

# **Dr. Kenneth Mathews, Genesis, Session 10, Introduction Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

## **1. Abstract of Mathews, Genesis, Session 10, Abraham's Calling and Promises of God (Gen. 11:27-12:3), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This is a lecture by Dr. Kenneth Mathews on Genesis 11:27-12:3, focusing on Abraham's calling and God's promises. The lecture analyzes the narrative's significance, emphasizing Abraham's pivotal role as a bridge between universal and patriarchal history. Dr. Mathews highlights the covenant between God and Abraham, detailing its promises of land, descendants, and blessing, and explores the themes of faith and faithfulness in Abraham's journey. The lecture also connects Abraham's story to the broader themes of the Pentateuch, examining how Abraham's experiences foreshadow the fulfillment of God's promises. Finally, the lecture examines the background of Abraham's family and his journey from Ur to Canaan.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathews, Genesis, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Genesis).**



**Mathews\_Genesis\_  
Session10.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Mathews, Genesis, Session 10, Abraham's Calling and Promises of God (Gen. 11:27-12:3)**

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Mathews\_Gen\_EN\_Session10.pdf":

#### **Briefing Document: Genesis Session 10 - Abraham's Calling and the Promises of God**

##### **Introduction**

This session focuses on the pivotal transition in Genesis from universal history (chapters 1-11) to the specific history of the patriarchs, beginning with Abraham. Dr. Mathews emphasizes the significance of Abraham as a central figure in God's plan of redemption, and his role as the link between the early narratives and the subsequent development of God's covenant with Israel. The session explores the promises made to Abraham and their connection to earlier themes in Genesis, as well as the spiritual journey of faith that Abraham embodies.

##### **Key Themes and Ideas**

###### **1. Shift from Universal to Specific History:**

- Chapters 1-11 of Genesis deal with universal human history, while chapter 11:27 onwards narrows the focus to the lineage of Terah, particularly Abraham. This shift highlights God's specific plan for humanity's redemption.
- "Chapters 1 through 11 concern the universal history of the families, human history. Now, we turn our attention to the specific history of the patriarchs."

###### **1. Abraham as a Central Figure:**

- Abraham's narrative receives extended attention, with more detail given to his life, his wife, and his relationship with God than events such as creation or the Fall. This is because his story embodies the remedy to sin that begins in the garden.
- "God is giving focal attention to the remedy to the sin problem, the brokenness that humanity has experienced as a consequence of the events that occurred in the garden."
- Abraham is the "matrix" linking the universal history (1-11) to the story of the patriarchs (12-50).

- He is the first focal person in the narratives, transitioning from the broader family to a specific one.

#### 1. **Abraham: Not Born a Hebrew, But a Sojourner:**

- Abraham was not initially a Hebrew; he came from Mesopotamian lineage, and he was later identified as a Hebrew, a term indicating a traveler or migrant, which aligns with his experience.
- "One thing that is often overlooked is that actually Abraham was not born a Hebrew in the sense that his father was a Hebrew. Rather, he came out of Mesopotamian lineage...a Hebrew was a person who is identified as a traveler, a migrant, someone who crosses boundaries."

#### 1. **Covenant as an Overarching Idea:**

- The Abrahamic narrative is structured around the idea of covenant which includes:
- The promises of the covenant are articulated in Chapter 12:1-3, even though the word covenant is not explicitly mentioned.
- Chapter 15 details the ritual of covenant acceptance.
- Chapter 17 details the sign of the covenant, which is circumcision.
- Chapter 22 reveals Abraham's action of confirming the covenant.
- These promises are based on God's goodness and love, not merit on Abraham's part. This is in line with the way God enters into covenant in previous books.
- "These are promises based on goodness and love. Deuteronomy 7 says specifically that God chose the patriarchs as the ancestors of the nation Israel out of his elective love, his love for the fathers. And so, when it comes to the Abraham covenant, it is God who chooses to enter into that covenant."

#### 1. **The Theme of Partially Fulfilled Promises:**

- The overarching theme of the Pentateuch is the partially fulfilled promises of God, specifically involving land, offspring, and blessing.
- The promises made to Abraham are partially fulfilled, implying a progressive process of fulfilling those promises.

