

“God Builds a Nation”

Introduction: In many TV action series, the show will begin with a review. Let’s do that with The Story revealed in the Bible. Last time we discovered that God’s vision in creation is to be with us. Adam and Eve chose a different vision and sin and the sinful nature entered the human race. Yet, God passionately pursues us at great cost. In this part of the Story, we discover that God decides to build a nation and through that new nation win us back to God.

Main Idea: God builds a new nation to reveal God and God’s plan to get us back.

I. The People God Chooses to Build a New Nation

A. The Place where the people are: Ur

On your Bible map find the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. In this area the Tower of Babel was being built by many nations who all had one language. God confounded their language and the nations scattered. God chose to create a new nation in this area of the world.

B. The People God Chose to begin the New Nation

1. God chose Abraham and Sarai who were very old and whose parents and grandparents worshiped pagan gods.
2. Abraham obeyed the command of God by faith: Genesis 12:1-4a; Hebrews 11:8

C. The Reason God Chose Abraham and Sarai

God chose an old and unlikely couple so that all people would look to God, knowing that all that happens is done by God. God wants people to see him and understand his plan.

Genesis 15:6 (NIV84)

⁶ Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

I want you to consider this for a moment with me. What was it that Abram believed? Abram believed that God had a plan that involved Abram and that God would bring it about. Abram’s belief was demonstrated by action, obedience. This is righteousness. Righteousness is more than doing good and not doing evil. Righteousness is a matter of relationship. When I love God and when I love my neighbor as myself I am fulfilling all the law and the prophets. It is a matter of relationship not law.

Here is the application for you and me. God has a great plan. That plan is for you. It's a plan for good. It is a plan that is bigger than you. It is a plan that will bless others. And when you believe this enough to base your life upon the promise and plan of God, you will be considered righteous.

- II. The Four-fold Plan God Reveals for the New Nation: Genesis 12: 1-3
 - A. God will make the new nation great.
 - B. God will make Abraham's name great.
 - C. God will bless all who bless Abraham and curse the one who curses Abraham.
 - D. God will bless all the nations of the world through Abraham and the new nation. God will use the new nation to reveal his heart and his plan to win us back.

- III. The Turbulent Beginnings of the New Nation: Genesis 16, 18, 22
 - A. Sarai proposes her own way to start the new nation. Genesis 16
Because Sarai is old, she offers Hagar to Abraham and Ishmael is born. God blesses Ishmael, but does not begin the new nation with Ishmael.

 - B. Abraham and Sarah, at 100 and 90 respectively, are promised their own child. Sarai laughs at this preposterous word of the LORD and the supernatural boy who is born to them is named Isaac which means "laughter." Genesis 18

Romans 4:16–25 (NIV84)

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

¹⁸ **Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed** and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God,

but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²² This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” ²³ The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, ²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

I love this phrase, “Against all hope Abraham in hope believed.” There are times that all hope may seem to be lost. For Abraham it seemed as though Sarah’s womb was dead, but God brought the promise to life. This was a picture of what would happen through Jesus. He is HOPE RESURRECTED.

- C. God severely tests Abraham by commanding him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. In Genesis 22, Abraham obediently responds believing that God could raise his beloved son to life from the dead (Hebrews 11:17). Isaac is spared and a ram is offered in sacrifice. Centuries later another beloved Son will be sacrificed and is not spared (John 3:16). God will win us back at great cost to himself.

Let’s fully consider the picture here of Abraham taking the promised son to the mountain to worship.

- The obedience of the son would be completely demonstrated in the Holy Son of God.
- God is the one who provides the sacrifice. If you are obedient God will provide the sacrifice.
- God watches over His promise. It was God who promised Isaac and said the promise would be fulfilled through Him. So Abraham could trust that God would watch over the promise., even when it didn’t seem like that was happening.

Application: In choosing Abraham and Sarai to begin the new nation, God reveals a pattern. God chooses unlikely people who are not the smartest, the most beautiful and handsome with the best resumes. God chooses ordinary people like you and me. You are not disqualified to be used greatly in God’s great Story. You may reveal God, too, and reflect his plan to win us back.