

MESSAGE GUIDE

ABRAHAM: WALKING WITH GOD LIVING BY FAITH ON A ROCKY ROAD

**LIVING TRUTH MINISTRIES
COPYWRITE 2008**

Study Notes Guide

This Message Guide may be a little different from those that you have used before.

The purpose of these Notes is not an in-depth study of the scriptures used, but rather to assist you or your Study Group as you reflect on the message given by Charles Price on the subject of Abraham as found in Genesis 11 v.27 to 12 v.4.

We present questions in order to stimulate discussion. Sometimes we will give you the answer ... sometimes not. At other times a statement or a theme is presented for your consideration.

As you allow the Holy Spirit to guide the direction of your study and discussions we pray the flexibility of this Message Guide will help you as you delve more deeply into Charles' message, and that you will unearth more lessons from the Lord than may not have been immediately obvious.

Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 1 – ‘Starting The Journey’
Genesis 11:27 to 12:4

Message Guide & Questions

1. Every journey has a starting point. Consider briefly: when did your journey with Jesus start? Has it always been a smooth road? Would you say you are a better person now, than at the start?

2. Our relationship with God is a ‘journey’
Consider some relevant aspects of a journey.
A _____
B _____

3. The Bible is perhaps unique in the raw honesty it displays concerning its ‘hero’s’ and their journeys. Consider 3 such hero’s in the Bible –
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

4. Is human failure the end of the road? Explain.

5. Read again Genesis 11 v.27 to 12 v.4
Can you identify two ‘movements’ in Abraham life from these verses?
a. _____
b. _____

6. Read also Luke 14 v.25 – 27, then v. 33 and v.35

7. What were the choices facing Abraham? Between
The F _____ or the U _____
That which was C _____ or that which was U _____
That which was E _____ or that which was D _____
Abraham could either O _____ or D _____
He could T _____ G _____ or D _____ G _____

8. Interestingly the Bible only gives us a record of Jesus actually ‘calling’ 6 of the disciples.
Name those 6 disciple if you can.

9. If you were asked to 'follow' someone, what would be the first question you would ask but which the disciples did not ask? Why?

10. Unfortunately Abraham – right at the start – did not completely obey God. In what way did he disobey God?

Final Thoughts

It is so easy to start off well – but then get sidetracked.

Career – you get on the ladder, but then are sucked into the system.

Marriage – good, but you 'settle down' and get stuck
which is not God's plan for some people.

2nd Best - you settle for that which is good,
but not the perfect will of God for you.

Comfort - we get stuck in a 'comfort zone'
where we may well be doing things 'for God'
but never really experiencing what HIS will for us is.

Quote from Charles:

"All human allegiances must become second to our allegiance to God."

9. This physical land of Canaan is a foreshadowing of a spiritual truth of the fullness of the Christian Life. Please read Ephesians 1 v. 3 and 2 Peter 1 v.3.
-
-

10. But there is a warning! What are the two conditions for living in this land?

a. O _ _ _ _ _ to God

b. T - - - - in God

Final Thoughts

The **Covenant with Abraham** is so important to us because
It is the Gospel! Read Galatians 3 v.8

Here is the challenge: Are you among the People of God?
Through new birth, repentance & faith?

If you are: Are you living in the right place?
Enjoying the provision of Canaan?
Resting in Christ's full sufficiency?

If you are: Are you committed to the Purpose?
That all peoples of the world will be blessed?
Are you being a channel for God to accomplish this?

Quote from Charles :

*"When we talk about 'progressive revelation'
it is not a progress from half-truth to a whole-truth;
it's a progress from promise to fulfillment.*

Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 3 – When Spiritual Reality and Physical Reality Collide
Genesis 12:6 - 20

Message Guide & Questions

1. Abraham was not really an adventurous kind of person, so how would you describe the nature of this 'mission' that he went on?

2. After the Lord appeared to Abraham in verse 7 what was the first thing that Abraham did?

3. What is the significance of building an altar to the Lord?

4. An altar represented the **interaction** between Abraham and God, which involved -

W _____ of Him S _____ to Him

D _____ on Him and A _____ to Him

5. This act of building an altar to Lord was repeated several time by Abraham; and then his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob.

Read Genesis 12:8; 13:18, 22:9 then 26:25; 33:20 and 35:7

It is good to continually acknowledge God along the journey; and to symbolically mark our territory for God.

Can you think of some ways in which we do this in our society today?

At a M _____ At a C _____

When we say G _____ At a F _____

6. In verse 10 everything changes.

What was that change? _____

What affect did it have on Abraham? _____

7. Do you think this famine was caused By God? Or was it caused by the devil?



8. Consider Abraham's reaction to this situation.
From what perspective was he viewing it?

9. So Abraham has panicked and fled, out of God's will, to Egypt.
This sets in motion a chain of event that causes, what?

Abraham became D _____

Abraham became D _____

Abraham became D _____

Abraham's action caused others to S _____ C _____

10. What was Abraham's problem in all of this?

Final Thoughts

Where are YOUR roots established?
If they are in this world, then you will be tossed about
according to the ebb and flow of this world.
So please read Jeremiah 17 v.7 & 8 and let your roots be in the Lord.

Learn to always look at your personal famine – your difficulties – through God,
so that He [not the problem] becomes your reference point.

And do not neglect the building of your symbolic altars to the Lord, as a reminder that
He brought you here! He takes the responsibility!
Just trust and obey!

Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 4 – The Dangers of Second-Hand Godliness
Genesis 13:1 – 6; 10 – 13; 14:11 - 12

Message Guide & Questions

1. Just believing in something doesn't do any good in itself; but it may not do any harm either. It is only when we act on what we believe that any good, or harm, comes from it.

Many people believe all the right things about God; they have their Christianity neatly packaged. But this belief does not do them any good because they are not prepared to act upon it. Of course, it does do any harm either; but it has just become 'information'.

