

# Genesis

## The Promise

Lesson #8 for May 21, 2022

Scriptures: Genesis 22-25; Hebrews 11:17; Leviticus 18:21; John 1:1-3; Romans 4:1-12; 5:6-8.

1. This lesson covers approximately 60 years in the lives of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. It includes: (1) The birth of Isaac, (2) the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael, (3) Abraham's trip to Mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac, (4) the death of Sarah, (5) Abraham's purchase of land for her burial and for the first time owning property in Canaan, (6) the long process of finding a wife for Isaac when he was about 40 years old, (7) the marriage of Abraham to Keturah, (8) the six sons that were born to Keturah, (9) Abraham apportioning his inheritance to his eight sons, (10) the death of Abraham, and (11) the birth of Isaac's two sons (Esau and Jacob).

Finally, as God had promised, Sarah bore Abraham a son, "in his old age" (*Gen. 21:2*), and he named the baby Isaac (*see Gen. 21:1-5*). But the story of Abraham is far from over, reaching a climactic moment when he took his son to Mount Moriah to be sacrificed. Isaac, however, is replaced by a ram (*Gen. 22:13*), which signified God's commitment to bless the nations through his "seed" (*Gen. 22:17, 18*). That Seed, of course, was Jesus (*Acts 13:23*). Hence, in this astonishing (and in some ways troubling) story, more of the plan of salvation is revealed.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, May 14.<sup>§</sup>

2. God had promised Sarah that she would have a son. (Genesis 17:1-22) Why did God wait so long to give Abraham and Sarah that son? He was given as a miracle baby; God could have given him at any time.
3. Twenty years later when Abraham was 120 years old and Isaac was 20, Abraham was instructed by God to take his son, the son of the promise, and sacrifice him on Mount Moriah even though God had promised Abraham many descendants through Isaac.

**Genesis 22:1-19:** <sup>1</sup> Some time later **God tested Abraham**; he called to him, "Abraham!" And Abraham answered, "Yes, here I am!"

<sup>2</sup> **"Take your son," God said, "your only son, Isaac,** whom you love so much, and go to the land of Moriah. There on a mountain that I will show you, **offer him as a sacrifice to me.**"

<sup>3</sup> Early the next morning Abraham cut some wood for the sacrifice, loaded his donkey, and took Isaac and two servants with him. They started out for the place that God had told him about. <sup>4</sup>On the third day Abraham saw the place in the distance. <sup>5</sup>Then he said to the servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there and worship, and then **we** will come back to you."

<sup>6</sup> Abraham made Isaac carry the wood for the sacrifice, and he himself **carried a knife and live coals for starting the fire.** As they walked along together, <sup>7</sup>Isaac said, "Father!"

He answered, "Yes, my son?"

Isaac asked, "I see that you have the coals and the wood, but **where is the lamb for the sacrifice?**"

<sup>8</sup> **Abraham answered, "God himself will provide one."** And the two of them walked on together.

<sup>9</sup> When they came to the place which God had told him about, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. He tied up his son and placed him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup>Then he picked up the knife to kill him. <sup>11</sup>But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!"

He answered, "Yes, here I am."

<sup>12</sup> **"Don't hurt the boy or do anything to him," he said. "Now I know that you honour and obey God, because you have not kept back your only son from him."**

<sup>13</sup> Abraham looked round and saw a ram caught in a bush by its horns. He went and got it and offered it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

<sup>14</sup>Abraham named that place "The LORD Provides". [*sic*] And even today people say, "On the LORD's mountain he provides."

<sup>15</sup> The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time,

<sup>16</sup>"I make a vow by my own name—the LORD is speaking—that I will richly bless you. Because you did this and did not keep back your only son from me, <sup>17</sup>**I promise that I will give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand along the seashore.** Your descendants will conquer their enemies. <sup>18</sup>All the nations will ask me to bless them as I have blessed your descendants—all because you obeyed my command."