- "When we use the word fulfilled or fulfillment, it may be suggestive that the promises have been fully actuated when the theme of the Torah Pentateuch is...the partiality, the partially fulfilled promises of God, or we could say the yet fulfilled promises of God."

### 1. **Three Strands of the Covenant**

- The three primary promises to Abraham include: land, offspring/progeny, and blessing, all of which require a relationship between God and the recipient.
- These same three ideas are also found in the promises made in creation and in the garden.
- In creation, the promise of relationship was inaugurated with the creation of humanity. The promise of procreation came when God told them to be fruitful, and the promise of rule came through the dominion mandate over the rest of creation.
- In the garden, the promise of a relationship is emphasized when God is revealed as Yahweh. The promise of procreation is revealed when the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent. The promise of the land comes in the specificity of Eden and the garden.
- "Land, population, blessing, and relationship these three."

### 1. **Abraham's Spiritual Journey:**

- Abraham's life journey is portrayed as a journey of faith, marked by both successes and failures, which highlights his spiritual training under God's guidance.
- "When we look at the account of Abraham and his journey, we can think of it as a spiritual journey of faith. This is the preeminent idea when it comes to interpreting and understanding what the author wants to focus on when it comes to Abraham. His faith in the word of God, his faith in the promises of God."
- The call in Genesis 12:1 is mirrored in 22:2, bookending the journey.
- The climax of Abraham's journey is tested when he is asked to sacrifice Isaac.

### 1. Faith and Obedience:

- Abraham's faith is not just intellectual belief but a confident entrusting of himself to God, based on knowledge and experience of God's trustworthiness, which he demonstrates by his actions, particularly in the binding of Isaac.
- "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. I like the word confidence...It may be simply beliefs, and beliefs can be superficial because a belief is not just simply an idea, but a matter of entrusting oneself, acting out, acting with confidence, acting upon what we believe because the person or thing in whom or in which we're placing our faith is found to be trustworthy."

### 1. Leaving the Past and Giving the Future:

- God called Abraham to leave the past – his comfort, security, and inheritance – and to trust in God's promises. He was also called to give his future, which was represented by his son Isaac, and trust in God as the giver more than the gift.
- "So what we find in chapter 12, verse 1, is a calling that Abraham would leave his past, and then what we find in chapter 22, he's saying to Abraham, give me your future."

### 1. Background of Terah's Family:

- Abraham's family background is given (11:27-31) to highlight Lot as a potential heir since Sarai is barren.
- Terah's family originally settled in Ur of the Chaldeans, in Mesopotamia, before moving to Haran. The significance of Haran is its location on the way to Canaan.
- "Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram. And together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there."

### 1. Ur vs. Haran:

- Both Ur and Haran are cited as places of origin for Abraham.
- Stephen's sermon in Acts 7:2-4 merges the calling from Ur and Haran, suggesting a dual calling with the vision in Genesis 15. He concludes that Abraham was called out of Ur and then again from Haran.

- "The God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran."

#### **1. Abraham's Calling and Universal Blessing:**

- Abraham's calling in 12:1-3 is a potential resolution to what happened with the table of nations.
- The promise to bless all peoples through Abraham is a counter to the division of nations in chapter 11 and the previous curses.
- The five occurrences of "bless" in 12:1-3 correspond to the five curses found in chapters 1-11, demonstrating God's plan to reverse the curses into blessings.
- "Five blessings counteracting the five curses, showing that God has an outgoing, on-working plan of salvation and that those who will place their faith and trust in his word will experience that blessing."

#### **Conclusion**

Dr. Mathews' session emphasizes Abraham's pivotal role in God's redemptive plan and his journey as a model of faith. The Abrahamic covenant, with its promises of land, progeny, and blessing, provides a focus on God's plan for all of humanity, with a particular emphasis on a relationship of trust with God. The session concludes by setting the stage for a deeper dive into the specifics of God's promises and Abraham's subsequent journeys in the next session.