Lot was very much like this he knew it all, but it was of no value to him.

Here we will contrast Lot with Abraham; two men on the same journey, but for very different reasons and consequences.

What do we learn from the following verses?
Genesis 12 v.14; Genesis 13 v.1 and Genesis 13 v.5

2. It would be good to recap from our previous study.

Abraham left Ur -

- i Not because he knew where he was going.
- ii Not because he could predict the role he would play in history.
- iii Not because he was game for an adventure.

So why did Abraham go?

3. Can you remember what the essence of a true relationship with God is?

4. What are the 3 foundation stones of our relationship with God?

- a. L ___ for God.
- b. O _____ to God.
- c. D _____ on God.

5. Lot does not have a vision of his own – and like Lot, we could find ourselves simply *moving around with Abraham*. We may
- * Seem to take the right S _____.
 - * Seem to do the right T _____.
 - * Speak the right L _____.
 - * Engage in the right B _____.
 - * Turn up at the right E _____.

6. Read Genesis 13 v. 10 & 11. What does this tell you about Lot?

7. Read Genesis 13 v.12 & 13. What does this tell you about Lot's further digression?

8. Now let's contrast Abraham's situation.

Although he had made mistakes and seemingly had failed, failure is never final if we genuinely turn back to the Lord and are willing to learn from our mistakes.
Read Genesis 13 v.3 & 4. What does this signify?

Final Thoughts

There is a myth that says that our security is in
our circumstances, our possessions, our attributes or our prosperity.
THIS IS NOT TRUE!

Our security is never in external things,
but rather **in our own personal relationship with God.**

- I The Christian environment will not make you a Christian
- ii The Christian family will not keep you close to God.
- iii The Christian church will not make you spiritual.
- iv The Christian culture is not a substitute for God.

All of these are helpful –
but you need **YOUR OWN personal relationship with God.**
Do not make the same mistake as Lot,
or you may be subtly sucked into your own personal Sodom.

An finally, remember this, and be encouraged –
Failure is never final – it can be a stepping stone to better things!
Do not be afraid to fail; nor be afraid to face up to,

and be honest about, your failure.

Fear was a real part of the journey for Abraham – and it may be for you too.
However, Abraham moves from experiencing fear to exercising faith.

**Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 5 – Abraham : Justification by Faith
Genesis 15:1 - 21**

Study Notes Guide & Questions

1. One of the great doctrines of the Christian faith is that of ‘Justification By Faith’.
Can you explain it?

2. What is the name of the 16th Century German monk who ‘rediscovered’ this truth?
Describe his life before his “discovery”. What brought about the change?

3. As a basis for our understanding we will explore 3 ‘movements’ :
 - a. Abraham Experiencing Fear Genesis 15 v.1 – 5
 - b. Abraham Experiencing Faith Genesis 15 v.6 – 7
 - c. Abraham Experiencing Fulfillment Genesis 15 v.8 - 21
4. Reading again Genesis 15:1 – 5
Why does Abraham need to be told to not be afraid?

5. Read Genesis 15 verse 1b.
How should we face a dilemma, especially one involving fear and doubt?

6. Read and consider again Genesis 15:6. What does the word “credited” mean in this situation?

7. Read again verse 6. What exactly was it that Abraham believed?

8. Faith is not having no doubts; it is T _____ in the face of doubts.
9. So – Abraham Experienced Fear; he Exercised Faith: and this led to him
E _____ F _____

Final Thoughts

There has to be a dying with Christ if the Christian life is to be lived in fullness.

The “Good News” of the Gospel is that we do not have to earn this –
it has been ‘credited’ to our account.

Sadly many people are still trying to earn their standing with God;
trying to build up their own account by works and actions,
in the hope that one day they will reach the point where the scales tip in their favor.

Please read, and fully embrace, Ephesians 2:8 and 9.

And finally, remember this:

It is not the quality of our faith that matter,
but rather it is the quality of the **object** of our faith –
GOD HIMSELF.

Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 6 – Ishmael & Isaac – The Flesh and the Spirit
Genesis 16:1 – 4a; 17:1 – 8; 21:1 - 3

Message Guide & Questions

1. This study deals with the subject of PATIENCE, and who is in control.

Edward Sapir, a Jewish writer of a century ago wrote;

“Impatience translates itself into a desire to have something immediate done about it all, and, as is generally the case with impatience, resolves itself in the easiest way that lies ready to hand.”

This perfectly describes Abraham’s actions in today’s study.

We need to remember that God works in a different time frame than us.

- * He doesn’t wear a w _ _ _ _ _
- * He doesn’t carry a c _ _ _ _ _
- * And He never looks at the c _ _ _ _ _

2. Abraham is known in scripture as the F _ _ _ _ _ of F _ _ _ _ _

3. Let’s look at the biggest mistake Abraham ever made - made usually by those who are most zealous for God.

Charles breaks this down into 3 parts. This first being

A Crisis of Faith [ie. Trust / Confidence in God]

Question 1 What did the whole Covenant with Abraham depend on?

Question 2 How did Abram & Sarah react to this idea?
And what was their expectation?

Question 3 What did they DO about it.

4. What nationality was the maidservant that Abraham slept with?
Is there any significance to this?

5. But what REALLY was their mistake?
Be careful here, because it may not be what you think!

6. The next part is that they were **Committed to Folly**.

It sounds so right to commit themselves to fulfill the will of God, but they had separated their O _____ to God from their D _____ on God.

7. And now to the third thing –
A Conflict of the Flesh [against the Spirit of God]

Read Genesis 22 v. 2. What deliberate mistake did God make when speaking to Abraham?
How is this resolved?

Final Thoughts

The secret in Christian life, and especially Christian ministry,
is that you should **never be in control**.
Distance yourself from control,
and concern yourself only with
Obedience that operates in Dependence.

He who calls you is **FAITHFUL**, and **HE** will do it.