<sup>19</sup>Abraham went back to his servants, and they went together to Beersheba, where Abraham settled.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Genesis 22:1-19). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup> [Did the servants who had been waiting at a distance have any questions for Abraham when they came back? And what about Sarah?]<sup>†‡</sup>

4. **How certain was Abraham that the voice he had heard in the middle of the night was God's?** Would you be willing to depart on a two-or-three-day walking journey to sacrifice a child based on that amount of evidence? Of course, Ellen G. White wrote that as they approached Mount Moriah, Abraham saw the sign over the mount, confirming—in his mind—that it had been God's voice.

[From the writings of Ellen White=EGW:] That day—the longest that Abraham had ever experienced—dragged slowly to its close. While his son and the young men were sleeping, **he spent the night in prayer**, still hoping that some heavenly messenger might come to say that the trial was enough, that the youth might return unharmed to his mother. **But no relief came to his tortured soul.** Another long day, **another night of humiliation and prayer**, while ever the command that was to leave him childless was ringing in his ears. **Satan was near to whisper doubts and**

**unbelief, but Abraham resisted his suggestions. As they were about to begin the journey of the third day, the patriarch, looking northward, saw the promised sign, a cloud of glory hovering over Mount Moriah, and he knew that the voice which had spoken to him was from heaven.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 151.3.<sup>†‡</sup> [What was that “cloud of glory”? Was it like the pillar of fire that led Israel?]<sup>‡</sup>

5. Doesn't the sacrifice of Isaac fly in the face of commandments later given by God to the children of Israel and His later directions against human sacrifices? What important lessons are we to learn from the experience on Mount Moriah? At the climax of that experience on Mount Moriah, suddenly, Isaac's life was spared; a ram was provided as a substitute. Some people think that the plan of salvation is all about substitution. But, there is a lot more to salvation than substitution. **What did the universe learn from that experience?** Is it clear in your mind that nothing that we can do—even something so incredible as Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed and Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac—could earn salvation? Our only hope of salvation is as a free gift from God. There is nothing that we could do to earn a place in heaven! What can we learn from the story of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah about the atonement? Remember that the word *atonement* comes from *at-one-ment*. How does this story bring us closer to God?

[EGW:] **The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his own good, nor solely for the benefit of succeeding generations; but it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds. The field of the controversy between Christ and Satan—the field on which the plan of redemption is wrought out—is the lesson book of the universe. Because Abraham had shown a lack of faith in God's promises, Satan had accused him before the angels and before God of having failed to comply with the conditions of the covenant, and as unworthy of its blessings. God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted, and to open more fully before them the plan of salvation.**

**Heavenly beings were witnesses of the scene as the faith of Abraham and the submission of Isaac were tested.** The trial was far more severe than that which had been brought upon Adam. Compliance with the prohibition laid upon our first parents involved no suffering, but the command to Abraham demanded the most agonizing sacrifice. All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unfaltering obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity. **Satan's accusations were shown to be false.** God declared to His servant, “Now I know that thou fearest God [notwithstanding Satan's charges], seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.” God's covenant, confirmed to Abraham by an oath before the intelligences of other worlds, testified that obedience will be rewarded.

**It had been difficult even for the angels to grasp the mystery of redemption—to comprehend that the Commander of heaven, the Son of God, must die for guilty man. When the command was given to**

**Abraham to offer up his son, the interest of all heavenly beings was enlisted.** With intense earnestness they watched each step in the fulfillment of this command. When to Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham made answer, "God will provide Himself a lamb;" and when the father's hand was stayed as he was about to slay his son, and the ram which God had provided was offered in the place of Isaac—**then light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man's salvation.** 1 Peter 1:12.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 154.3-155.2.<sup>†‡</sup> [The brackets and the content in brackets inside the paragraph above are in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.\*]<sup>†‡</sup> [When Abraham is described as showing "a lack of faith in God's promises," was that only referring to the "half-truth" that Abraham had told to Pharaoh? Or, was it also not believing God about having a son through Sarah and taking Hagar as a concubine? Or, even more? Is God going to demand perfect obedience from each of us? Is that possible? *Perfection* in the Bible means maturity. Those who are on God's side will continue to grow in their faith. The final question for each of us is: Are you safe to live next door to for the rest of eternity?]<sup>‡</sup>

