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Going His Way?

Keep on Running!

Looking Forward . . . Looking Back

Never Stop Believing

Don't Believe It!

"I Believe" Statements

Ya Gotta Grow

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A Guide to the Young Believer Bible

So you've gotten your hands on a copy of the *Young Believer Bible*. Flipping through the pages, you see a ton of special stories about people, places, and events of the Bible; special symbols and colorful backgrounds to help you locate important information; and lots more. *What's it all for? What do I do with this?* you may be wondering.

Well, here's a list of ten kinds of buried treasure you're holding in your hands. Let's start with the most important one . . .

1. The 52 "I Believe" statements

These statements are the main focus of this whole Bible. Each one shows up a bunch of times and identifies an important belief of the Christian faith. That's why this is called the *Young Believer Bible*. Clever, huh?

When you come across an "I Believe" feature, you'll see a Scripture reference for a verse or verses to read. Those verses are marked in the Bible text with this symbol: ❖

Whenever you see an "I Believe" statement, you'll also see the page number for the next verse about the same belief. That way you can track some of the many places where God's Word clearly shows that each statement is true.

In the section of color pages you'll find a list of all 52 statements, as well as the starting point for each one.

To see a list of every Scripture reference that goes with each statement, check out the index at the back.

2. Character Profiles

So many people, so many stories—who are they, and why are they mentioned? And did God include them in his story because all of them lived perfect lives? In profiles of more than 150 real-life people from the Bible, you'll find out that some of them lived for God; others did not. Some stories show great victory and incredible belief, while others tell about people who rebelled against God. You can meet them in the pages that follow.

3. Can You Believe It?

You may or may not know that the Bible contains some amazing true stories of miracles and battles and fights with giants and other occurrences that sound almost too strange to believe. But they're true! The "Can You Believe It?" features will let you in on many of those mysterious events.

4. THAT'S A FACT!

These small bytes of information focus on cultural and religious traditions and other factual items of interest in the Bible. God's people have quite a story to tell, and that's a fact!

5. Book Introductions

Every book of the Bible begins with a helpful introduction that gives you a quick look at what you'll read about in that book. Themes, important moments of belief, and lessons are explained as well, with verses to help you locate them.

6. SAY WHAT??

You'll find short, cool definitions for key Bible terms and phrases at the bottom of most pages. Many are repeated several times since they're used over and over again. You can find a complete list of "Say What??" definitions in the index at the back.

7. color section

These pages include more great info about Christianity. Here you can discover God's plan of salvation. You can learn how to have a personal relationship with him and how to deal with life when it gets tough. You'll even find out what *not* to believe, and so much more.

8. KEY VERSES

Hundreds of verses are highlighted within the Bible text. Some are great for memorizing, and others point out important truths to keep in mind.

9. "BELIEVE" words

Throughout the *YB Bible*, the word "believe" and all its forms are highlighted whenever they're used to show belief in God. Some books (mostly in the New Testament) have more than others. How many can you find?

10. slogans

Every now and then you'll come across a page with a heading up the left side and a background design across the spread. The heading will be either

never stop believing. 

Belief with feet. 

Believe without seeing.  or

Believer power. 

If you look closely on those pages, you'll find a small symbol at the beginning and another at the end of a section of verses that show evidence of belief in action.

Sound like a lot? You bet! The *Young Believer Bible* is the place to find out what God's about and what he has in store for the future. God wants *you* to be part of his ongoing story of love that lasts forever. Life is an adventure full of ups and downs, but through it all God will never stop believing in you. His plan for you is big, so enjoy the journey and . . .

never stop believing!

BACKGROUND

When you tell a story, you usually start at the beginning, right? The Bible is the story of a relationship between God and the people he made (including you). The book of Genesis starts at the beginning of everything, when there was God and nothing else. God made a universe out of nothing. He made the earth and the people, plants, and animals that live here. In the beginning, everything was new and fresh. But then the first sin happened. Suddenly, everything seemed spoiled and old. A new beginning was needed. God had a plan that began with the birth of the nation of Israel. Through this nation a Savior would someday come to make things right once more.

As you get into reading God's Word, begin by checking out the "Aha! Moments" and "Believer Building" list at the beginning of each book. They'll give you the lowdown on believers and key points of the book.



AHA! MOMENTS

- Noah chooses to believe God and build a boat (6:1-22).
- Abraham trusts God and moves to a strange land (12:1-9).
- Jacob meets God and gains a new name—Israel (32:22-32).
- Joseph realizes that God brought good out of his brothers' evil plan (50:14-21).