**Obedience detached from dependence may look good
but it produces only Ishmaels.**

Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 7 – The Wrongs & Rights of Sodom
Genesis 18:1–2 & 20–26; 19:14–17 & 27-29

Message Guide & Questions

1. This study will focus on the city of Sodom, and what positive lesson we can learn about God's dealing with man. Read the above verses.
The city of Sodom, as we well know, is the epitome of evil. Even its name conjures images of the rampant sexual debauchery that occurred there. But the sin of Sodom was more than that! What does Ezekiel 16:49 & 50a tell us about Sodom?

2. Indeed, Sodom becomes the B _____ of W _____ by which other cities are compared in the Old and New Testaments.

3. There are 3 events in this narrative.
For the first event please read Genesis 18:1 – 21
What was it and why was this significant?

4. Can you identify the 2 things about which God wanted to talk to Abraham?

a. _____
b. _____

5. What was the second event? Read Genesis 18:16 – 33

6. Can you think of any reason why Abraham may have felt moved to make this intercession?

7. Abraham begins to plead with God [or was it bargaining], playing on the merciful nature of the Lord; but in the end, how many righteous people were found in Sodom?

8. This leads us to the third event – **An Almighty Devastation.**
To what depth does Lot sink? Please read Genesis 19:1 – 38.

9. All of this leads to the main message of this study.
After escaping from Sodom, Lot disappears from the pages of history, until you get to the New Testament. Please read and consider 2 Peter 2:6 - 9
List some of Lots negative attributes.

10. In order to get an understanding of what is happening here you need to read
Genesis 19:29 and then 1 Corinthians 7:13 – 14
What does Abraham have to do with God's decision to save Lot?

Final Thoughts

There are many facets to this story, which will throw up as many questions as it answers.
Have you seen seemingly unrighteous people benefiting because of who their parents are?
Or who they know? Or where they work?

Have you sometimes felt that twinge of jealousy and / or resentment towards that person?

In Acts 11 v.14

The household of Cornelius, the gentle Centurion, all benefited because of his righteousness.

In Acts 16 v.15

The household of Lydia in Philippi, all benefited because of her righteousness.

In Acts 16 v.31

The household of the Philippian Jailer, all benefited because of his righteousness.

In Acts 18 v.8

The household of Crispus, the synagogue ruler in Corinth,
all benefited because of his righteousness.

God's mercy and patience have a much greater reach than we will ever understand.

So don't give up on other people;
and remember, as you live a righteous life before the Lord
you will never know who will be eventually drawn to the Lord because of it.

Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 8 – The Testing of Abraham
Genesis 22:1 - 14

Message Guide & Questions

1. In this study we will look at one of the more familiar stories in the Old Testament.

We recall how God had promised Abraham a son, which, despite Abraham & Sarah's old age, and despite their impatience to see God's word accomplished – an impatience that caused them to disobey God and which would cause many future problems – God was still faithful to His word and provided a son through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed.

And now God instructs Abraham to kill that son by way of a sacrifice.

We will look at this from 3 perspectives.

- a. What it says about God.
- b. What it says about Abraham.
- c. What it says about Us.

So, what does this say about God?

2. God shows us who He is by His words and actions.

One of his main roles is that of a P _____

3. We usually don't like this ongoing experience, but read James 1 v.2 – 4.

This T_____ of your faith P _____ E _____

It is P _____ , and therefore C _____.

4. There can be many different ways that God will test us, but the common denominator will be ...

* ... in ways which we D _____ L _____

* ... in ways we W _____ He D _____

* ... in ways that are N _____ C _____

5. There are many kinds of Offerings in the Bible. Can you list some of them?

- a. G _ _ _ _ Offering
- b. S _ _ Offering
- c. F _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Offering
- d. M _ _ _ Offering
- e. B _ _ _ _ Offering
- f. G _ _ _ _ Offering
- e. B _ _ _ _ Offering

What is the significance of this last offering?

6. There is something familiar here in the words God uses,
Read Genesis 22 v.2 and then Genesis 12 v.1
Can you see what it is?

7. This could not have been easy for Abraham.
Think about the people he DIDN'T tell what he was about to do!

8. So the Promise of God in Genesis 21 seemed to be on collision with this new Command of God in Genesis 22.
What very important thing had Abraham learned from his past mistakes?

9. And what does all this say to US?

- * We have to let go of our P _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- * We have to let go of our C _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- * We have to let go of our F _ _ _ _ _

Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 9 – Good Grief (Dealing with Death)
Genesis 23:1 - 4

Message Guide & Questions

1. We are all aware of that saying which goes, “The only two things in life that we can be certain of are death and taxes.” Well, I don’t know about the taxes, but we can be sure that, regardless of our nationality or creed, one day we will die.

We hope this study will give you some practical and spiritual help – based on the story of Abraham in scripture – to help you deal with this inevitability.

There are three headings :-

- a. There is a time to Die.
- b. There is a time to Cry.
- c. There is a time to stop asking, ‘Why?’

Reading Genesis 23 v.1, what is the first thing we notice?

2. Consider your own attitude to death.
Are you comfortable with how you have dealt with it in the past?
Have you ever really considered that there is a scriptural way to deal with the death of a loved one?
Has your grief been so overwhelming that you could not even think clearly?

The first thing we learn here is - **Be Real about it!**
Why do many of us shy away about talking about death?

3. It would be good to consider briefly here, just what IS death?

4. Is there such a thing as a **post-body** existence?
Read Hebrew 9 v. 27

5. What does verse 3 reveal to us about Abraham’s state of preparedness for this event?

6. **Be Ready Practically.** Apparently, in our society over half the people die intestate – with no proper will having been made. What are some of the physical arrangements that you could be making now to ease the death of a loved one – or even of your own death?

7. **Be Ready Spiritually**

Read Hebrews 2 v.15, and the John 3 v.16

What is often the result when people fear death?

8. **God is not insensitive to our sense of loss.**

Read 1 Thessalonians 4 v.13 What does this infer?