6. We live on a little blue "marble," the third planet from the sun, in a relatively minor galaxy. **Is it possible that the life of Abraham and his foibles and victories were actually the focus of the inhabitants of the vast, entire universe?**

7. Why did God give Abraham such a "test"?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Genesis 22 has become a classic in world literature and has inspired philosophers and artists, not just theologians. The meaning of God's test is difficult to comprehend, however. This divine command contradicted the later biblical prohibition against human sacrifices (*Lev. 18:21*), and it surely seemed to work against God's promise of an eternal covenant through Isaac (*Gen. 15:5*)....

The biblical notion of "test" (in Hebrew, *nissah*) embraces two opposite ideas. It refers to the idea of judgment; that is, a judgment in order to know what is in the heart of the tested one (*Deut. 8:2; compare with Gen. 22:12*). But it also brings the assurance of God's grace on behalf of the tested (*Exod. 20:18–20*).

In this case, Abraham's faith in God takes him to the point that he runs the risk of losing his "future" (his posterity). And yet, because he trusts God, he will do what God asks, no matter how difficult it all is to understand. After all, what is faith if not trust in what we don't see or fully understand? [See Item #8 below for a different idea of *faith* and a biblical definition of *faith*.]

Also, biblical faith is not so much about our capacity to give to God and to sacrifice for Him—though that has a role, no doubt (*Rom. 12:1*)—but about our capacity to trust Him and to receive His grace while understanding just how undeserving we are.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Sunday, May 15.<sup>‡§</sup>

8. **Based on all of Scripture, a biblical definition of *faith* stated so well so many times by one of God’s best modern friends, Dr. A. Graham Maxwell, is as follows:**

**Faith** is [just] a word we use to denote a relationship with God as with a Person well known. The better we know Him, the better this relationship may be. [We cannot say *will be* because we know the story of Lucifer.]

Faith implies an **attitude toward God of love, trust, and deep admiration**. It means having enough confidence in Him, based upon the more than adequate evidence revealed, to be willing to believe whatever He says [as soon as we are sure that He is the One who has said it], to accept whatever He offers [as soon as we are sure that He is the One who is offering it], and to do whatever He wishes [as soon as we are sure He is the One who wishes it]—without reservation—for the rest of eternity.

**Anyone who has such faith is perfectly safe to save. This is why faith is the only requirement for heaven. [See Acts 16:31.]**

[Faith also means that like Abraham, Job, and Moses, God’s friends, **we know God well enough to reverently ask Him, “Why?”**—A. Graham Maxwell, *You Can Trust the Bible* 81.<sup>†‡</sup> [Sections in brackets are added based on frequent statements by Dr. Maxwell in his Bible study classes.]<sup>‡</sup>

9. This does not suggest that there is nothing for us to do. Abraham believed God; because of his faith, God accepted him as righteous.

**James 2:18-24:** <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “One person has faith, another has actions.” My answer is, “Show me how anyone can have faith without actions. **I will show you my faith by my actions.**” <sup>19</sup> Do you believe that there is only one God? Good! The demons also believe—and tremble with fear. <sup>20</sup> You fool! Do you want to be shown that faith without actions is useless? <sup>21</sup> How was our ancestor Abraham put right with God? It was through his actions, when he offered his son Isaac on the altar. <sup>22</sup> Can’t you see? His faith and his actions worked together; his faith was made perfect through his actions. <sup>23</sup> And the scripture came true that said, “Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous.” And so Abraham was called God’s friend. <sup>24</sup> You see, then, that it is by people’s actions that they are put right with God, and not by their faith alone.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

10. Have you had any tests or experiences in your life that remind you of Abraham’s test on Mount Moriah?
11. If you do not read or do not understand Hebrew, you would not know that there is a very interesting point made regarding this story.

