

God Builds a Nation

“The Story”—Part 2

Genesis 12–33

Where have we been so far?

- The Big Bang of **creation**
- The Big Bang of **rebellion**
- The Big Bang of **sin permeating** the entire human race
- The Big Bang of **God’s judgment** against man’s rebellion

1. God has a plan

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

—Genesis 12:1–4

And He [God] took him [Abram] outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

—Genesis 15:5

- God decides to **build a nation**, and through that new nation **win us back** to Himself.
- God uses **imperfect** people for His **perfect** plan.
- Why does God use the weak, the cast-offs, the failures, the sinners? It’s for **His glory**.
- God uses people **just like you**.

2. God’s plan requires faith

- Common **mistakes** in thinking about faith:
 - Faith is not **positive thinking**.
 - Faith is not a **cheerful attitude**.
 - Faith is not an **abstract** like “**the force**.”
- Faith is **hearing God** and **trusting Him**.

“I prayed for faith and thought that some day it would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith didn’t seem to come. One day I read in Romans that ‘faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).’ I had up to this time, closed my

Bible and prayed for faith. Now I open my Bible and began to study and faith has been growing ever since.”

—D. L. Moody

“So Abram went forth...”

—Genesis 12:4

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

—Hebrews 11:8

- Faith is **obeying** God even when you don't know **where you're going**.

In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.” Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

—Romans 4:18–21

- Your story is going to come down to one pretty simple question: **Do I believe God?**
- Faith is not believing that **God will do** whatever **I want** Him to do.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.

—Genesis 16:1–4

- Your Story chapter titles
 1. **I Got This**
 2. You **Said What?**
 3. How About a **Compromise?**
 4. Are We **There Yet?**
 5. I Give Up, **You Write This**
- Sarah and Abraham got ahead of God's plan and the result is **conflict**.

3. You can trust God's plan

Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

—Genesis 22:1–2

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.

—Genesis 22:3–4

Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you."

—Genesis 22:5

- Abraham's faith is such that if need be, God will **bring his son back to life**.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead...

—Hebrews 11:17–19

- Trusting God when it doesn't make sense. This is something **you'll be called** to do.

Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.

—Genesis 22:6–13

Application

- God will never take you to a place you **cannot endure**.
- The path that follows God looks narrow, but it is the path to **freedom**. It's the path to **new life**.
- Choose to trust **God**, more than you trust **yourself**.

Scripture References

Genesis 6:5, 13–14

Genesis 12:1–4

Genesis 15:5

Joshua 24:2

Romans 10:17

Hebrews 11:8

Romans 4:18–21

Genesis 16:1–4, 12

Genesis 22:1–5

Hebrews 11:17–19

Genesis 22:6–13

All verses from the New American Standard unless otherwise noted.