9. Abraham's Grief was mixed with Gratitude.

Consider what they had been through together over the years.

10. And remember – referring back to 1 Thessalonians 4 v.13
– we do not grieve as other do. Why?

11. This brings us to the last heading – **There is a time to stop asking, 'Why?'**.
Read again Genesis 23 v.3, and consider what Abraham was doing here!

Final Thoughts

For the Christian, Death is not the end, but rather the beginning of something new and exciting.

There is a future on earth for those left behind; just as there is a future beyond earth for those who have died. Please read again John 14 v.1 – 3

Read these words from 2 Corinthians 4 v.16 – 18.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Death has been swallowed up in victory!

“Where, O death, is your victory?

“Where, O death, is your sting”

1 Corinthians 15 v.55

**Abraham – Walking With God
Living By Faith on a Rocky Road
Part 10 – How to Find a Spouse
Genesis 24:1 - 4**

Message Guide & Questions

Our final study on the life of Abraham concerns the subject of **How to Find a Spouse?**

If you are single and interested – listen carefully.

If you are single and not interested – be warned.

If you are already married – stay and see if you got it right.

1. Read Genesis 15 v.5 What can we conclude from this?

2. Read again Genesis 24 v.3 – 4. What can we conclude from these verses?

3. What are the 2 most important decisions that you will make in your Life?

4. Should you ever get involved in **looking** for a spouse?

Read Genesis 24 v.10

And Read the Song of Solomon 2 v.7; 3 v.5 and 8 v.4

5. What vitally important thing did Abraham's servant do here in Genesis 24 v.12?

6. We now come to an interesting part of the process of finding the right wife for Isaac.
Read Genesis 24 v.13 – 14. What is going on here?

7. So what did Abraham's servant do next to assess whether or not Rebekah was the right choice of wife for Isaac? Read Genesis 24 v.17, then v.21

8. The next important step was? Verses 22 - 24

9. In verses 24 – 49 Abraham’s servant recounted to Rebekah’s brother, Laban and father. Bethuel, the whole story of how he met Rebekah and determined that she was God’s choice for Isaac. What happens then in verse 50 & 51?

10. Finally Read v.57 – 60. What was the final step?

Final Thoughts

Sadly, Isaac and Rebekah had a bad marriage.
After 20 years they had twins;
Esau, who was a real man’s man;
and Jacob, who was a real ‘mummy’s boy’
His mother, Rebekah, had taught to lie and cheat.
So what went wrong?

In fact, it is hard to find good marriages in the Bible,
so what does this say about all that this study has presented?

**It doesn’t matter how well you start your marriage,
you still have to keep the Lord at the very centre of all that you do.
It is like all of our Christian life; there has to be a daily dying to self.**

This is one of the biggest decisions of your life.
Once made – live with it In total dependence on God.
He is on your side to make it work!

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

This Leader's Guide is prepared to help the Study Group Leader to keep the discussions moving along. Maybe your people will come up with different answers, or perhaps they will need a little prompting from you.

Remember, you want to encourage your people to fully participate. This is not a 'teaching session' by the Group Leader, but rather a discussion group. This may at first seem like a contradiction, but you will need for the Lord to give you wisdom to keep the discussions 'on track' whilst also allowing the Holy Spirit to direct your path.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham– Walking With God Part 1 – Starting The Journey Genesis 11 v.27 to 12 v.4

1. N/A
2. A journey is not stationary; it involves movement; progression. Usually that movement is forward, but it can be backward – and even up and down.
3. Noah the only man of his corrupt generation to *find grace in the eyes of God* - yet he ends up a drunkard, lying naked on the floor.

Moses set aside by God, but commits murder.

David a *man after God's own heart*, the writer of Psalm 23 – but he becomes an adulterer, and arranged another man's death.

Abraham too had his peaks and valleys. He was a man of faith, courage and obedience; and yet he also displayed times of deception and disobedience.

4. Human failure is NOT the end of the road, but only IF –
 - a. We acknowledge it.
 - b. We come clean about it.
 - c. We exchange our weakness for His strength

There IS a price to pay for folly and disobedience; but there is always a way back through Jesus.

5. a. There was a **Call to Action**.
Read Genesis 12 v.1
The Lord said “Go” – which meant extracting himself from other things.
 - i. His country
 - ii. His people
 - iii. His family [specifically – ‘his father’s house’]

It was a ‘progressive’ command narrowing down and becoming more personal.

- b. There was a **Compromised Reaction**
Abraham did not make a clean sweep; he did not leave his father's household.
Read Genesis 11 v. 31,

Quotes from Charles –

“When you don't ditch the things God tells you to ditch, you won't go the distance.”

“Obedience to God always requires leaving things behind.”

6. There was a heavy price to pay, and Jesus was not making it easy, same as God with Abraham

7. The choices facing Abraham were between

The Familiar

or the Unfamiliar

That which was Certain

or that which was Uncertain

That which was Easy

or that which was Difficult

Abraham could either Obey

or Disobey

He could Trust God

or Distrust God

How easy it is to just take the familiar and certain road – especially when the Lord doesn't even tell us WHERE we are going.

Quote from Charles:

“If your security lies in knowing what is going to happen – you're not living the Christian life.”

8. Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew and Philip.

9. The main question would probably be “Where are we going?”
However, there is no record of this question ever being asked. Why?

Because the main issue of your journey with Jesus is not “Where are you going?”, but rather WHO you are going with.

Consider this also. Read John 14 v.5

The disciples wanted to know What? Where? How? When? Do we not also do the same?

But Jesus just said “I am The Way.”

So when all the questions crowd into your mind; what is the answer?

Just trust in Jesus. He will reveal all you need to know when you need it.

10. Read Genesis 11 v.31

Yes – Abraham left his country; he left his people; but he did NOT leave his family.

Subsequent studies in this series will show the many problems resulting from this act of disobedience.