When Isaac asked about the sacrificial animal, Abraham gave an intriguing answer: God will “**provide for Himself** the lamb for a burnt offering” (*Gen. 22:8, NKJV*). Yet, the Hebrew verbal form can actually mean “God will provide Himself as the lamb.” The verb “provide” (*yir’eh lo*) is used in a way that can mean “**provide Himself**” (or literally, “see Himself”).

What we are being shown here, then, is the essence of the plan of salvation, with the Lord Himself suffering and paying in Himself the penalty for our

sins!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, May 16.<sup>†§</sup> [Is it payment for our sins that is needed?]<sup>‡</sup>

12. Does this story of the events leading up to and at Mount Moriah help us to better understand what happened at the cross?

There, at Mount Moriah, long before the Cross, the sacrificial ram “caught in a thicket by his horns” (*Gen. 22:13*) was pointing right to Jesus. He is One that is “seen” here, as Abraham explains later, “**In the mount where the LORD is seen**” (*Gen. 22:14, author’s translation*). Jesus Himself had pointed to Abraham’s prophetic utterance here, when He said, echoing Abraham’s statement: “ ‘**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad**’ ” (*John 8:56, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Monday, May 16.<sup>†§</sup>

It was to impress Abraham’s mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man’s redemption.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets\** 154.2.

Isaac was a figure of the Son of God, who was offered a sacrifice for the sins of the world. God would impress upon Abraham the gospel of salvation to man. In order to do this, and make the truth a reality to him as well as to test his faith, He required him to slay his darling Isaac. All the sorrow and agony that Abraham endured through that dark and fearful trial were for the purpose of deeply impressing upon his understanding the plan of redemption for fallen man. He was made to understand in his own experience how unutterable was the self-denial of the infinite God in giving His own Son to die to rescue man from utter ruin. To Abraham no mental torture could be equal to that which he endured in obeying the divine command to sacrifice his son.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church,\** vol. 3, 369.1.

13. How many of us would be willing to give our lives or the lives of any of our children as an offering to God? What kind of offering does God really want?

**Romans 12:1:** So then, my brothers and sisters, because of God’s great mercy to us I appeal to you: **offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.**—*Good News Bible.\*†*

14. Sarah had been intimately involved with many of Abraham’s problems. Among other things, this is revealed by: (1) The time in Egypt when she either openly or in her silence agreed to the half-truth that she was Abraham’s sister, and (2) the suggestion that Abraham should take Hagar as a concubine in order to have an heir.
15. It was probably not too long after that event on Mount Moriah that Sarah died. While it is true that we have no records recorded of Sarah’s learning about the near-death of Isaac, there is no doubt that she found out about it. What did she say to Abraham and to Isaac

when they returned? Is it possible that the shock of hearing about what almost happened to Isaac at Mount Moriah contributed to Sarah's death?

16. After Sarah died, Abraham purchased a burial ground for her; that was his first possession of land in Canaan.

**Genesis 23:12-19:** <sup>12</sup> But Abraham bowed before the Hittites <sup>13</sup>and said to Ephron, so that everyone could hear, "May I ask you, please, to listen. I will buy the whole field. Accept my payment, and I will bury my wife there."

<sup>14</sup> Ephron answered, <sup>15</sup> "Sir, land worth only four hundred pieces of silver—what is that between us? Bury your wife in it." <sup>16</sup>Abraham agreed and weighed out the amount that Ephron had mentioned in the hearing of the people—400 pieces of silver, according to the standard weights used by the merchants.

<sup>17</sup> That is how the property which had belonged to Ephron at Machpelah, east of Mamre, became Abraham's. It included the field, the cave which was in it, and all the trees in the field up to the edge of the property. <sup>18</sup>It was recognized as Abraham's property by all the Hittites who were there at the meeting.

<sup>19</sup> Then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in that cave in the land of Canaan.

