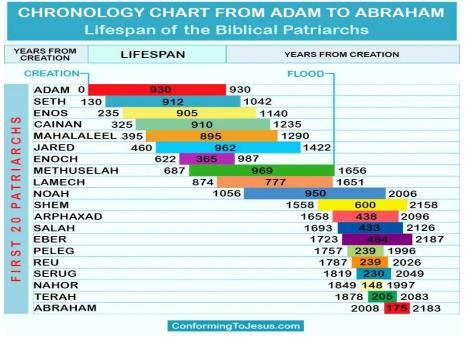
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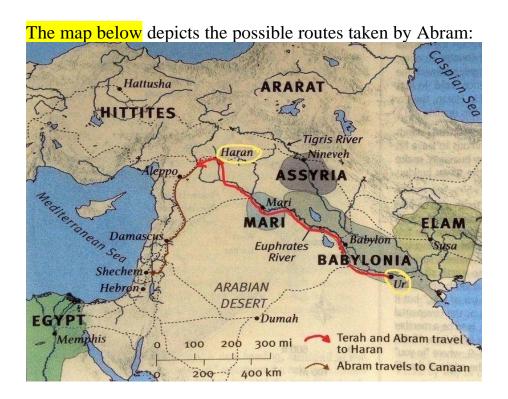
- 1. H.L. Wilmington. 'Wilmington's Guide to the Bible'. Tyndale House
- W.A. Criswell, FBC Dallas on The Scarlet Thread of Redemption. I have included it for historical and summary overview purposes. Along with interspersed points from: https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/chronology_adam-abraham.htm
- 3. Orality Bible Stories". Kevin Olson. 2014 Ambassador Institute.
- 4. https://www.stephensizer.com/2014/01/abraham-lessons-in-the-call-of-god/
- 5. https://blogs.belhaven.edu/adult-education/2017/07/21/lessons-from-father-abraham/
- Understanding God's Call (Genesis 12:1–9) | Bible.org https://bible.org/seriespage/1-understanding-god-s-call-genesis-121-9. 2017. Gregory Brown

The book of Genesis spans a period of time around 2350 years. The 11 chapters describe the Creation of the Universe, Origin and creation on humans, the fall, the flood and the Tower of Babel. This period covers around 2000 years.

The last 39 chapters, covers around 350 years and introduces us to Abram/Abraham and his descendants. It is noteworthy to see that God gave us more detail about Abraham that about the Origin of the Universe! In the story of Abraham we see how one person Heard, Responded & Obeyed to God's Call to Live a Life of Faith. Though not a perfect man, Abraham sets an example for us to Hear & Following God's Call to Live a Life of Faith now.

Following is a chart showing the key players in God's Good News Story.





Abram (later named changed to Abraham) was born about 2008 years after the creation of Adam & Eve. He lived to the age of 175 years, He was born in the well-known and populace ancient city of Ur. Though we cannot be 100% positive as to its exact location, it appears to have been in Chaldea or the area known as Babylonia at the mouth of the Euphrates River near modern day Persian Gulf. It was a fabulous city for it's time with large, high thick city walls, and was know for its towers or ziggurats. (Think Tower of Babel).. According to archaeologists they worshipped at 2 main temples, one dedicated to the moon-god Nannar, and the other to his wife, Ningal. Abram was a son of a man named Terah (of the line of Noah's son Shem. His brothers were named Haran & Nahor.

It appeared that Terah, was caught up and practiced the worship of the false moon gods of Ur. After the death of Terah's son Haran (brother of Abram) Terah moved his family to an area which was named Haran. It could be that Terah founded this city and named it for his deceased son. He also took his deceased son's child Lot with them on this journey. It was here that God began to place His Call on Abram to follow Him in Faith.

God's Call To Abraham Gives US Insights To Hearing And Following God's Call To Live A Life Of Faith

The Call of Abram
Genesis 12:1-8... 1 The Lord said to Abram, "Leave

your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." 4 So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. ⁶ After traveling through the land 7 the Lord appeared to Abram and said "To your offspring I will give this land." So Abram built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him ... 8 and called on the name of the Lord.