Believer Building



- God created me (1:26-27).
- Sin separates people from God (3:1-24).
- Our faith can affect other people (18:16-33).
- God keeps his promises (21:1-7).
- God works through imperfect people to carry out his plans (27; 37; 45).

Chapter 1

The Account of Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ❁

²The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. ³Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that it was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." Together these made up one day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be space between the waters, to separate water from water." ⁷And so it was. God made this space to separate the waters above from the waters below. ⁸And God called the space "sky." This happened on the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky be gathered into one place so dry ground may appear." And so it was. ¹⁰God named the dry ground "land" and the water "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the land burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant. And let there be trees that grow seed-bearing

❁ I BELIEVE God created the world. Gen. 1:1

Heard of the big bang theory? It's not new. In fact, the Bible begins with it. Not as a *theory* about the universe but as a *fact*. *Bang*—God created! Our world isn't here by accident. God had a purpose in making everything, including each person who would ever be born. That includes you. Aren't you glad you have a reason for living?

GO TO▶ 2 Chron. 2:11-12, p. 577

❁ I BELIEVE God created people and patterned them after himself. Gen. 1:26-27

Ever have a day when you said to yourself, *I'm the biggest loser on Earth*? Then think about this: God made people to reflect who he is and what he's like. That includes you. He didn't make rocks or trees to show his character. He made you. That makes you pretty special.

GO TO▶ Song of Songs 4:8-11, p. 877

fruit. The seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And so it was. ¹²The land was filled with seed-bearing plants and trees, and their seeds produced plants and trees of like kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³This all happened on the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let bright lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. They will be signs to mark off the seasons, the days, and the years. ¹⁵Let their light shine down upon the earth." And so it was. ¹⁶For God made two great lights, the sun and the moon, to shine down upon the earth. The greater one, the sun, presides during the day; the lesser one, the moon, presides through the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the heavens to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹This all happened on the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every



Adam OUSTED FROM EDEN

Genesis 2:4-3:24

I was in the garden for only a short time. I'm not exactly sure how I got there, but I definitely remember why I had to leave. It was a great place. One of the best things was that I could talk directly to God. He's great! He loves me so much, and we had a wonderful time walking and talking together.

Of course, there were rules around there, like anyplace else. The most important was: Don't eat fruit off this one certain tree (see Genesis 2:1-17). Now, that seems simple enough, right?

Problem is, I couldn't help it. My wife, Eve, and I ended up eating that forbidden fruit. Then all of the fun kind of dried up. Things got serious. We had committed sin, so we weren't close to the Lord anymore. He still loved us; it's just that we showed we didn't believe him as much as we should have.

Anyway, my job used to be taking care of the Garden—keeping it growing really nice. Another job I had was to name all the animals. Think that would be easy? Guess again. There weren't already a bunch of names to choose from. The names could be anything. I mean, what would you call a tiny creature that has eight legs? Or how about that one over there, hanging upside down from a tree? Can you think of a better name than, say, *possum*?

So I did my job. But I also had to endure punishment for my sin. Eve and I had to leave the Garden and the hopes of more great times with God. And that is the saddest part of my whole story.

On the Fence?

When we enter a brand-new situation, we might not know exactly how to act. But that wasn't Adam's situation, because he had the Lord to guide him perfectly. He knew the rule about the tree. But he chose to ignore it. And like all our choices, his had consequences. The Bible compares Adam to Jesus (see 1 Corinthians 15:45-49). Jesus keeps God's rules perfectly. That's why he can be our Savior. If we believe in him, he'll take us to a great "garden spot" someday. (It's called heaven. You'll want to be there!)

sort of fish and every kind of bird. And God saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, "Let the fish multiply and fill the oceans. Let the birds increase and fill the earth." ²³This all happened on the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of animal—livestock, small animals, and wildlife." And so it

was. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to reproduce more of its own kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals."

27 So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them. †

²⁸God blessed them and told them, “Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals.” ²⁹And God said, “Look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given all the grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food.” And so it was. ³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way. This all happened on the sixth day.

Chapter 2

So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ²On the seventh day, having finished his task, God rested from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from his work of creation.

† I believe Satan tries to make me do wrong.
Gen. 3:1-5

Have you ever heard someone say, “The devil made me do it”? Yeah, Satan tempts you to do wrong. Look what happened to Eve. But keep your focus on the word *tempts*. Satan can only *tempt* you to do wrong. You have the freedom to decide whether or not to give in to temptation.