Notice also that when they reached Haran they settled there; but this was NOT what the Lord told Abraham to do. Why was staying in Haran disobedient again? Haran was a comfortable, healthy prosperous place to live.

So Abraham got stuck in a comfortable place! He stopped moving!

Quote from Charles:

“The devil will always find an alternative to the will of God, and it will usually look attractive and good.”

Can you identify with this in your life?

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 2 – The Covenant Genesis 12:1 - 4

1. A Covenant is an agreement and a commitment that goes beyond just a promise.
2. It is of the utmost importance.

This covenant is about - a place
 a people
 a purpose

but it is also about the redemption of the entire mankind.

Says Charles, *“You and I are the beneficiaries of this covenant with Abraham”.*

“The Gospel to us Gentiles was not an afterthought. It is right there in the covenant that God made with Abraham.”

“The beneficiaries of the promise made to Abraham are not the people of Israel, but those who belong to Christ.”

3. Although the actual place was important, this was also about God's people demonstrating unquestioning obedience in getting there.

We saw from our previous study that Abraham – in his human frailty – compromised at the very start. The Lord requires our total trust and obedience.

4. The answer is simple. To quote from Charles' sermon notes ;
*“That in the heart of Israel, at one of their darkest times of domination, a baby cried in a stable in Bethlehem [and] the Angelic host rejoiced in the birth of the Messiah, ‘Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.’
That was the end result.”*

This is not about the nation of Israel, but about the Seed [not Seeds] of that nation - our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Read Galatians 3 v.16

5. Israel were the Pipes
Christ is the Water
The purpose being that All Nations may drink the water.
It would be good to commit that to memory.

6. Yes. If you belong to Christ you are Abraham's seed – regardless of your ethnic background. Read also Romans 4 v.17 & 18
7. To answer this read; Acts 17 v.26 & 27 Then also read Genesis 15 v.18. On today's map that goes from Egypt to Iraq, and includes Jordan.
8. It sounds wonderful doesn't it! A land flowing with milk and honey; where the people did not have to work for it – it was just theirs to enjoy.
9. Thus, our 'spiritual Canaan' is also flowing with milk and honey.
10. a. Obedience **to** God
b. Trust **in** God

.... Both of which are expressions of our Love **for** God

Remember that when people ceased to obey and trust, God would discipline them through internal strife and external attack or exile

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 3 – When Spiritual Reality and Physical Reality Collide Genesis 12:6 - 20

1. It was a divine mission, ordered and ordained by God; and when the Lord orders and ordains something, He will see it through to completion – no matter what obstacles are faced on the way.
2. He built an altar to the Lord. This is something we will see later repeated by Abraham, his son and his grandson.
3. It signifies **acknowledging God in the situation.**
4. Worship of Him Submission to Him
Dependence on Him and Availability to him
Symbolically this is saying : This is God's business.
He brought me here.
He has given me this land.
He is going to fulfill His purpose.
5. At a Marriage At a Christening
When we say Grace at meals At a Funeral
6. The physical reality of **a famine** in Egypt was the first real challenge to Abraham's faith. This was not supposed to happen. Abraham was in this land by divine appointment with a promise to become a great nation, but now everything turns bleak, and the land seems unlivable in.

Abraham panics, and this great Man Of Faith becomes a Man Of Fear.
7. We have to leave room in our theology for the possibility that not everything that happens is either by God's hand or the devil's.
Sometimes things just happen! Read Mathew 5 v.45.
There are cycles of weather, seasons, flood and famine

While it is true that God does sometimes use these elements to test us, much of what we face in the world today has neither a divine origin, nor a devilish origin.

What IS important is **How Do We Respond** in unexpected adverse situations?

Please read Philippians 1 v. 27 & 28. And remember that Paul wrote these words whilst he was in prison!

8. As we are in our own personal famine or challenging situations, so too Abraham was faced with 2 choices.
- a. He could look at the famine through God. Or
 - b. He could look at God through the famine.

One will **FEED FAITH**; the other will **FEED FEAR**.

Abraham looked at God through the famine; so the famine became his reference point and he became paralyzed with fear. He panicked and fled in fear to Egypt, a move that was out of God's will.

9. Abraham became Disobedient Read verse 10
- Abraham became Dishonest Read verses 11 & 12
- Abraham became Disloyal Read verse 13

Abraham's action causes others to Suffer Consequences

When you begin reading verses 14 to 20 it seems to be working out OK for Abraham; but let's not forget that he caused his wife Sarah to suffer sexual abuse when Pharaoh took her; and then later Pharaoh and his household suffered greatly.

Our disobedience, dishonesty and disloyalty can cause others close to us to suffer.

10. Abraham's problem was that his roots were in the land, his culture, family all that he was familiar with and from which he derived his security— rather than his roots being in God.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham– Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 4 – The Dangers of Second-Hand Godliness Genesis 13:1 – 6; 10 – 13; 14:11 - 12

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Abraham was getting direction. | Lot followed him around. |
| Abraham was doing business with God. | Lot was just hanging on. |
| Abraham knew and experienced God. | Lot only knew and experienced Abraham. |

Lot's dealings with God were 2nd hand.

2. Abraham left because –
He had met with God who had told him to go with no map, no clear destination, and no details. Read Hebrews 11 v.8

3. **Where** you are going is not nearly as important as **WHO** you are going with.

We are not called primarily to tasks and functions – but to God Himself.
He may give us tasks and functions, but our security is not in them – but in God.

Christianity is about relationships – not about agendas, plans or goals.

4. The 3 foundation stones of our relationship with God are -
- LOVE for God.
 - OBEDIENCE to God.
 - DEPENDENCE on God.

With no strings attached!

5. * Seem to take the right STEPS
* Seem to do the right THINGS
* Speak the right LANGUAGE
* Engage in the right BEHAVIOUR
* Turn up at the right EVENTS

..... but we are not prompted by our own dealings with God.
We are following someone else, or just moving with the crowd.