Some of the following is adapted from
Understanding God's Call (Genesis 12:1–9) | Bible.org
https://bible.org/seriespage/1-understanding-god-s-call-genesis-121-9

Genesis 12:1... The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

Key Points of God's Call to a Life of Faith:

1. We Must Listen & Anticipate God Speaking to Us

a. To discern our specific call, we must apply principles found in Scripture.

In order to discern our specific call, we must apply the wisdom principles in Scripture. David said, "Your Word is a light unto my path and a lamp unto my feet" (Ps 119:105). When we are not using the principles given in Scripture, we walk in the dark.

b. To discern our specific call, we must faithfully fulfill God's general call.

God has given a general call in Scripture for everyone to obey—like meditating on his Word day and night, sharing the gospel, using our spiritual gifts to serve the church, and turning away from sin. When we are faithful with what God has already revealed, he gives us more. (Brown)

Mark 4:24–25 "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

c. Abraham's call initially consisted of only one set of directions (Genesis 12:1):

It's alright for us not to see the full picture of our educational journey. We "go" one step at a time, trusting God to lead us along the way.

2. It is God Who Chooses and Calls According to His Will

We do not know if Abram was a following of God before his call. It was God's sovereign choice and will to choose and call Abram to follow the plan God had set for Him. This point is similar to grace, we don't deserve it but God offers it and if we accept He grants us grace and mercy. You may think that you are not worthy to have a call from God to join Him in His work. But, it is God who knows best and calls us to join Him.

1. Understanding this helps us trust God instead of being angry at him when we consider our situation or others'.

We may not fully understand his electing grace and sovereignty, but we must trust that he is good and perfect in all his ways. Only someone who is all-wise and all-good is suitable to be sovereign over all.

2. Understanding this helps us to be humble instead of prideful when God prospers us.

Abraham could look back and remember that he was an idolater that God called and saved by grace. Paul was a murderer—the chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15, KJV). David was a shepherd—the least in his household and

despised by Israel because of his occupation - it keeps us humble.

3. Understanding this helps us worship God.

Consider Paul's response to God's election of Israel in Romans 11:28, 34–36...Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. (Brown)

3. God's Call is Costly and Involves Sacrifice

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. (Genesis 12:1)

- a. It involves faith & dependence
- b. It is a call to separate yourself from the world and sin
- c. The call requires courage.

Abraham came to understand the limits of his cognitive understanding. Similarly, intellectual work challenges us and forces us to reckon with what we don't know as we arrive at a place of deeper wisdom and insight.

d. The call required obedience.

Abraham wrestled with some of God's commands (see Gen. 22). We are expected to run the race set before us in obedience.

e. The call involved his family.

Abraham's family was implicated in all that his journey entailed. We, too, have family, friends, and communities who partner with us in the good and bad we experience. We are not alone – and this can be both an encouragement and an ongoing responsibility that tests our strength.

f. The call requires sacrifice.

Abraham yielded his time and stood to lose his earthly wealth in fulfilling his call. Similarly, we're making an investment in God's Kingdom by investing in our degrees. This means we sometimes forego other opportunities and pleasures in pursuit of God's call. https://blogs.belhaven.edu/adult-education/2017/07/21/lessons-from-father-abraham/

4. God's Call Includes Great Promises For Those Who Obey

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:2-3)

God's promise to Abram has a sevenfold structure:

- 1. "I will make you a great nation"
- 2. "I will bless you."
- 3. "I will make your name great"
- 4. "you will be a blessing"

- 5. "I will bless those who bless you"
- 6. "whoever curses you I will curse"
- 7. "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"

5. God's Call Is a Call to Bold Worship

Genesis 12:6–9...Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

"Another aspect of our call is bold worship. Throughout Abraham's life, we commonly see him build altars. When Abraham gets to Shechem in the land of Canaan, the Lord appears to him, and he builds an altar to God (v. 7). After moving, he then builds another altar in the hills between Bethel and Ai (v. 8). The altar symbolized his worship. When Abraham began to follow God, he became a worshiper". (Brown)

Conclusion: Take-Aways

- To obey the Lord and worship Him without questioning His reasons for what He asks.
- To go where the Lord tells us to go without hesitation.
- To pass on the blessing that we have been given. (from "Orality Bible Stories")

Additional Reading Materials These goals are reprinted from "Orality Bible Stories". Kevin Olson. 2014 Ambassador Institute.