GO TO ▶ 1 Chron. 21:1, p. 562

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the heavens and the earth, ⁵there were no plants or grain growing on the earth, for the LORD God had not sent any rain. And no one was there to cultivate the soil. ⁶But water came up out of the ground and watered all the land. ⁷And the LORD God formed a man’s body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had created. ⁹And the LORD God planted all sorts of trees in the garden—beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit. At the center of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹One of these branches is the Pishon, which flows around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch is the Gihon, which flows around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch is the Tigris, which flows to the east of Asshur. The fourth branch is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it. ¹⁶But the LORD God gave him this warning: “You may freely eat any fruit in the garden ¹⁷except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die.”

¹⁸And the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the soil every kind of animal and bird. He brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and Adam chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, birds, and wild animals. But still there was no companion suitable for



Eve A BITTER BITE

Genesis 2:18–3:24

Picture the scene: Fruit trees bursting with cool, ripened fruit. Flower-lined pathways. Sound like paradise? This was the Garden of Eden—my home. Since I was the second person created, I didn't have to worry about crowds at the beach or long lines at the supermarket. Best of all, God was available for long strolls in the evening. There was only one condition for permanent residence: Don't eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Hey, no problem, right? Wrong.

You know my story. A talking snake came along. (You don't see those every day.) The snake was really Satan in disguise. His tempting words made disobedience look like an offer I couldn't refuse. Bada bing, bada boom! Everything I believed about God went out the window. I took one bite and offered some to Adam. After that, I was singing a new tune: "The snake made me do it."

On the Fence?

The sin of Adam and Eve caused everyone on Earth to be born with a desire to sin. Sin always involves a choice: God's way or the wrong way. Remembering what you believe about God can help you avoid "the snake made me do it" blues.

him. ²¹So the LORD God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the place from which he had taken it. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam.

²³"At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man." ²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. ²⁵Now, although Adam and his wife were both naked, neither of them felt any shame.

Chapter 3 The Man and Woman Sin

Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made.

"Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?"

²"Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. ³"It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die."

⁴"You won't die!" the serpent hissed. ⁵"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil." ❁

⁶The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at

The Awful Advice-Giving Snake

You've probably heard all sorts of people give advice. But did you ever think that a snake could give advice, let alone talk at all? Believe it or not, one did! The slithering serpent was really Satan in disguise. Listening to his advice caused major problems for Adam and Eve. It can cause major problems for you, too! Can you believe it? *Gen. 3*

their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves.

⁸Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. ⁹The LORD God called to Adam, "Where are you?"

¹⁰He replied, "I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

¹¹"Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

¹²"Yes," Adam admitted, "but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it."

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, "How could you do such a thing?"

"The serpent tricked me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be

punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly. ¹⁵From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, he will be your master."

¹⁷And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. ¹⁸It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. ¹⁹All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return."

²⁰Then Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all people everywhere. ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

²²Then the LORD God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!" ²³So the LORD God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After banishing them from the garden, the LORD God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life.

Chapter 4 Cain, Abel, and Seth

Now Adam slept with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When the time

SAY WHAT??

The Fall = Adam and Eve's first sin in the Garden of Eden that separated people from God *Gen. 3*



Cain USE THE BRUISE CONTROL

Genesis 4:1-16

Cain and Abel were Adam and Eve's first two sons. In fact, Cain has several "firsts" to his name: The first son of the first humans. The first farmer. The first murderer. . . . *Huh?* Yep, he was a bruiser. He had major issues with jealousy and rage.

Every family has good times as well as tense moments, and the first family was no different. Since there weren't other people around to be friends with, the brothers probably spent a lot of time together. And that spelled trouble! Cain didn't share Abel's love for God, and that's what got him into trouble. Worse, it got Abel killed.

Here's what happened: God asked the brothers to bring him the best gifts they had to offer. Abel brought his best lambs, which God accepted. And Cain? . . . Well, Cain brought some veggies, but they weren't the best he had to give. So God rejected them. God knew Cain's heart, and he saw the deadly result of Cain's jealousy. He knew Cain had become angry and had killed Abel. God also knew that the punishment he gave had to be tough. Cain would deal with the consequence of his sin all his life.

Believers Beware!

The Bible tells us not to be like Cain (see 1 John 3:12). If we look around, we'll always find somebody who bugs us. Maybe those people act like they're better than us. Or maybe, in some ways, they *are* better. If someone has acted that way to you and it makes you angry, the best first step is to relax. You don't want to let your rage get out of control.

came, she gave birth to Cain, and she said, "With the LORD's help, I have brought forth a man!" ²Later she gave birth to a second son and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer. ³At harvesttime Cain brought to the LORD a gift of his farm produce, ⁴while Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his offering, ⁵but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and dejected.

