

OLD TESTAMENT 1

UNIT THREE THE PATRIARCHS

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

- Usually the migration of Abram from Ur is dated between 2000BC and 1800BC.
- Some have tried to link Abram to this period by referring to social customs in Genesis.
- If the Exodus is dated to around 1400BC an approximate date for Abram can be suggested.
- The patriarchs can be roughly dated to between 2000BC and 1600BC.

GENESIS 12:1-3

➤ THE FUNCTION OF GENESIS 12:1-3

- Similarities exist between Genesis 12:1 and Genesis 1:3
- As God created through the Word, so God saves through the Word as heard here by Abram.
- The call of Abram is a pattern of the elective call which comes to all believers.

➤ THE PROMISES & THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

- There are five promises in Genesis 12:2-3
 - Verse 2: directed towards Abram
 - Verse 3: directed to the world in relation to Abram
- Promises concern LAND, PEOPLE, FAME and BLESSING.
- Salvation to the Jew first becomes, through the Jew, a blessing then available to the Gentiles.

➤ ABRAHAM'S ROLE

- The promise does not depend on human merit.
- Abraham builds altars and claims the land, while God commands him to take legal possession of it.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Genesis 15
promises:

- **LAND**
- **DESCENDANTS**

The covenant is concluded by God, who alone is obligated.

It supplies assurances for promises previously given.

- Most of the rest of the narratives are about the question of an heir.

ISAAC AND JACOB

- Isaac is only briefly treated.
- Jacob's story is told in greater detail.
 - Jacob becomes the father of the twelve tribes.
 - Laban & Jacob reach agreement and Jacob is seen to be blessed.
 - Alienations which Jacob has experienced are reversed.
 - Jacob's name is changed to Israel.
 - First stage of the promise – name, descendants and fame – has been fulfilled.

JOSEPH

- When Joseph is reunited with his brothers his purpose in Egypt is revealed.
- This purpose is to provide life for the descendants.
- Like Jacob, when Joseph is reunited with his brothers a series of alienations (from his father, brothers and land) is reversed.
- Genesis ends with Israel in Egypt, as a great people but with no land of their own.