

The Story Chapter 2, “Abraham: God Builds a Nation”
(readings excerpted from Genesis 12-35, NLT)

[This is the account of Abram, who was born ten generations after Noah. Abram’s father left Ur and moved to Haran.]

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All families on earth will be blessed through you.”

So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed... Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth – his livestock and all [his servants] – and headed for the land of Canaan... There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites. *(Gen 12:1-6)*

[When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him and renewed his covenant.]

“I am changing your name... You will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations... Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them! ... I will always be your God and the God of your descendants... Regarding your wife – from now on her name will be Sarah. And I will bless her and give you a son from her!”

Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. “How could I become a father at the age of 100?” he thought. *(Gen 17:1-17)*

...

The Lord kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. And Abraham named their son Isaac [which means, “Laughter.”] Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. *(Gen 21:1-7)*

...

[Isaac married Rebecca and had twin sons, Esau and Jacob, who wrestled even in the womb and fought for their parents’ favor. Although Esau was the older and thus should have inherited Isaac’s wealth and blessing, Jacob tricked him out of his inheritance.]

[In turn, Jacob was tricked into marrying the wrong woman. He loved Rachel, but he was deceived into marrying her older sister Leah first. Leah and Rachel competed for Jacob’s favor by bearing him many children – twelve sons and at least one daughter. Among the youngest of these children was Rachel’s son Joseph, his father’s favorite.]

[Jacob was also known as Israel. It would take many more generations, but from his twelve sons would come the twelve tribes of Israel.]