⁶"Why are you so angry?" the LORD

asked him. "Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you respond in the right way. But if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it."

⁸Later Cain suggested to his brother, Abel, "Let's go out into the fields." And while they were there, Cain attacked and killed his brother.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?"

"I don't know!" Cain retorted. "Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?"

¹⁰But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen—your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹You are hereby banished from the ground you have defiled with your brother’s blood. ¹²No longer will it yield abundant crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, constantly wandering from place to place.”

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from my land and from your presence; you have made me a wandering fugitive. All who see me will try to kill me!”

¹⁵The LORD replied, “They will not kill you, for I will give seven times your punishment to anyone who does.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

¹⁷Then Cain’s wife became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and they named him Enoch. When Cain founded a city, he named it Enoch after his son.

¹⁸ Enoch was the father of Irad.

Irad was the father of Mehujael.

Mehujael was the father of Methushael.

Methushael was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women—Adah and Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to a baby named Jabal. He became the first of the herdsmen who live in tents. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal, the first musician—the inventor of the harp and flute. ²²To Lamech’s other wife, Zillah, was born Tubal-cain. He was the first to work with metal, forging instruments of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah.

²³One day Lamech said to Adah and Zillah, “Listen to me, my wives. I have killed a youth who attacked and wounded me. ²⁴If anyone who kills Cain is to be punished seven times, anyone who takes revenge against me will be punished seventy-seven times!”

²⁵Adam slept with his wife again, and

she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth, for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, the one Cain killed.” ²⁶When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. It was during his lifetime that people first began to worship the LORD.

Chapter 5 From Adam to Noah

This is the history of the descendants of Adam. When God created people, he made them in the likeness of God. ²He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”

³When Adam was 130 years old, his son Seth was born, and Seth was the very image of his father. ⁴After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

⁵He died at the age of 930.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, his son Enosh was born. ⁷After the birth of Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

⁸He died at the age of 912.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, his son Kenan was born. ¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years,

The Man Who Never Died!

Nobody likes to think about dying. You’d like to live forever, wouldn’t you?

Believe it or not, one man skipped death altogether.

His name was Enoch. Enoch was super close to God, so God decided to let him come right into heaven, special delivery! Can you believe it?

Gen. 5:22-24

The World's Oldest Man!

Think your grandpa or great-grandpa is old? Your great-grandpa is a baby compared to Methuselah. Who's he?

Only the oldest man who ever lived. He died at the ripe old age of 969! (Think he had some wrinkles?) Can you believe it?

Gen. 5:26-27

and he had other sons and daughters.
¹¹He died at the age of 905.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, his son Mahalalel was born. ¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴He died at the age of 910.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, his son Jared was born. ¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁷He died at the age of 895.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, his son Enoch was born. ¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

²⁰He died at the age of 962.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, his son Methuselah was born. ²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived another 300 years in close fellowship with God, and he had other sons and daughters.

²³Enoch lived 365 years in all. ²⁴He enjoyed a close relationship with God throughout his life. Then suddenly, he disappeared because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, his son Lamech was born. ²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived

another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷He died at the age of 969.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, his son Noah was born. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "He will bring us relief from the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." ³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹He died at the age of 777.

³²By the time Noah was 500 years old, he had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Chapter 6 Noah and the Flood

When the human population began to grow rapidly on the earth, ²the sons of God saw the beautiful women of the human race and took any they wanted as their wives. ³Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, they will live no more than 120 years."

⁴In those days, and even afterward, giants lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with human women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes mentioned in legends of old.

⁵Now the LORD observed the extent of the people's wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, "I will completely wipe out this human race that I have created. Yes, and I will destroy all the animals and birds, too. I am sorry I ever made them." ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

⁹This is the history of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth had become corrupt in God's sight, and it was filled with



Noah ARE YOU IN THE BOAT?

Genesis 6–9

They say I found favor with God. All I know is, the Lord's patience ran out with everybody else. They were involved in all the wrong things: lots of violence, a ton of crime, a heaping helping of cheating and double-crossing. I couldn't get into it. I chose to live right.

Then God told me he was going to wipe out all the evil on the earth. He'd make it rain for 40 days and nights. Nothing was going to make it, not a single living thing. Unless they got on the boat. I believed God and did everything he asked, even when others made fun of me because there wasn't a rain cloud in the sky.

That's right, you know about my boat. Two by two, God brought the animals he was going to save. Everybody laughed when I built that big boat.

They weren't laughing when the floodwaters started covering their roofs, though. They weren't laughing when God closed up the door and my family floated away in the portable zoo. No, by then all those people were wishing they'd opened their hearts to God.