It would be good to consider these words from FB Meyer,

*“In every great spiritual movement there always have been, and always will be, a number of individuals who cast their lot with it, without knowing the power which inspires it and lies behind it. **Beware of them!** They cannot stand the stress of the life born out of a true*

relationship with God. The mere excitement will soon die away from them; and having no true spiritual life to take its place, they will become hindrances and disturbers of the peace.”

6. Lot became increasingly concerned only about his own interests and his own agenda. He chose the best land in order to accumulate more wealth. Because he had no relationship with God of his own he resorted to **rational and self-centered thinking**.
7. Even though Lot is well aware of the wickedness of Sodom, he still goes and lives close to them. Eventually he moved to live IN Sodom and becomes ‘a man of standing in that wicked city’.

When Lot was around Abraham he knew right from wrong; good from evil; but now, free from Abraham, Lot has lost his moorings completely.

8. Abraham called on the name of the Lord. Read Genesis 12 v.7

Having gone to Egypt to escape a famine – but out of the will of God – he now returns humbly and sets about re-establishing his Covenant with God.

The road was rocky, he made many mistakes, and encountered many difficulties, but finally he learned what many years later the Apostle Paul was to declare in Philippians 4 v.12 & 13. As you read these words remember that Paul was writing from prison.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 5 – Abraham : Justification by Faith Genesis 15:1 - 21

1. Justification by Faith is the doctrine that states that a person is made right with God, not on the basis of anything that **they** do, but solely on the basis of what **Christ** has already done, and continues to do.
2. Martin Luther – who taught theology at the University of Wittenberg in Germany.
 - * He engaged in the disciplined living required of him.
 - * Frequently went to confession.
 - * Fulfilled the acts of penance assigned to him.
 - * Made the expected pilgrimages.
 - * Endured self-inflicted suffering

But none of this gave him any peace with God until one day, reading the New Testament Book of Romans, Luther finally understood:

‘The just shall live by faith; that righteousness [our standing before God] is not **earned** but **credited** on the basis of **faith** as a **free gift** of God.

This central doctrine of the New Testament is traced by the Apostle Paul back to Genesis 15 v.6 in the Old Testament.

3. n / a
4. There are probably 3 reasons for this.
 - a. Abraham, in the previous chapter, had been involved in battle which included rescuing his nephew Lot, who had been captured. After the adrenaline rush of battle, depression and fear often follow.
 - b. We can see in verses 2 & 3, Abraham is still preoccupied by the fact that he is still childless. **He is fearful that he will not have decedents.**
 - c. And in verse 8 Abraham questions whether or not he will inherit the Promise. **He is fearful he will not fulfill his Destiny.**
5. Instead of trying to figure it all out yourself - *Apply all that you know about God to all that you **don't know** about your circumstances.*
Fear was a real part of the journey for Abraham – and it may be for you too.
However, Abraham moves from experiencing fear to Exercising Faith.
6. This word ‘credited’ is used several times in the New Testament.

Please read Romans 4 v. 3 and Galatians 3 v.6
It is a banking term that we are familiar with; but consider this :

- * Abraham did not have enough.
- * He had no resources.
- * He was childless with no heir.
- * He had no idea how to gain possession of the land promised to him.
- * His metaphorical bank account was exhausted.

And what does God say to Abraham?

**Abraham, you don't have to pay out anything.
I will pay it all into your account for you.**

7. Abraham believed the Lord when He said of Himself,
"I AM your shield I AM your very great reward."

This next saying is very important to remember –

**His righteousness depended not on Abraham's faithfulness to God,
but on God's initiative and faithfulness to Abraham.**

8. Trusting in the face of doubts.
9. Expecting Fulfillment. Genesis 15 v. 8 – 21

These verses carry a very dramatic depiction as an answer to Abraham's question in vs. 8.
The symbolism of death is very important.

The slaughter of the animal is saying

Abraham, you must die to **your own agenda**.

You must die to your own '**need to know**' the details.

You must die to **everything** but what I show you, and **everywhere** but where I lead you.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 6 – Ishmael & Isaac – The Flesh and the Spirit Genesis 16 v.1 – 4a: 17:1 – 8; 21:1 - 3

1. * He doesn't wear a watch.
* He doesn't carry a calendar.
* And He never looks at the clock.
2. Abraham is known in scripture as the Father of Faith.

This is true as he gave a wonderful example of trusting and obeying God – eventually.

But scripture is very honest about its leading characters.

- * They too had feet of clay as we do.
- * They too failed in moments of crisis and anxiety.

3. Answer 1 The Covenant was dependent upon Abraham and Sarah having a Son.

Under normal circumstances there would be nothing unusual about this except that both Abraham and Sarah were well advanced in years.

Answer 2 They probably reacted with some sense of incredulity, but they believed God, and so probably expected to see the baby arrive in about 9 months time.

Answer 3 Here is where they made their BIG mistake. When the baby did not come within a time frame that they considered reasonable; when what God had promised did not appear to be working out

They decided to produce the baby themselves!

Read Genesis 16 v.2

4. The maidservant was an Egyptian girl, who in all probability they acquired they had stepped out of God's will and ran away to Egypt during the famine.

They compounded mistake upon mistake!

5. They had committed themselves to do the will of God – **but by their own ability.**

Remember - To have a son was God's idea; not theirs.
God had reiterated the promise several times.

The clock was ticking – but nothing was happening.
They knew God's purpose, so on the basis of their own logic
They drew up a strategic plan to accomplish God's will –
BUT THEY LEFT GOD OUT OF THE PROCESS,

Does that sound familiar?

6. They had separated their OBEDIENCE to God from their DEPENDENCE on God.
NEVER do that, otherwise you will be ON YOUR OWN.