<sup>20</sup>So the field which had belonged to the Hittites, and the cave in it, became the property of Abraham for a burial ground.—*Good News Bible*.\*

17. Sarah's death followed by the purchase of that land from the Hittites and then Abraham's refusal to have Isaac himself go to Haran to pick out a wife all suggest that **Abraham was taking all necessary steps to make sure that his heritage would remain in Canaan.**
18. Genesis 24, recording the story of Abraham's and Eliezer's efforts to get a wife for Isaac, is the longest single story in the book of Genesis. Abraham's chief servant left with 10 camels loaded with gifts for the future bride and her family.

[EGW:] Abraham had become an old man, and expected soon to die; yet one act remained for him to do in securing the fulfillment of the promise to his posterity. **Isaac was the one divinely appointed to succeed him as the keeper of the law of God and the father of the chosen people, but he was yet unmarried.** The inhabitants of Canaan were given to idolatry, and God had forbidden intermarriage between His people and them, knowing that such marriages would lead to apostasy. The patriarch feared the effect of the corrupting influences surrounding his son.... In the mind of Abraham the choice of a wife for his son was a matter of grave importance; he was anxious to have him marry one who would not lead him from God....

Isaac, trusting to his father's wisdom and affection, was satisfied to commit the matter to him, believing also that God Himself would direct in the choice made.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 171.1-3.†‡ [Why didn't Abraham choose a bride for his son from the daughters of his large company of trained soldiers and "converts.]"‡

19. **Read Genesis 24:10-67, especially verses 12-28, about seeking a bride for Isaac.**

**Genesis 24:12-28:** <sup>12</sup>He [Eliezer] prayed, “LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today and keep your promise to my master. <sup>13</sup>Here I am at the well where the young women of the city will be coming to get water. <sup>14</sup>I will say to one of them, ‘Please, lower your jar and let me have a drink.’ If she says, ‘Drink, and I will also bring water for your camels,’ may she be the one that you have chosen for your servant Isaac. **If this happens, I will know that you have kept your promise to my master.”**

<sup>15</sup> **Before he had finished praying, Rebecca arrived with a water jar on her shoulder.** She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham’s brother Nahor and his wife Milcah. <sup>16</sup>She was a very beautiful young woman and still a virgin. She went down to the well, filled her jar, and came back. <sup>17</sup>The servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a drink of water from your jar.”

<sup>18</sup> She said, “Drink, sir,” and quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and held it while he drank. <sup>19</sup>When he had finished, **she said, “I will also bring water for your camels and let them have all they want.”** ...

<sup>24</sup> “My father is Bethuel son of Nahor and Milcah,” she answered. <sup>25</sup> “There is plenty of straw and fodder at our house, and there is a place for you to stay.”

<sup>26</sup> **Then the man knelt down and worshipped the LORD.** <sup>27</sup>**He said, “Praise the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has faithfully kept his promise to my master. The LORD has led me straight to my master’s relatives.”**—*Good News Bible*. \*††

20. **The story of Abraham’s servant traveling to Haran to get a wife for Isaac is amazing. It is a story full of miraculous answers to prayer and a young woman’s willingness to venture into the unknown to take a husband. Was God working step-by-step to help Abraham accomplish His goals? Compare and contrast the story of Abraham’s servant traveling to Haran accompanied by 10 camels loaded with gifts versus the journey that Jacob made to Haran many years later as he was fleeing from his brother!**
21. Think of Eliezer, Abraham’s servant, traveling about 500 miles from the place where Abraham was staying all the way to Haran to find a wife for Isaac. How would you like to have that responsibility? Eliezer clearly took it seriously. Consider his prayer.
22. As far as we know, Eliezer had never been to Haran before. He was in a country unknown to him, and he was supposed to be finding the right wife for Isaac.