Noah believed God even when other people disagreed and made fun of him. Just as in Noah's time, there is a right way to "navigate" our lives . . . and a wrong way. God is faithful to show us the right way. If we choose to obey him, we can sail ahead, even if we're the only ones in the boat.

violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, and he saw violence and depravity everywhere. ¹³So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Yes, I will wipe them all from the face of the earth!

¹⁴"Make a boat from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. ¹⁶Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches below the roof. Then put three decks inside the boat—bottom, middle, and upper—and put a door in the side.

¹⁷"Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing. Everything on earth will die!

¹⁸But I solemnly swear to keep you safe in the boat, with your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of each kind of bird and each kind of animal, large and small alike, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And remember, take enough food for your family and for all the animals."

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

Chapter 7

The Flood Covers the Earth

Finally, the day came when the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the

earth, I consider you alone to be righteous. ²Take along seven pairs of each animal that I have approved for eating and for sacrifice, and take one pair of each of the others. ³Then select seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that every kind of living creature will survive the flood. ⁴One week from today I will begin forty days and forty nights of rain. And I will wipe from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did exactly as the LORD had commanded him. ⁶He was 600 years old when the flood came, ⁷and he went aboard the boat to escape—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and other small animals. ⁹They came into the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰One week later, the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, the underground waters burst forth on the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. ¹²The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights. ¹³But Noah had gone into the boat that very day with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. ¹⁴With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of breathing animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds and flying insects of every kind. ¹⁵Two by two they came into the boat, ¹⁶male and female, just as God had commanded. Then the LORD shut them in.

¹⁷For forty days the floods prevailed, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰standing more than twenty-two feet above the highest peaks. ²¹All the living

things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all kinds of small animals, and all the people. ²²Everything died that breathed and lived on dry land. ²³Every living thing on the earth was wiped out—people, animals both large and small, and birds. They were all destroyed, and only Noah was left alive, along with those who were with him in the boat. ²⁴And the water covered the earth for 150 days.

Chapter 8

The Flood Recedes

But God remembered Noah and all the animals in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the waters, and the floods began to disappear. ²The underground water sources ceased their gushing, and the torrential rains stopped. ³So the flood gradually began to recede. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began, the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months later, as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks began to appear.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven that flew back and forth until the earth was dry. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to land because the water was still too high. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰Seven days later, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time, toward evening, the bird returned to him with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Noah now knew that the water was almost gone. ¹²A week later, he released the dove again, and this time it did not come back.

¹³Finally, when Noah was 601 years old, ten and a half months after the flood began, Noah lifted back the cover to look. The water was drying up. ¹⁴Two more months went by, and at last the earth was dry! ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat, all of you. ¹⁷Release all the animals and birds so they can breed

and reproduce in great numbers.”¹⁸ So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat.¹⁹ And all the various kinds of animals and birds came out, pair by pair.

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.²¹ And the LORD was pleased with the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things, even though people’s thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood.²² As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night.”

Chapter 9

God’s Covenant with Noah

God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Multiply and fill the earth.² All the wild animals, large and small, and all the birds and fish will be afraid of you. I have placed them in your power.³ I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables.⁴ But you must never eat animals that still have their lifeblood in them.⁵ And

☀️ I believe God makes promises . . . and always keeps them. **Gen. 9:11-13**

Every time the sun shines after a rain, God reminds us of his promise. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet—these colors are an awesome promise. God won’t ever send another flood to destroy the whole world’s evil. As we count a rainbow’s colors, we can count on God to keep his word.

GO TO Gen. 35:9-12, p. 53

murder is forbidden. Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed.⁶ Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image.⁷ Now you must have many children and repopulate the earth. Yes, multiply and fill the earth!”

⁸ Then God told Noah and his sons,⁹ “I am making a covenant with you and your descendants,¹⁰ and with the animals you brought with you—all these birds and livestock and wild animals.¹¹ I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth.”¹² And God said, “I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures.¹³ **I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth. ☀️**¹⁴ When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds,¹⁵ and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life.¹⁶ When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.”¹⁷ Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this is the sign of my covenant with all the creatures of the earth.”

Noah’s Sons

¹⁸ Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah, survived the Flood with their father. (Ham is the ancestor of the Canaanites.)¹⁹ From these three sons of Noah came all the people now scattered across the earth.