Never forget 1 Thessalonians 5 v.24

**When God calls, it is not that we should go out and accomplish things for God;
but that we should be the means by which GOD accomplishes things through us.**

God works to his own agenda and timetable.
Too often we say; these are my plans, please bless them.

7. Abraham had 2 sons, Ishmael and Isaac; so why would God say 'your only son'.
To understand this read Galatians 4 v.22 – 26

Ishmael can be explained in terms of what **Abraham did for God.**

Isaac can only be explained in terms of what **God did for Abraham.**

God, in His mercy, did have a plan for Ishmael too – Read Genesis 16 v. 11& 12 –
But it is the 'child of the Promise', Isaac, whose birth was humanly inexplicable, through
whom the redemption for mankind would flow.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 7 – The Wrongs & Rights of Sodom Genesis 18:1–2 & 20–26; 19:14–17 & 27-29

1. Sodom was described as being arrogant, overfed and unconcerned, with little or no interest in helping poor and needy. “They were haughty and did detestable things before me.” said the Lord. Rarely does wickedness manifest itself in just one way. If the heart is corrupt, so is ALL that comes from it. Read Luke 6 v.45

The sins of Sodom were many; they were varied; and they were explicit.

2. Benchmark of Wickedness.
3. These verses describe **An Angelic Visitation** which was, in fact, a **temporary physical manifestation of God**.

This is an important event, because for God to appear in physical form implies that something crucial is at hand.

4. a. God reaffirmed his promise that Sarah would have a son, and even gave an approximate time as to when that son would be born.
b. God wanted to talk to Abraham about the city of Sodom. Was this a warning?
5. Here Abraham makes **An Urgent Intercession** for God's mercy on behalf of the city.
6. The fact that Abraham's nephew, Lot, with all his family, were now living in Sodom must have influenced Abraham's actions here.
7. We are not given an exact number, but clearly there were less than 10, because in Chapter 19 the judgment of God comes on the city of Sodom.
It is worth noting too that Lot's sons-in-law all perished in Sodom; and one wonders whether or not Lot's daughters could be considered 'righteous' when you consider their later acts.
Read Genesis 19 v.30 – 38.
8. This is truly appalling! How could any, supposedly righteous, father offer up his own 2 virgin daughters to be raped. Surely this makes Lot one of the most despicable men in the Bible!
9. How on earth can Peter call Lot 'a righteous man'?
List his negative attributes.
* He is selfish.

- * He has no sense of his own calling, but lives on Abraham's coat-tails.
- * He chooses to live amongst the sin and debauchery of Sodom.
- * He offers his own daughters to be raped.

By no stretch of the imagination could Lot be considered 'righteous', but

10. When God destroyed Sodom He remembered Abraham and so saved Lot.

Lot is benefiting from the righteousness of Abraham!

Similarly, the unsaved husband / wife of their spouse are sanctified – set apart by God – through his / her believing spouse.

Make no mistake – such a person is not **SAVED** in this way – that is a separate thing altogether - but one can benefit from the righteousness of the other.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 8 – The Testing of Abraham Genesis 22:1 - 14

1. In Charles' sermon notes he writes

"For many people, God is expected to play a role similar to the recreational director on a cruise ship whose task is to make sure everyone is having a good time."

We must let God, by His words and by His actions, show us what He is really about. And one of the things He is about is molding us and making us into the kind of people He wants us to be.

2. One of his main roles is that of a POTTER.
We are unfinished products, and He is continually molding us and making us.
3. We may not like it but it is necessary because

This TESTING of your faith PRODUCES ENDURANCE
It is PRODUCTIVE , and therefore CONSTRUCTIVE.
It ultimately has a POSITIVE effect on us.

4. There can be many different ways that God will test us,
but the common denominator will be ...
- * ... in ways which we DON'T LIKE
 - * ... will be in ways that WE WISH HE DIDN'T
 - * ... in ways that are NOT COMFORTABLE
5. There are many kinds of Offerings in the Bible. Can you list some of them?

- a. Guilt Offering
- b. Sin Offering
- c. Fellowship Offering
- d. Meal Offering
- e. Blood Offering
- f. Grain Offering
- e. Burnt Offering

The significance of the BURNT Offering is that it speaks of FULL SURRENDER.

This is what the Lord required of Abraham, and it is what He requires of us.

6. As it was years earlier, God did not tell Abraham exactly where he was going.

Once again, stepping out was *“not knowing WHERE he was going”* but **knowing** *“Who he was going with.”*

Abraham had learned his lessons. We only have to recall from previous studies what happened to Abraham when he compromised and sometimes even blatantly disobeyed God. It's just not worth it! FULL SURRENDER is the only way to go.

7. There is no evidence that he told Sarah.
He would not have confided in the servants what his intentions were.
He most certainly did not tell Isaac.

Sometimes our most intimate dealings with God are done in solitude, and sometimes we just have to walk alone – with Him!

8. Abraham had learned that –
The Consequences of his Obedience were NOT his Responsibility.
Genuine Trust takes its hands off the **Consequences.**

9. * We have to let go of our **POSSESSIONS**

A. W. Tozer says that because the boy represented everything sacred to his father, and to the very purpose that God had brought him to Canaan in the first place, there is a danger he may have become an idol to Abraham.

When something given to us BY God becomes a substitute FOR God, it has to go or it will become a hindrance.

- * We have to let go of our **CHILDREN**

Imagine Isaac lying there after having allowed his father to bind him and place him on the altar – remember Abraham was very old, and Isaac would have been a strong young man – and now he waits for the knife to be plunged into him.
Isaac now had to trust God for himself.
He came out of this with **his own relationship with God.**

- * We have to let go of our **FUTURE**

Every promise God had made; Abraham's every sense of purpose;
The blessing of all the nations; The coming of the Messiah;
All the future Abraham could hope for - it was all through Isaac – yet now he had to lay him down and slay him.