## 4. Study Guide: Mathews, Genesis, Session 10, Abraham's Calling and God's Promises (Gen. 11:27-12:3)

### Abraham's Calling and the Promises of God: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

1. What is the structural function of the genealogy that begins in Genesis 11:27?
2. How does the narrative pace in the Abraham story compare to that of the creation and garden narratives?
3. According to the lecture, why is the Abraham narrative more focal than other patriarchs in Genesis?
4. How is Abraham a link between chapters 1-11 and 12-50 of Genesis?
5. What does it mean to be a "Hebrew" in the context of the Abraham narrative?
6. What are the three key elements of the covenant made with Abraham, as outlined in the lecture?
7. In what ways do the creation and garden narratives foreshadow the promises made to Abraham?
8. What does the lecture suggest is the preeminent theme for interpreting Abraham's journey?
9. How does Abraham's offering of Isaac in Genesis 22 reveal about his faith journey?
10. What are the two key background details given about Abraham's family in Genesis 11 that play a role in his call?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The genealogy in 11:27 functions as a hinge or binding device between the universal history of humanity (chapters 1-11) and the specific history of the patriarchs; it also speaks of the future of the Tera family.
2. The narrative of Abraham is much slower, with more details and an emphasis on God's relationship with Abraham, unlike the brief accounts of creation and the fall.

3. The Abraham narrative is foundational, setting the plan and pattern for the patriarchal stories, so later narratives can be understood with less focus after understanding Abraham's story.
4. Abraham is presented as a person from the post-flood world who leads the reader to a narrowed focus on a particular family, he is also the father of the Hebrews.
5. In the context of the narrative, Hebrew refers to a person who is a traveler or migrant, someone who crosses boundaries, which is characteristic of Abraham's journeys.
6. The three key elements are land, offspring/population, and blessing; and the blessing presupposes a relationship between God and the blessed.
7. The themes of relationship with God, procreation, and rule or stewardship are found in both creation and the garden, foreshadowing the specific promises of land, descendants, and blessing given to Abraham.
8. The preeminent theme is Abraham's faith in God's word and promises, which is reflected in his geographical and spiritual journeys.
9. The offering of Isaac is the culmination of his faith journey and a test, where Abraham's obedience shows he values his relationship with God above even his most cherished promises.
10. Lot is introduced as a potential heir since Sarai is barren, presenting challenges for the family's inheritance and succession.



## Essay Questions

1. Discuss how the concept of covenant is presented in the text and how it shapes Abraham's relationship with God. How do the different aspects of the covenant—promise, ritual, sign, and confirming action—contribute to understanding the nature of God's commitment?
2. Analyze the spiritual journey of Abraham as presented in the lecture. How do his geographical movements reflect his growth or challenges in faith? What are key instances in his life that mark significant shifts in his relationship with God?
3. Examine the significance of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 within the broader narrative of Genesis and the Pentateuch. How do these promises relate to the themes established in creation and the garden? How does the concept of blessing play a pivotal role?
4. The lecture emphasizes that Abraham is the connection between the universal history (chapters 1-11) and the history of the patriarchs (chapters 12-50). Explore how this idea is developed through the various themes discussed in the lecture, including family, land, covenant, and faith.
5. How does the lecture explain the complex relationship between faith and action, specifically in light of the command to sacrifice Isaac in chapter 22? What does this event reveal about the nature of faith and its role in experiencing God's promises?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Patriarch:** A male head of a family or tribe; in the context of Genesis, refers to figures like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who are seen as the fathers of the Israelite nation.
- **Genealogy:** A line of descent traced continuously from an ancestor; in Genesis, these serve as structural devices connecting narratives and demonstrating lineage.
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement or pact, particularly between God and humanity; the Abrahamic covenant is a foundational theme in Genesis.
- **Sojourner:** A person who resides temporarily in a place; this term describes Abraham's transient lifestyle and his relationship to the promised land.
- **Pentateuch/Torah:** The first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), traditionally attributed to Moses; foundational to understanding the context of Genesis.
- **Theme:** The overarching idea or concept in a text; the dominant color or pattern of the text.
- **Motif:** A recurring element or idea that contributes to the development of a theme; minor colors contributing to artistry.
- **Elective Love:** God's choice to love particular people or groups; in Deuteronomy 7, it refers to his love for the patriarchs as ancestors of Israel.
- **Circumcision:** The removal of the foreskin of a male's sexual organ, a ritual act that functions as the sign of the covenant with Abraham.
- **Faith:** Trust and confidence in God; in the Abraham narrative, it is essential for receiving and acting on God's promises.
- **Telescoping:** A literary device that brings two distinct scenes or actions into the same narrative.