²⁰ After the Flood, Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard.²¹ One day he became drunk on some wine he had made and lay naked in his tent.²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers.²³ Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, walked

backward into the tent, and covered their father's naked body. As they did this, they looked the other way so they wouldn't see him naked. ²⁴When Noah woke up from his drunken stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. ²⁵Then he cursed the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham:

“A curse on the Canaanites!
May they be the lowest of servants
to the descendants of Shem and
Japheth.”

²⁶Then Noah said,

“May Shem be blessed by the LORD my
God;
and may Canaan be his servant.

²⁷ May God enlarge the territory of
Japheth,
and may he share the prosperity of
Shem;
and let Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the Flood. ²⁹He was 950 years old when he died.

Chapter 10

This is the history of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the Flood.

Descendants of Japheth

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples in various lands, each tribe with its own language.

Descendants of Ham

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba,

Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸One of Cush's descendants was Nimrod, who became a heroic warrior. ⁹He was a mighty hunter in the LORD's sight. His name became proverbial, and people would speak of someone as being “like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in the LORD's sight.” ¹⁰He built the foundation for his empire in the land of Babylonia, with the cities of Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there he extended his reign to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen—the main city of the empire, located between Nineveh and Calah.

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came.

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. ¹⁹Eventually the territory of Canaan spread from Sidon to Gerar, near Gaza, and to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified according to their tribes, languages, territories, and nations.

Descendants of Shem

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth. Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber. ²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah was the father of Eber. ²⁵Eber had



The People of Babel

Look How Great We Are!

Genesis 11:1-9

Ever wanted to show off a little bit? You know, let everybody know you've got some skills? Maybe you're pretty good on the basketball court. Or you're the smartest kid in the class. Or you're awesome at the clarinet.

Anyway, years after the Flood, people started bragging about all their accomplishments on the earth. They said, "Hey, let's make a city with a building so high and so cool that everybody will think we rule!"

They made brick after brick. They got the mortar together, and they started to build. Higher and higher, the tower was looking good. Of course, God knew this was the wrong approach to life. We humans receive everything from him, even our talents and abilities. So he put an end to the monument people were building to their own greatness.

How did he do it? Well, since everybody spoke the same language in those days, it was a simple thing to mess them up. God gave them different languages. Now how would they tell one another what to do next? How would the bosses tell the workers what to make? How would the workers read the plans?

Imagine it: a beautiful new city with a huge tower, but never finished. And everybody babbling about how great it was.

Believers Beware!

There's nothing wrong with knowing your strengths. Just be sure you know the One who gave them to you. All of your abilities are gifts from God. Give him thanks every day.

two sons. The first was named Peleg—"division"—for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups and dispersed. His brother's name was Joktan.

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. ³⁰The descendants of Joktan lived in the area extending from Mesha toward the eastern hills of Sephar.

³¹These were the descendants of Shem, identified according to their tribes, languages, territories, and nations.

³²These are the families that came from Noah's sons, listed nation by nation according to their lines of descent. The earth was populated with the people of these nations after the Flood.

Chapter 11

The Tower of Babel

At one time the whole world spoke a single language and used the same words.

²As the people migrated eastward, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. ³They began to talk about construction projects. "Come," they said, "let's make great piles of

burnt brick and collect natural asphalt to use as mortar. ⁴Let's build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies—a monument to our greatness! This will bring us together and keep us from scattering all over the world."

⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶"Look!" he said. "If they can accomplish this when they have just begun to take advantage of their common language and political unity, just think of what they will do later. Nothing will be impossible for them! ⁷Come, let's go down and give them different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other." ❄️

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the earth; and that ended the building of the city. ⁹That is why the city was called Babel, because it was there that the LORD confused the people by giving them many languages, thus scattering them across the earth.

From Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the history of Shem's family.

When Shem was 100 years old, his son Arphaxad was born. This happened two years after the Flood. ¹¹After the birth of Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, his son Shelah was born. ¹³After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, his son Eber was born. ¹⁵After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, his son Peleg was born. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, his son Reu was born. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, his son Serug was born. ²¹After the birth of

Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug was 30 years old, his son Nahor was born. ²³After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, his son Terah was born. ²⁵After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶When Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The Family of Terah

²⁷This is the history of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran had a son named Lot. ²⁸But while Haran was still young, he died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the place of his birth. He was survived by Terah, his father. ²⁹Meanwhile, Abram married Sarai, and his brother Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of their brother Haran. (Milcah had a sister named Iscah.) ³⁰Now Sarai was not able to have any children.

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai, and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and left Ur of

❄️ **I BELIEVE** God is three persons in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Gen. 11:7**

God is actually three persons but one God, and he often speaks of himself as a group. Awesome, huh? It's pretty difficult to understand it all, but that's where faith and belief come in. We can't understand how God is three in one. If we could, well, we'd be God. But we can *know* God through his Son, Jesus.