It was an enormous test, but consider this –

A faith that cannot be tested is a Faith that cannot be Trusted.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 9 – Good Grief (Dealing with Death) Genesis 23:1 - 4

1. The first thing we notice is that scripture is very blunt and straight to the point.

In the book of Genesis, 30 individuals are specifically named as 'dying'. In fact, of all the deaths mentioned in the entire Bible about ¼ to 1/3 of them are in Genesis. Chapter 23 is very helpful in that it gives us an account of how Abraham dealt with the death of his beloved wife.

2. One of the reasons we don't like thinking about death and talking about death is because something inside us tells us it really ought not to be. Read Ecclesiastes 3:10. There is something inside of us that thinks I ought to be around forever.

In our society we try to soften the blow by calling 'death' anything but that. A recent visit to a Website revealed no less than 213 euphemisms for dying, ranging from "Kicking the bucket" to "Gone to Glory". Can you think of others?

However, here scripture uses just the one word; and in the span of just 13 verses [2 – 15] the word 'dead' or 'died' is used no less than 9 times.

There is a Finality about it! Things will never be the same again!

3. It used to be defined as 'the cessation of heartbeat and breathing'. Today, doctors and coroners speak of 'brain death'; when electrical activity in the brain ceases.

However, these are just biological definitions of death.

The Christian and Biblical view of death is that during life the Body and the Soul are wired together as a complete unit. **At death the Body and Soul separate.**

Read Ecclesiastes 12 v.7

The Body is finished – but the Soul is not!

4. Death is **NOT** the end.
When we face it in others, the sooner we can be real about it, the sooner we can move on.
5. Abraham was NOT prepared and this whole chapter deals with Abraham making the arrangements.

The message to us is **Be Ready Physically**

6. a. Are you prepared financially? Funerals can be very expensive.

- b. Do you have any preference concerning burial/cremation?
- c. Are there any unresolved issues that should be cleared up before you or a loved one dies?
- d. Have you had a proper will made?

7. Many people, even some Christians, are so afraid of death that they are held in slavery – in bondage – to this fear.

It is rooted in the fear of unknown oblivion – but I suggest to you that it is also **the fear of being unprepared.**

This fear can often bring on a state of paralysis of action. Snap out of it – get prepared both physically and spiritually. Remember – **Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you, that where He is, there you may be also.**

8. The clear inference here is that it is OK to grieve – but not like those without hope.

There is an appropriate time and place for tears
Tears are the price we pay for the happiness we enjoyed!

It is not unscriptural to cry. Weeping is natural, healthy and necessary.
It is crucial to the grieving process, and part of the recovery process.
Read Romans 12 v.15
Remember – Jesus wept publicly over Lazarus, and the city of Jerusalem.

9. Abraham and Sarah had –

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| * Laughed together | * Wept together |
| * Hurt each other | * Made up to each other |
| * Shared fears together | * Shared triumphs together |
| * Slept together , and produced off-spring | |
| * Dreamed together | * Planned together |

It sounds like a pretty normal marriage.
Mixed in with his sense of loss, Abraham’s tears were also those of **Gratitude.**

10. Because physical death is not the end. We have a hope – we have an eternal reward waiting for those who have been faithful.

11. Abraham had mourned and wept – but now he was getting on with his life.

He moved on! In Abraham’s case he lived for another 37 years after Sarah had died, during which time he married again and had 6 more children.

There was a future for Abraham, and rather than wallow sorrowfully in the past, he mourned appropriately, and then moved on.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Abraham – Walking With God Living By Faith on a Rocky Road Part 10 – How to Find a Spouse Genesis 24:1 - 4

1. **There is a time when it is right to marry.**

It was totally logical to conclude that it was the will of God for Isaac to marry and have children.

We need to understand, however, that this is not so for everyone.

Read Matthew 19 v. 12b and 1 Corinthians 7 v.7, where being single, as Paul was, is likened to a 'gift'.

2. We conclude, **She [he] needs to be from God's own people.**

The people of God were to marry only other people of God.

This does not preclude marrying people of a different culture – although that can bring unique challenges – but it means that we are not to marry outside of our faith. See also 2 Corinthians 6 v.14.

3. Who is your Master?

Who will be your mate?

If you get the first one right that should lead to getting the second one right.

God is going to guide you to the person He has chosen. But only if you submit to God's plan for you in this area.

How do you do that? Do not set your own agenda. Be patient and trust God.

4. **There does come a time to start looking**, but don't be in a hurry or step outside of God's timetable; and don't push it. The same warning is presented 3 times in these verses in the Song of Solomon. The writer must surely have been anxious to get his point across.

5. **He prayed about the whole process.** It is not a sign of desperation to talk to our Heavenly Father about this. In fact, **it is absolutely the wisest and most sensible thing to involve God in this entire process.** Indeed, there are sadly too many Christians locked into unhappy marriages with other Christians precisely because they did NOT pray to God every step of the way.

Remember – your choice of Mate is second only in importance to your choice of Master.

6. In these verses we see that Abraham's servant set a trap; but to accomplish what?
He looked for qualities of character.

In reading verses 12 to 20 we see that Rebekah was very beautiful, single, a virgin, but more importantly she displayed the important characteristics that went far beyond mere physical attraction.

7. By engaging her in conversation he began to establish a relationship with her.

He began to get to know her as a person.

(As the song in My Fair Lady goes “Getting to know you, getting to know all about you.”)

But notice what the servant does in verse 21. He watched her closely!

He wanted to see for himself what her actions and reactions would be when she was under pressure.

8. **He enquired about her family and history.** This is more important that you may at first realize. You marry the person – not the family; but try telling some families that!

Your spouse will be a product of that family. It has a history; it has its own habits and customs which you need to be aware of.

Despite your attraction to this person, are you truly compatible?

9. **They all saw the guidance of the hand of God.**

By all accounts it appears to have been unanimously agreed.

10. **They went to Rebekah and ASKED her** – it was still her choice – and she said ‘yes’ and went to Isaac with the full blessing of her family.