## 5. FAQs on Mathews, Genesis, Session 10, Abraham's Calling and God's Promises (Gen. 11:27-12:3), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Okay, here's an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source, formatted with markdown:

### FAQ: Abraham's Calling and the Promises of God

1. **Why does the narrative of Abraham receive so much attention in Genesis compared to other significant events like creation or the fall?** The extensive focus on Abraham is because God is now directing attention to the remedy for sin, the brokenness caused by the events in the Garden of Eden. Abraham's story is where the plan for salvation begins to unfold, making his narrative critical for understanding God's redemptive purposes. This shift to the specific history of a family is a stark contrast to the universal history of the prior chapters, highlighting the importance of this particular lineage in God's plan.
2. **How does the genealogy of Terah function as a "hinge" in Genesis, and why is Abraham's lineage important?** Terah's genealogy serves as a structural device, linking the universal history of humankind in chapters 1-11 to the specific history of the patriarchs beginning with Abraham in chapter 12. By naming Terah, the father of Abraham, it echoes the genealogies of the past while pointing to the future of the family. Abraham's lineage is essential because he is the first person in the Bible to be the focus of the narratives and is the father of the Hebrews, although not a Hebrew by birth but one by his migratory lifestyle. He is also the link between humanity after the flood and the chosen family that God will use to bless all nations.
3. **What are the major components of the covenant God makes with Abraham, and how are they expressed throughout the Abraham narrative?** The Abrahamic covenant is expressed through promises of land, a great offspring/population, and blessing. Although the word "covenant" doesn't appear explicitly in Genesis 12:1-3, it is the classic expression of the Abrahamic covenant which becomes ritualized in chapter 15 (formal acceptance), a sign of the covenant in chapter 17 (circumcision), and an action of faith confirming the covenant in chapter 22 (the near sacrifice of Isaac). The focus is on God's action of choosing Abraham and initiating these promises which emphasize a binding relationship.

4. **How does the Abrahamic covenant relate to the overarching theme of the Pentateuch (Torah)?** The Abrahamic covenant provides the specific expression of the overarching theme of the Pentateuch, which is God's promises. The covenant is a continuation of the promises made at creation and in the garden. These promises are partially fulfilled in the lives of the patriarchs, implying a progressive process of fulfillment with a focus on the yet-to-be-realized aspects, particularly the establishment of a great nation with its own land, with a proper relationship to God.
5. **What role does faith play in Abraham's journey, and how is this emphasized by his travels?** Abraham's journey is framed as a spiritual journey of faith. His physical journeys, from his homeland to Canaan, then Egypt, and back to Canaan, parallel his spiritual development. God uses various events in his life to train him and challenge him to greater faith. The climax of this is seen in the near-sacrifice of Isaac in chapter 22, which confirms his faith through faithfulness to God's commands.
6. **What is the significance of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22?** The near-sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 is a test of Abraham's faith and a confirmation of his loyalty to God. It demonstrates that Abraham trusted God not only for the gift of a son (Isaac), but also trusted God as the giver of that gift more than the gift itself, indicating a willingness to sacrifice even what was most precious to him because of his faith in God's promises and God's character. Abraham's faith was shown to be genuine through his actions.
7. **What is the significance of the inclusion of Lot and the barrenness of Sarai in the background of Abraham's calling?** The introduction of Lot, Abraham's nephew, and the barrenness of Sarai highlight challenges and uncertainties facing Abraham. Lot is presented as a potential heir since Sarai is unable to bear children. In a patriarchal society, a family needs a designated heir, and Sarai's condition created questions concerning the continuation of Abraham's lineage and of God's promises.

8. **How does Dr. Mathews reconcile the different accounts of Abraham's call, specifically between Ur and Haran?** Dr. Mathews explains that both Ur and Haran are significant in Abraham's calling. While the Bible speaks of Ur as Abraham's homeland in Genesis 15:7 and Nehemiah 9:7, and also Stephen in Acts 7:2-4 describes God's call to Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, the setting where Abraham receives a distinct call and command from God is Haran, which is in Genesis 12. He harmonizes these accounts by noting the idea of “telescoping,” where Stephen is putting these events into a single episode. It's also possible that there were two calls, one in Ur and a more formal calling in Haran. These two places represent different aspects of Abraham's journey in obedience to the divine call to leave his past and pursue a new future.