GO TO ▶ 1 Cor. 12:3-6, p. 1476

the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But they stopped instead at the village of Haran and settled there.

³²Terah lived for 205 years and died while still at Haran.

Chapter 12

The Call of Abram

Then the LORD told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you."

⁴So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people who had joined his household at Haran—and finally arrived in Canaan. ⁶Traveling through Canaan, they came to a place near Shechem and set up camp beside the oak at Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I am going to give this land to your offspring." And Abram built an altar there to commemorate the LORD's visit. ⁸After that, Abram traveled southward and set up camp in the hill country between Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar and worshiped the LORD. ⁹Then Abram traveled south by stages toward the Negev.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰At that time there was a severe famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to wait it out. ¹¹As he was approaching the borders of Egypt, Abram said to Sarai, "You are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!'" ¹³But if you say you are my sister, then the Egyptians will treat me well because of their

interest in you, and they will spare my life."

¹⁴And sure enough, when they arrived in Egypt, everyone spoke of her beauty.

¹⁵When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to their king, the pharaoh, and she was taken into his harem. ¹⁶Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, cattle, donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD sent a terrible plague upon Pharaoh's household because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh called for Abram and accused him sharply. "What is this you have done to me?" he demanded. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?" ¹⁹Why were you willing to let me marry her, saying she was your sister? Here is your wife! Take her and be gone!" ²⁰Pharaoh then sent them out of the country under armed escort—Abram and his wife, with all their household and belongings.

Chapter 13

Abram and Lot Separate

So they left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev—Abram with his wife and Lot and all that they owned, ²for Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. ³Then they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where they had camped before. ⁴This was the place where Abram had built the altar, and there he again worshiped the LORD.

⁵Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, was also very wealthy with sheep, cattle, and many tents. ⁶But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. There were too many animals for the available pastureland. ⁷So an argument broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.

⁸Then Abram talked it over with Lot. "This arguing between our herdsmen has got to stop," he said. "After all, we are close relatives! ⁹I'll tell you what we'll



Lot A LOT OF HEARTACHE HERE!

Genesis 13:5-13; 14:1-16; 19:1-29

Do you know what to do when opportunity knocks? Lot, Abram's nephew, would have said, "Go for it! Take the best."

That's exactly what he did. You see, he was a businessman. He'd already made lots of money. He had large ranches with lots of cattle. But his workers were starting to fight with his uncle Abram's workers. The two men were so big and successful that there wasn't enough room for them to live in the same place! So Abram (later known as Abraham) said, "Lot, just look at all the

land around us. Choose your place. Wherever you want to live, fine. I'll go in the opposite direction.

Then . . . no more fighting!"

So Lot took a look around. He could have chosen the desert—a hot, dry place with little chance for raising good crops. Instead, he went for a place that looked like a beautiful garden—the best land he could see.

Here's the problem, though: This awesome spot was right next to a town known for its evil ways—Sodom. Eventually, living next to Sodom brought Lot a lot of misery, and it pulled him away from God. In fact, he ended up living in a cave! (See Genesis 19:30.)

On the Fence?

There's nothing wrong with choosing the nice things. But sometimes what looks good may not be all it's cracked up to be. If a seemingly good decision puts you in bad company, look out! The people you hang out with can make your life miserable—and even worse, they can pull you away from God.

do. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want that area over there, then I'll stay here. If you want to stay in this area, then I'll move on to another place."

¹⁰Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹Lot chose that land for himself—the Jordan Valley to

the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. ¹²So while Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom, among the cities of the plain. ¹³The people of this area were unusually wicked and sinned greatly against the LORD.

¹⁴After Lot was gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction. ¹⁵I am going to give all this land to you and your offspring as a permanent possession. ¹⁶And I am going

to give you so many descendants that, like dust, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Take a walk in every direction and explore the new possessions I am giving you.” ¹⁸Then Abram moved his camp to the oak grove owned by Mamre, which is at Hebron. There he built an altar to the LORD.

Chapter 14 Abram Rescues Lot

About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim ²fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (now called Zoar).

³The kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela formed an alliance and mobilized their armies in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea). ⁴For twelve years they had all been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but now in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵One year later, Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived. They conquered the Rephaites in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emities in the plain of Kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites in Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. ⁷Then they swung around to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and destroyed the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

⁸But now the army of the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (now called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea ⁹against King Kedorlaomer of Elam and the kings of Goiim, Babylonia, and Ellasar—four kings against five. ¹⁰As it happened, the valley was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some slipped into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains.