Goals:

Knowledge

- To understand that the Lord promised that all of the people of the earth would be blessed through Abram's seed, Jesus.
- To recognize that the blessing of the Lord carries a privilege and a responsibility. The privilege is the Lord's promised offspring; the responsibility is to carry that Blessing to the whole earth.

Attitude

- To believe that the Lord alone, through His promise, is the only thing that qualifies you for anything.
- To trust the Lord's plan even when you cannot see it all.
- 1. In what way does the Lord call to us today? (Genesis 12:1 The Lord calls us through the preaching, teaching, reading of His Word, and through the Holy Spirit.)
- 2. How must we respond when the Lord calls us to do something? (Genesis 12:1-4 We must go where He tells us to go and do what He commands us to do.)
- 3. The Lord commanded Abram to leave the comforts of Haran. What does He ask us to leave behind in order to follow Him? (Genesis 12:1 The Lord asks us to leave everything behind including our sinful way of living.)
- 4. What is the blessing that we have been given? What responsibility goes with that blessing? (Genesis 12:1-3 The blessing is Abraham's future offspring, Jesus. The

- responsibility is the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.)
- 5. When God calls us, do we always know where God will be leading us? (Genesis 12:1 No, but we can trust that He will show us when the time is right for us to know.)
- 6. What does this story teach us about God's provision when He calls us? (Genesis 12:2-3, 7 We can be sure that when the Lord calls us and we obey Him, He will bless us and provide for us.)
- 7. Abram was seventy-five years old when God called him to leave his home. What qualifies us, like Abram, to be God's chosen one. (Genesis 12:1-8 Nothing in ourselves, only the Promise of God. The new land and the alter point to the only sacrifice that would qualify Abram.)
- 8. What does this show us about who God is able to call and use for His glory? (Genesis 12:4 God is able to call anyone He desires. When God uses someone who is not strong to do great things, this gives Him much glory, because it is clear to everyone that God is the One who is doing the great things.)
- 9. How should we respond to the Lord when He is leading us? (Genesis 12:7-8 We should always worship God and give Him glory. We must ask Him to lead us in every decision.)
- 10. What does it mean that God said He would be Abram's "shield and very great reward?" (Genesis 15:1 God is like a shield that surrounds us and protects us from the devil, the world, and our flesh. God is our reward because Jesus makes it
- possible to know Him and having fellowship with Him. He also provides for all that we need for life and godliness through the glorious riches in Jesus Christ our Lord. See 2 Peter 1:3 and Philippians 4:19.)

11. What makes God look upon us as righteous? (Genesis 15:6 God looks at us as righteous when we have faith in His Word and we trust in His promises. If we believe Him, we will obey what He tells us to do. Romans 4:1-5, 18-25; 5:1) 12. What is faith? (Genesis 15:6 Faith is trusting God at His Word. It is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1, 8-10)

from "Orality Bible Stories" . Kevin Olson. 2014 Ambassador Institute.

Tracing The Scarlet Thread

Revelation 13:8... "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship Him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

1 Peter 1:19-21... "[19] But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: [20] For He was chosen or foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for your sake, [21] and through Him you believe [confidently] in God [the heavenly Father], who raised Him [Christ] from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are [centered and rest] in God.

{Genesis 2:15 & 3:6,7 set the stage for the need of a 'Scarlet Thread of Redemption]

Genesis 2:15...¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Genesis 3:6,7... ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings... ¹³ And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Protoevangelium (First Gospel)

Genesis 3:15... "And I will put enmity (open hostility) Between you and the woman, And between your seed (offspring) and her Seed; He shall [fatally] bruise your head, And you shall [only] bruise His heel." (AMP)

Genesis 3:21... The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.

From the very beginning of human history, it is revealed. When Adam and Eve sinned, God shed innocent blood in order to make them clothes from animal skins (Genesis 3:21). This is a picture of the covering of righteousness that we receive when the Lord Jesus Christ died for us.

