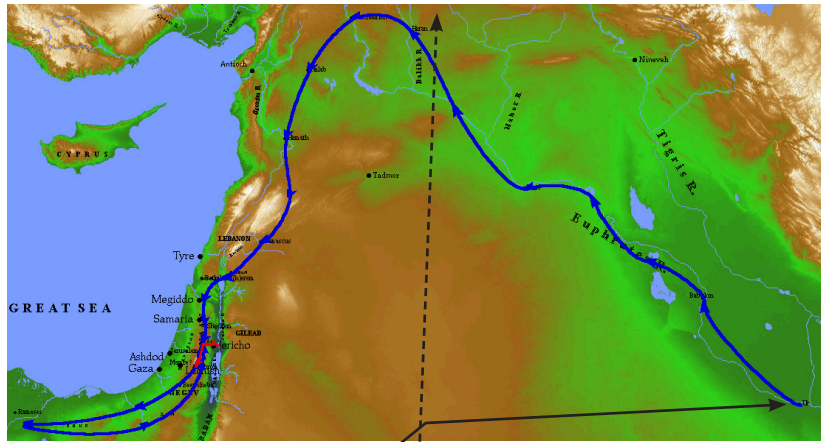
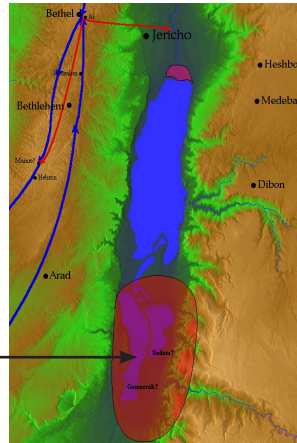


# Abraham & Ancient Near Eastern Empires

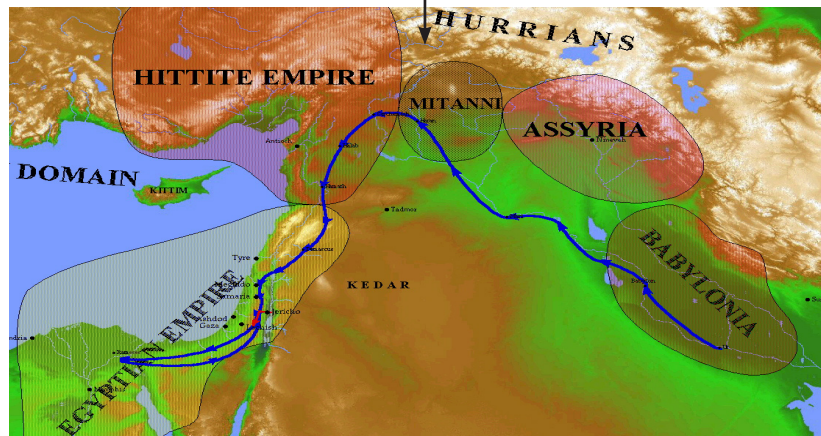


Genesis 12:1 tells us of God's call to Abram to leave his home in "Ur of the Chaldeans" (cf. Genesis 11:31) for the "promised land" of Canaan. Traditionally, this Lower Mesopotamian site for Ur (see solid arrow line) has been understood as the beginning point for Abram's journey. However, recent scholarship and archaeology has indicated the existence of a Northern site for Ur (same city name, different location) closer to the region of Haran (see dashed arrow line).

Genesis 19 is the account of the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah. Since the site was annihilated, we are not completely sure where it is, but this site is a strong possibility.



Abraham was the "father" to kings (Genesis 17:6), but when he made his journey from Ur to Canaan, he traveled through many other kingdoms. These kingdoms are mentioned throughout the Genesis account, for which this map is a helpful guide. Different kingdoms controlled different areas at different times (cf. Genesis 23), but this map gives a good general overview of where the kingdoms of the Ancient Near East were located.



# The Promise Of A Lifetime

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATIONS FOR AN EVERLASTING COVENANT, TO BE GOD TO YOU AND TO YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU. I WILL GIVE TO YOU AND TO YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU, THE LAND OF YOUR SOJOURNINGS, ALL THE LAND OF CANAAN, FOR AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD. GOD SAID FURTHER TO ABRAHAM, "NOW AS FOR YOU, YOU SHALL KEEP MY COVENANT, YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATIONS.**

**~GENESIS 17:7-9 (NASB)**

## 1) A Command & Three-Fold Promise

- A) Abram is commanded by God to go "to the land which I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). Before the promises comes the command!
  
- B) In light of Abram's obedience to the command, God delivers a three-fold promise to Abram (12:1-3).
  - i) God promises to deliver Abram (and family) to a land "which God will show them" (12:1). God promises land!

ii) God promises to make Abram into a great nation with a great name (12:2). God promises descendents!

iii) God promises to bless the whole earth through Abram (the man and, subsequently, the nation -- 12:3). God promises blessing!

C) These three elements (land, descendents, and blessing) are the central and guiding theme of the first five books of the Older Testament.

D) The command to obey and the promises which follow are the central crux of the "Abrahamic Covenant," which God is foreshadowing in Genesis 12, and explains in greater detail in Genesis 15 & 17.

## 2) Abram's Learning Curve Of Blessing

A) Abram was 75 years old when he moved from Haran with Sarai, his nephew Lot, and their servants (12:4-5).

B) Because of drought, Abram and Sarai flee to Egypt for food (12:10). Abram asks Sarai (she's a hottie) to pretend she is his sister (cf. 20:12), so the Egyptians will not kill Abram (12:11-20). The whole plan backfires when Pharaoh sleeps with a complicit Sarai, despite Abram becoming more rich.

C) Abram & Lot settle in different parts of the land (Genesis 13). Lot's area (near the Jordan) falls into a localized "war" where Lot and his family are captured (14:12). Abram raises his own army and re-captures Lot (14:16), but when faced with accepting the "spoils of war," Abram reverently refuses (14:22-24).

## 3) God Unpacks His Promises For Abram

A) Immediately following the faithful response of Abram, God calls out to Abram to "fear not" (15:1), God will protect and reward Abram.

B) Abram though, cannot imagine that God will bless, especially in the absence of a naturally born son (15:2). God, in mind-blowing fashion, assures Abram of a son, and reinforces each aspect of His promises.

C) Abram (who is now around 80 years old) believes what God says (15:6), and God "reckons" (gives) Abram righteousness. This is an important verse in understanding faith & works! The verse does NOT say that Abram "earned" his righteousness, but that God "gave" Abram righteousness (cf. Romans 4:1-5)!

D) Abram responds by following the common legal method of "sealing" a contract of promise, called a "covenant" (15:18). Abram never "walks the line" of the promise though, falling asleep and experiencing a vision of the future Egyptian captivity and deliverance (15:12-16).

E) In an unexpected and magnificent act of grace, God Himself "seals" the covenant, bearing all of the obligation for the covenantal promise of land, descendents and blessing (15:17-21). In other words, mankind might fail God, but God will never fail mankind -- He will be faithful to His promises!