

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

History 109 Patriarchs I

Break out your maps and histories as we travel again in our time machine to examine history & geography through a biblical world view. Let's look at what is going on in the world around 2166BC, the approximate time of Abram's birth. The life of Abram, later renamed Abraham at the age of 99, is covered in Genesis from chapter 11 to 25. Let's not lose sight of where he comes from; he is a descendant of Shem. He left Ur with his father's family headed for Canon but ended up in Haran. Abram was called out of the land of Haran (on the southern border of modern day Turkey) by God in 2091 BC at the age of 75. After ten years of waiting for his promised heir, his wife Sari took things into her own hands and had Abram marry her servant Hagar. Ishmael was born to Hagar in 2080 and lived to the ripe old age of 137 when he died in 1943 BC. Ishmael was not the promised son but as the first son of Abraham, was blessed to become the father of all Arab peoples in the world.

In 2067 BC God changed Abram's (exulted father) name to Abraham (father of many). At that time God also promised Abraham that Isaac (laughter) would be born the following year. Sari (princess) laughed when she heard this, being 89 years old. God confronted her about her laughter, about doubting God's promise, and renamed her Sarah (princess of many). These events also give us the date for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah 2067-2066 BC as it followed the promised birth of Isaac.

In 2066 BC when Isaac is born, the Genesis narrative shifts to him, but not for long. The birth of Jacob and Esau are listed in the same chapter. Isaac only really gets about 3 chapters that primarily cover his narrative. By Chapter 28 the narrative shifts again, primarily to Jacob. Although Isaac lived for 180 years he serves more as a transitional character between Abraham and his grandson Jacob than a character himself. A few significant things in Isaac's life story would include his mother Sarah dying in 2029 BC, making him around 37 years old at the time. In 2026 BC, about 3 years later, Abraham arranged for Isaac's marriage to Rebecca. About 20 years after that, 2006 BC, God blessed Isaac and Rebecca with their first sons, Jacob and Esau. In 1991 BC the first of the patriarchs dies at the ripe old age of 175. His 15 year old grandsons, Jacob and Esau, would have been able to attend the funeral. Esau would have been about 40 years old when he married two Hittite women in 1966 BC. These marriages were a source of grief for Isaac and Rebecca according to Genesis 26:35.

In 1930 BC Jacob, with the help of his mother, fooled his 114 year old father into giving him the blessing of the first born. Now Jacob has taken both Esau's birthright and his blessing. Esau became furious and threatened to kill Jacob so his parents sent a 75 year old Jacob to Haran to Rebecca's brother Laban to keep him safe. They also wanted Jacob to marry an acceptable wife. After 7 years of labor for his uncle as a bride price, Jacob, then 82, became a groom to Leah and a week later married her sister Rachel. Now you may be thinking 82 is pretty old to get married and have children. Keep in mind that Jacob lived to be 147 years old so for him 82 is middle aged, and remember too that his father's parents were 100 and 90 years old when they had a child.

Here at the Smoky Mountain Bible Institute we are going through these things with a biblical worldview. There is precious little scientific evidence for the accounts so far however you would not expect to find any evidence for a small family going from Ur to Cannon via Haran in those days. However, we do start to get some evidence outside scripture with Jacob's 11th son Joseph. For now we have the best witness available, God's word, on which to build our historical chronology. My primary source for many of these dates, besides scripture, is a book by Andrew E. Steinmann from CPH titled "From Abraham to Paul". This is a great source book for a concise discussion of how ancient dates are calculated and reckoned and a great biblical chronology.

So class, we come to the end of our lesson having just started to discuss the third patriarch Jacob. We will pick up our chronology next month after Jacob's second wedding feast in a week in Paddan Arram near Haran in 1923 BC.

In Christ Pastor Portier