[BSG:] Eliezer asks for the success of the operation. The Hebrew verb *haqr’eh*, “give me success” (*Gen. 24:12, NKJV*), derives from the verb *qarah*, which means “to happen” and conveys the idea of “chance” (*Ruth 2:3*). The servant asks God to produce the chance of this encounter. The notion of accidental chance has no room here. **The fact that God is in control of chance means that He will operate within the parameters of what appears to be chance from a human viewpoint. He is the God of providence, who can cause the event to occur. This view is reinforced by the fact that the servant goes so far as to determine not only the**



**moment of this event, which should take place right away (Gen. 24:12), but also the place that should be right here, where the servant has “made his camels to kneel down” (Gen. 24:11) and where he stands, “by the well of water” (Gen. 24:13, NKJV).—Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\* 108.†‡§**

23. Abraham’s servant was amazed at the quick response that God provided in answer to his prayer; the fact that Rebecca did exactly what he had prayed for was amazing. It certainly should have confirmed Eliezer’s faith.
24. It is interesting to notice that despite this incredible effort to obtain a wife, God made sure—through His directions to Eliezer—that Rebecca was free to refuse if she wanted to. God never forces humans.

Hence, we see here another example of the great mystery of how God has given us, as humans, free will, free choice, a freedom that He will not trample on. (If He did trample, it would not be free will.) And yet, somehow, despite the reality of human free will, and many of the terrible choices humans make with that free will, we can still trust that in the end God’s love and goodness, ultimately, will prevail.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, May 18.

[As Ellen White was discussing the situation on this earth much later, just before the birth of Jesus:] The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, **Satan’s deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.** To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world’s dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages\** 22.1.†‡

25. Prophecies like Daniel 2 and Daniel 7-9 might suggest that God arbitrarily makes things work the way He wants them to. This story of finding a wife for Isaac suggests that is not true; God works with us, despite our failings and our problems. God is able to predict the future far in advance; but, **He does not force our choices.**
26. Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother. When Rebecca arrived, Isaac took her into his mother’s tent; and she became his wife.
27. Genesis 25:1-8 tell us that after Sarah died, Abraham married another woman whose name was **Keturah**. She bore him six sons.
28. These sons were not counted as sons of the promise like Isaac was. So, before he died, Abraham gave them generous gifts as an inheritance and sent them off to live in the East along with Ishmael. Then, the rest of his inheritance was given to Isaac. Abraham died at the age of 175.

29. Who was Keturah? Where did she come from?

[BSG:] Yet, the identity of his new wife is unclear. The fact that the chronicler associates Keturah's sons together with Hagar's sons, without mentioning the name of Keturah, suggests, however, that Keturah could (as some have suggested) be Hagar. It also is significant that **Abraham behaves with Keturah's sons the same way he did with Hagar's son: he sends them away to avoid any spiritual influence and make a clear distinction between his son with Sarah and the other sons.**

He also gives "all that he had unto Isaac" (*Gen. 25:5*) while he "gave gifts to the sons of the concubines" (*Gen. 25:6, NKJV*). **The classification of "concubines" may also imply that Keturah's status, like Hagar, was that of a concubine. The potential identification of Keturah as Hagar may also explain the subtle allusion to the memory of Sarah as a prelude to his marriage with Keturah-Hagar.—Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\* for Thursday, May 19.†‡§**

30. It is possible that mentioning, once again, Ishmael's descendants and the descendants of Keturah was evidence of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. (See Genesis 25:1-4,12-18.)

31. While Isaac himself only had two sons and Esau soon departed in his ways and his habits from Jacob who inherited the spiritual blessing, Jacob then produced 12 sons whose descendants became the 12 tribes of Israel! Jacob had 2 wives and 2 concubines.

**Genesis 25:7-11:** <sup>7-8</sup> Abraham died at the ripe old age of 175. <sup>9</sup>His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in Machpelah Cave, in the field east of Mamre that had belonged to Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite. <sup>10</sup>It was the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites; both Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there. <sup>11</sup>After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac, who lived near "The Well of the Living One who Sees Me". [*sic*]**—Good News Bible.\*‡**

32. In all of this, do you see evidence that Abraham was a great example of faith? How do you interpret Romans 4:1-12?

33. Do you have experiences in your own life where God provided amazing answers to prayer? Should we expect that all the time? Or, from time to time? Or, do we need to have faith like Abraham before something like that could happen to us?

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