¹¹The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and began their long journey home, taking all the wealth and food with them. ¹²They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and took everything he owned.

¹³One of the men who escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was camped at the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram’s allies.

¹⁴When Abram learned that Lot had been captured, he called together the men born into his household, 318 of them in all. He chased after Kedorlaomer’s army until he caught up with them in Dan.

¹⁵There he divided his men and attacked during the night from several directions. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Abram and his allies recovered everything—the goods that had been taken, Abram’s nephew Lot with his possessions, and all the women and other captives.

Melchizedek Blesses Abram

¹⁷As Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and his allies, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). ¹⁸Then Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought him bread and wine.

¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰And blessed be God Most High,
who has helped you conquer your
enemies.”

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

²¹The king of Sodom told him, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.”

²²Abram replied, “I have solemnly promised the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from you. Otherwise you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich!’ ²⁴All I’ll accept is what these young men of mine have already eaten. But give a share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”



Abraham ABLE TO BELIEVE LIKE ABE?

Genesis 12–18; 22

Why did they call me the friend of God (see Isaiah 41:8 and James 2:23)? Maybe it's because every time God told me to do something (well, *almost* every time), I believed and acted. I guess the Lord could count on me to come through.

My first big test was when he told me to pack up all my stuff and move out of town—way out. I liked living in Haran, but God said he had a new place for me to live and raise my family. I didn't know exactly where I was going, but I went anyway.

Another time, God told me to offer my son Isaac as a sacrifice. I thought it was strange, and I didn't want to lose my boy. But I knew God could bring him back to life (see Hebrews 11:19). So I went ahead and laid him on the altar; I had my knife ready. At the last second, God saved Isaac's life.

I'm not perfect, though. There was a time when I lied about being Sarah's husband because I was afraid God wouldn't protect me. Even worse, while I was waiting for the son God promised, I took matters into my own hands because I had trouble believing the Lord would keep his word and give me a son. Silly me. Remember Ishmael (see Genesis 16)?

You won't find a man of greater faith than Abraham. He believed God in many tough situations. If you want to be a real winner in life, make this mighty friend of God your best role model. And remember—even Abraham made huge mistakes and sinned. But God did huge things through Abraham because God loved him, just like he loves you.

Chapter 15

The LORD's Covenant with Abram

Afterward the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

²But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since I don't have a son, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. ³You have given me no children, so one of my servants will have to be my heir."

"Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will

have a son of your own to inherit everything I am giving you." ⁵Then the LORD brought Abram outside beneath the night sky and told him, "Look up into the heavens and count the stars if you can. Your descendants will be like that—too many to count!" ⁶**And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD declared him righteous because of his faith.** ⁷Then the LORD told him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land."

⁸But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD,

THAT'S A FACT!**Three Is a Crowd!**

Not everything that's "accepted" in our society is accepted by God. We still have to ask, *Is this really God's will?* That's how it was with Abraham. In his day, it was cool if a wife wanted to give her husband a substitute wife—as long as it brought a child into the family. Everybody said, "Hey, go for it." But God has always had a higher standard for marriage: One husband, one wife, till death do they part. . . . That's a fact!

Gen. 16

how can I be sure that you will give it to me?"

⁹Then the LORD told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

¹⁰Abram took all these and killed them. He cut each one down the middle and laid the halves side by side. He did not, however, divide the birds in half. ¹¹Some vultures came down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away. ¹²That evening, as the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. He saw a terrifying vision of darkness and horror.

¹³Then the LORD told Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, and they will be oppressed as slaves for four hundred years. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will

come away with great wealth. ¹⁵(But you will die in peace, at a ripe old age.)

¹⁶After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, when the sin of the Amorites has run its course."

¹⁷As the sun went down and it became dark, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. ¹⁸So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—¹⁹the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."

Chapter 16**The Birth of Ishmael**

But Sarai, Abram's wife, had no children. So Sarai took her servant, an Egyptian woman named Hagar, ²and gave her to Abram so she could bear his children.

"The LORD has kept me from having any children," Sarai said to Abram. "Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed. ³So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram first arrived in the land of Canaan.)

⁴So Abram slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress Sarai with contempt. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "It's all your fault! Now this servant of mine is pregnant, and she despises me, though I myself gave her the privilege of sleeping with you. The LORD will make you pay for doing this to me!"

⁶Abram replied, "Since she is your servant, you may deal with her as you see fit." So Sarai treated her harshly, and Hagar ran away.

SAY WHAT??

Righteous (people) = okay with God *Gen. 15:6*