



# In-Depth Studies Canada



– Home Bible Studies –

## The Unfolding Revelation of Christ in the Bible

### Week 5 “Abraham” (Gen. 11-20)

#### Promises Made, Promises Kept: Jesus is our Promise

“All of world history is related to the promises that God makes to Abraham. The final meaning of history will be found in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, a descendant of Abraham.”

Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*, p. 120.

#### Timeline

ca. 2000 B.C.: Abram to Canaan

#### Themes in Gen. 11-50

Gen. 11: The Tower of Babel: Human works alone are futile

Gen. 12-20: Abraham: God’s promises are gained by faith

Gen. 21-28:9: Isaac: The God who makes promises keeps them

Gen. 28:10–36: Jacob: God vests his promises in a community

Gen. 37-50: Joseph: God preserves the community of promise through an intercessor

#### *Gen. 11: A Counterfeit Kingdom (The Futility of Human Works)*

#### Main purposes of the Babel project:

*To unify society:* The biblical account says the tower was built so that the people – who at that time had *one language and a common speech* (Gen. 11:1) - would not be *scattered over the face of the whole earth* (Gen. 11:4).

*To glorify men and satisfy the people’s vanity:* Gen. 11:4 says the goal was to *build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves* ... (emphasis added).

#### What Does Genesis 11 Mean for Us? Human pride

“The implication is that God attacks the problem of the misplaced center. Human beings regarded themselves as the measure of all things, able to control their world, able to build a better world. Such human attempts, then and since, that leave God out of consideration are sin in its ... most blatant form.”

William J. Dumbrell

*Gen. 12-50: The True Kingdom (The Sufficiency of God's Promise)*

**Gen. 12-20: Abraham: The Promises of God Are Gained by Faith**

Gen. 12: God's covenant of promise

Gen. 15: Covenant affirmed; Abraham's faith counted as righteousness

Gen. 17: Covenant affirmed; sign of covenant (circumcision)

Gen. 22: Covenant affirmed; God provides a substitute

The promises to the physical seed - fulfilled literally and physically (see 1 Cor. 15:46)  
(However, foreshadowed in these promises were the spiritual blessings to the spiritual seed fulfilled in Christ!)

**(i) A Great Nation -**

a) The Promise - Gen. 46:3

b) The physical fulfillment - 1 Chron. 17:21

c) Fulfilled in Christ - 1 Peter 2:9

**(ii) A Great Posterity -**

a) The Promise - Gen. 13:16; Gen. 15:5; Gen. 22:17

b) The physical fulfillment - 2 Chron. 1:9; 1 Kings 4:20; Deut. 1:10; Heb. 11:12

c) Fulfilled in Christ - Gal. 4:27-28; Rev. 7:9-10

**(iii) A Promised Land -**

a) The Promise - Gen. 13:14-15; Gen. 15:7, 18

b) The physical fulfillment - Josh. 21:43-45; 1 Kings 4:21-24

c) Fulfilled in Christ - Heb. 11:9-16; Rev. 21:1-3; Heb. 4:8-9

**Key Themes in Gen. 12-20**

**Grace:** Nothing in Abraham that deserves the covenant of promises

**Sovereignty:** God is sovereign over all events, even when it looks hopeless.