Genesis 4:8... Then Cain spoke to Abel his brother; and it happened when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Genesis 4:10-15... ¹⁰ And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. ¹¹ So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." ¹³ And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! ¹⁴ Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." ¹⁵ And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

Genesis 4:25-26...²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." ²⁶ And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD. [It is through the lineage of Enosh that our Lord Jesus Christ is descended. He is the 6th Great Grandfather of Noah)

Genesis 6:5-8, 14-18, 22...⁵ When the Lord saw that man's wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every scheme his mind thought of was nothing but evil all the time, ⁶ the Lord regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ Then the Lord said, "I will wipe off

from the face of the earth mankind, whom I created, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky—for I regret that I made them." Noah, however, found favor in the sight of the Lord... Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside. Is This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. You are to make a roof finishing the sides of the ark to within 18 inches of the roof. You are to put a door in the side of the ark. Make it with lower, middle, and upper decks. The understand that I am bringing a flood—floodwaters on the earth to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will die. But I will establish My covenant with you, and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives... And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

Genesis 8:15-22...¹⁵ Then God spoke to Noah, ¹⁶ "Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷ Bring out all the living creatures that are with you—birds, livestock, those that crawl on the ground—and they will spread over the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." 18 So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, came out. 19 All wildlife, all livestock, every bird, and every creature that crawls on the earth came out of the ark by their groups. ²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, He said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, even though man's inclination is evil from his youth. And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done. ²² As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night will not cease."

Noahic Covenant

Genesis 9:1-9, 12-17... ¹God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ² The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority ³ Every living creature will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given

you everything. ⁴ However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. ⁵ I will require the life of every animal and every man for your life and your blood. I will require the life of each man's brother for a man's life. 6 Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood will be shed by man, for God made man in His image. ⁷ But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it." 8 Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, ⁹ "Understand that I am confirming My covenant with you and your descendants after you... ¹² And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between Me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future generations: ¹³ I have placed My rainbow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 Whenever I form clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember My covenant between Me and you and all the living creatures: water will never again become a flood to destroy every creature. 16 The bow will be in the clouds, and I will look at it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all the living creatures on earth." ¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have confirmed between Me and every creature on earth."

<u>Geneaology of the Scarlet Thread Continues</u>
Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber (Hebrew), Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham...

<u>The Call of Abraham –</u> <u>Reaffirmation of God's Covenant Redemption</u>

Genesis 12:1-3,7... ¹The LORD said to Abram: Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you... ⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your offspring." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Genesis 14:17-20...¹⁷ After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ Then Melchizedek, king of Salem brought out bread and wine; He was a priest to God Most High. ¹⁹ He blessed Abram and said: Abram is blessed by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²⁰ and I give praise to God Most High who has handed over your enemies to you. And Abram gave Him a tenth of everything.

Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 15:1-6, 9-12, 17,18...After these events, the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: Do not be afraid, Abram, I Am your Shield; your Reward will be very great. 2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what can You give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Abram continued, "Look, You have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house will be my heir." ⁴ Now the Word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then He said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous." ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.... 9 He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. "10 So he brought all these to Him, split them down the middle, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut up the birds. 11 Birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. 12 As the sun was setting, a deep sleep fell on Abram, and suddenly great terror and darkness descended on him......¹⁷ When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the divided animals. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram,

Genesis 17:1-14...When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be blameless. ² I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." ³ Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: ⁴ "As for Me, My covenant is with you: you will become the father of many nations ⁵ Your name

will no longer be Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you. ⁷ I will keep My covenant between Me and you, and your future offspring throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. ⁸ And to you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing—all the land of Canaan—as an eternal possession, and I will be their God." ⁹ God also said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations are to keep My covenant. 10 This is My covenant, which you are to keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every one of your males must be circumcised. 11 You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 Throughout your generations, every male among you at eight days old is to be circumcised. This includes a slave born in your house and one purchased with money from any foreigner. The one who is not your offspring, 13 a slave born in your house, as well as one purchased with money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be marked in your flesh as an everlasting covenant. 14 If any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

The Covenant thread of Genealogy Continues with Birth of Issac

Genesis 17:19-22...¹⁹ But God said, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his future offspring. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will certainly bless him; I will make him fruitful and will multiply him greatly. He will father 12 tribal leaders, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year." ²² When He finished talking with him, God withdrew from Abraham.

Genesis 21:1-5...The LORD came to Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. ³ Abraham named his son who was born to him—the one Sarah bore to him—Isaac. ⁴ When his son Isaac was

eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

<u>Deferred Sacrifice Of Isaac – A Pre-type and Foreshadowing of the</u> <u>Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ, The Lamb of God</u>

Genesis 22: