



# BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **11th Grade | Unit 5**

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# BIBLE 1105

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# The Nation of Israel

## Introduction

Genesis 1:27-28 declares: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion....” From the beginning of mankind, God’s purposes have been for blessing. Yet the first man, Adam, sinned and fell from the position and purpose of God. Sin disintegrated the human race God created, and the great Flood destroyed all but eight people, the family of Noah. Four centuries passed, during which time emigrations abounded, pushing northward into Europe and Asia and southward over the fertile plains of Chaldea.

Genesis, the book of beginnings, recorded God’s plan for redemption, which would begin with Abraham, the faithful patriarch. Through Abraham, the nation of Israel, the seed of Abraham, and the people of the Covenant began. Within the succeeding generation, individuals belonging to the ancestral stock were excluded from the privileged line of descent. God was building a Messianic line, which would have a heritage of faith. Those excluded from the Messianic lineage included: Lot, the father of the Moabites and Ammonites; Ishmael, the father of the Arabs; the sons of Abraham by his concubines, who were sent away unto the east country (Genesis 25:6); and Esau, the father of the Edomites.

God demonstrated His sovereignty in choosing Abraham to become the father of an entire nation. Through Israel’s historical and theological developments, God would bring to a fallen human race the miracle of redemption through God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus’s ministry was initially for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but through their rejection of the Messiah, God opened the door of salvation to the whole world.

In this LIFEPAK® you will study the promises given to the nation of Israel in the Abrahamic Covenant. You will discover God’s marvelous preservation of His chosen people until His appointed time. You will learn the historical and theological significance of the Hebrew nation. You will also observe some of the remarkable twentieth-century discoveries in archaeology that support the infallibility of God’s purpose and plan.

## Objectives

**Read these objectives.** The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAK. When you have finished this LIFEPAK, you should be able to:

1. Define *covenant* and tell how the Abrahamic Covenant was given.
2. Explain the Abrahamic Covenant in terms of the promises and conditions.
3. Trace the history of the Jewish nation from the time of Abraham through the New Testament, citing specific incidents of how God sustained the Hebrew race.
4. Explain the main events of Hebrew history.
5. Explain the significance of the lives of Israel’s Old Testament leaders.
6. Identify major literary discoveries in the field of biblical archaeology concerning the Old Testament.
7. Identify archaeological findings in some of the important New Testament places.



# 1. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

In spite of the wickedness of the human heart and the failures of a degraded human race, God wanted to show His grace by electing a chosen people to whom he could entrust the Holy Scriptures. These people would be His witnesses to other nations and would be the line through whom the Messiah would come. God called an individual, Abraham, whose name means *father of a nation*, from the land of the Chaldees. The Chaldean land, where Abraham was first contacted by God, was a long strip of green garden land. It was sufficient to lure and maintain vast populations of men, and it was especially suitable for shepherd tribesmen who required extensive pasture lands. The Chaldean people were grossly idolatrous. Abraham uncompromisingly opposed the evil practices, both in his father's house and in his native land.

Against the backdrop of idolatry came God's summons to Abraham recorded in Genesis 12:1-2: "... Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." God called Abraham and made an agreement with him known as the Abrahamic Covenant. In this section of the LIFEPAK, you will see how God initiated the covenant and, throughout history, has preserved His promises to this day and will continue to fulfill them until the end of time.



**Read Genesis 12 - 17**

## Section Objectives

**Review these objectives.** When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Define *covenant* and tell how the Abrahamic Covenant was made.
2. Explain the Abrahamic Covenant in terms of the promises and conditions.
3. Trace the history of the Jewish nation from the time of Abraham through the New Testament, citing specific incidents of how God sustained the Hebrew race.

## Vocabulary

**Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.**

**Diaspora**

**gratuitous**

**Hellenistic**

**proselyte**

**Note:** All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAK appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

## GOD'S INITIATION

Abraham lived with his family in Ur and was part of an idol-worshipping nation. Others, in his nation and in his family, were probably no worse than Abraham; but God sovereignly chose him from among all the others and separated him unto himself. Genesis 12 begins the story of God's call to Abraham to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees and go to an unknown land where God would make him the father of a mighty nation. This call would initiate the history of Israel, God's chosen people. Abraham served as an example of God's sovereignty.

**The call of Abraham.** The beginning of the Abrahamic Covenant is recorded in Genesis 12:13: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." In this covenant God would fulfill all His promises to Abraham. Abraham was to obey God's Word and conditions:

1. Get thee out of thy country
2. From thy kindred
3. From thy father's house
4. Go to a land that I will show thee.

Each time Abraham acted in obedience to God's command, God met him and elaborated the original contract. When Abraham left his father's house and moved his family and Lot's family into the plains of Moreh (Genesis 12:6-7), the Lord appeared to him and said: "...unto thy seed will I give this land..." When Abraham separated himself from Lot, the Lord again spoke to him, as recorded in Genesis 13:14-17, "...Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then thy seed shall also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." In the following verse, the Scriptures reveal that Abram dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron. These



| Migration of the patriarchs

Hebrew names are descriptive of Abraham's status after hearing the great personal promises of God toward His people. *Mamre* means *vigorous*, or the quality of living and growing with full vital strength. *Hebron* means *association*, or the bringing together of persons into a relationship as companions, partners, or friends.

**The Covenant.** A *covenant* is a binding and solemn agreement made by two or more parties, such as man and wife, ruler and ruled, or God and man. In a covenantal relationship, each party agrees to certain conditions of the relationship and gives his word to uphold it. Usually, the idea of covenant denotes a mere legal agreement contracted for the mutual benefit of both parties; but, because of the mercy of God demonstrated in His election of Israel, the Covenant he made with Abraham became entirely **gratuitous**. Time after time Israel became disobedient and unfaithful, yet God's Word has remained true and His promises sure.

All the promises God had spoken to Abraham necessitated an heir, a son; yet Abraham had no children. Genesis 15:3 recorded Abraham's explanation that the only heir he had was Eliezer, the steward of his household. God made clear that Abraham was to have his own son as the initial fulfillment of all the other promises. Genesis 15:4-6 states: "...but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

Genesis 15:9-21 tells how the Covenant was made. Five animals, except the birds, were cut in two. Customarily, the partners making the Covenant would walk between the pieces in a figure eight, symbolizing the intermingling of life's blood in a never-ending bond. Abraham drove away the birds of prey waiting to devour the carcasses until a deep sleep fell upon him. While in the deep sleep and the horror of great darkness, God foretold the events of Abraham's successors through 400 years and four generations. God revealed the Egyptian oppression of 400 years and the victorious Exodus of the people of Israel. While Abraham was still asleep, according to Genesis 15:17, "...It came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." In Exodus 19:18, God was seen as descending upon Mt. Sinai in a fire, "...and the

smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." David said in 2 Samuel 22:29, "For thou art my lamp, O Lord; the Lord will lighten my darkness." God had made the Covenant himself while Abraham slept through the entire event. Similarly, when the Perfect Sacrifice was laid before God on the Cross of Calvary, great darkness covered the earth so that even those who would benefit from the transaction taking place could not see the actual proceedings. God and His Son provided a Covenant of eternal life and blessing for all the joint-heirs with Jesus, just as God made the Covenant with himself that blessings and great promises would come to Abraham and his heirs.

In Genesis 17, God gave further elaboration, specifying that the Covenant was an everlasting Covenant from God to Abraham and all his heirs and promising to give them the land of Canaan. He established the token of the Covenant to be circumcision for every male baby in Abraham's house eight days after birth or at the time that any male was accepted in the household. God then revealed to Abraham the name Abraham was to give his son Isaac.

When Abraham was one hundred years old, the son of promise was born to Sarah and Abraham.



| Canaan



Abraham had learned that God was able to perform the impossible. Although he never saw the nations born, he did see a child brought forth from barrenness; therefore, Abraham trusted God to complete that which he had begun. God later repeated the Covenant to Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5) and again to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15), entrusting them to communicate His promise to others.

Genesis 12 begins the story of how Abraham, the father of nations, received God's promises by faith. He then stood back and observed the glory of God in initially fulfilling His Word. By the end of the book of Genesis, the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel were established. The Abrahamic Covenant had been initiated as a sovereign act of God's mercy. God promised its total fulfillment.

**Write the correct letter and answer.**

- 1.1** Abraham's name means \_\_\_\_\_ .  
 a. chosen by God  
 b. man from the east  
 c. father of a nation  
 d. vigorous
- 1.2** When God called Abraham, he was living in \_\_\_\_\_ of the Chaldees.  
 a. Ur  
 b. Haran  
 c. Canaan  
 d. Mamre
- 1.3** Abraham served as an example of God's \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. love  
 b. justice  
 c. grace  
 d. sovereignty
- 1.4** The story of the nation of Israel begins in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. Genesis 2  
 b. Genesis 6  
 c. Genesis 12  
 d. Exodus 20
- 1.5** Abraham's wife was \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. Ruth  
 b. Sarah  
 c. Hagar  
 d. Rebekah
- 1.6** The steward Abraham suggested as his heir was \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. Lot  
 b. Isaac  
 c. Eliezer  
 d. Ishmael
- 1.7** God gave to Abraham the land of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. Haran  
 b. Egypt  
 c. Canaan  
 d. Ur
- 1.8** Abraham and Sarah's son was \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. Isaac  
 b. Ishmael  
 c. Lot  
 d. Eliezer
- 1.9** The token of the Covenant was the act of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. sacrifice  
 b. burnt offerings  
 c. prayer  
 d. circumcision

- 1.10** God repeated the Covenant to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. Isaac
  - b. Jacob
  - c. neither a nor b
  - d. both a and b

**Complete these activities.**

- 1.11** List the four conditions Abraham was to obey.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.12** List the five promises God gave in the original Covenant.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer these questions.**

- 1.13** What does *Mamre* mean?

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- 1.14** What does *Hebron* mean?

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- 1.15** What is a *covenant*?

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- 1.16** How was the Abrahamic Covenant made?

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