

AFRICAN WOMEN DEVOTIONAL BIBLE



United Bible
Societies

NAVIGATING YOUR AFRICAN WOMEN DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to keep your righteous rules.*
Ps. 119:105-106

What comes to mind when you think of navigation? Depending on where you live, this may mean different things. For those in the cities, navigation may suggest the use of a global positioning system (GPS) and to those in the countryside, it may refer to certain landmarks or even the direction of the sun by the day.

According to lexico.com, navigation is "the process or activity of accurately ascertaining one's position and planning and following a route." The ultimate purpose of any navigation process or activity is to determine where you are and find out how to get to your destination safely, avoiding any possible interruptions along the way. This guarantees you peace of mind.

The Bible in your hands is a great tool to help you navigate the journey of life; it is God's Word which provides a blueprint for living a healthy life. In the Bible, you will find women who lived before you. Some of them may look like you and others like women you know. You may identify with some of their failures and successes and possibly learn from their lessons as well.

The psalmist wrote:

*Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written,
every one of them,*

*the days that were ordained for me,
when as yet there was none of them.
How precious to me are
your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are
more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.*
Ps. 139: 15-18

If we desire to live according to God's principles, we will be in His presence more frequently. If we desire to obey God, reading His Word is essential. The more we read and study the Bible, the more knowledgeable we can become about how to live our lives according to His principles and commandments and how to navigate every day of our lives with grace. This women's devotional Bible has been prepared to provide you with tools to navigate life and to live in a way that brings glory to God.

HOW TO USE THIS BIBLE

The easiest way to use this Africa Women Devotional Bible is to follow the daily devotionals that are sequenced from Genesis to Revelation and which will help you to read the Bible in 365 days. You can follow the reading plan at the back of the Bible to tick what you have read. There is a divider between the devotionals to guide you on the portions to read for each day.

You also have the option of customizing the reading plan to focus on content or topics that are of interest to you. The topical index and other tools available at the back will guide you to navigate through the Bible in the ways that are most useful to you. What is of ultimate importance is for you to keep the navigation tool close

and constantly check in to ensure you are on course and the right path.

AFRICA WOMEN DEVOTIONAL BIBLE FEATURES

There is a daily reading portion that is accompanied by a short devotional to help you reflect on the daily reading.

- › **DAILY DEVOTIONS:** A full year of weekday and weekend devotions written by African women with reflections from the day's readings.
- › **BOOK INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions for each book of the Bible
- › **FACES:** Each week, there is a short article with details of a woman mentioned in the Bible, expressing her character, strengths and weaknesses.
- › **LET'S TALK:** Weekly articles address everyday life issues African women deal with from a biblical and professional perspective. These are useful for open dialogue. (52 Articles)
- › **WOMEN OF THE BIBLE:** All the women whose names are mentioned in the Bible are highlighted and a short description of each of them is provided.
- › **READING PLANS:** Multiple reading plans for year-after-year use
- › **INDEXES:** There is a list of contributors, the countries they represent and Bible Societies that participated in this project. In addition, there are topical and subject indexes to help you locate different topics and contents easily.

› LIST OF STORIES OF WOMEN IN THE BIBLE:

There is a partial list of stories about women in the Bible in chronological order, and a partial list of women's characteristics, situations and life issues. Choose the best story for your listeners' needs and life issues, considering also customs and traditions of the locality of your listeners, and time available to tell the story.

AFRICA WOMEN DEVOTIONAL BIBLE FEATURES

This Bible contains many inspiring features designed to help you navigate and engage with God's Word for a meaningful experience. You will find it helpful as you read the Bible for all it's worth, study it in a regular and orderly way, and thus, you will find a helpful guide to navigate your everyday life. As the psalmist said...

*Blessed is the man who walks
not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates
day and night.
He is like a tree planted
by streams of water that yields
its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.*
Ps. 1:1-3

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

AUTHOR AND DATE

Traditionally, Moses is considered to be the author of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch, however, some scholars feel that while some parts were attributed directly to Moses, (e.g., Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:24; John 5:46), it is obvious that it was written over a longer period of time than his lifetime. Whatever date is preferred for Moses and the composition of the Pentateuch, several centuries must have separated him from the patriarchs, during which time the stories about them were presumably passed on by word of mouth, or perhaps by some kind of early written record that is now lost.

THEME

The theme of Genesis is creation, sin, and re-creation. It tells how God made the world very good, but destroyed it in the flood because of man's disobedience. The new world after the flood was also spoiled by human sin (ch. 11). The call of Abraham, through whom all the nations would be blessed, gives hope that God's purpose will be realized through Abraham's descendants (ch. 49).

KEY THEMES

- › The Lord God commissions human beings to be his representatives on earth. They are to take care of the earth and govern the other creatures (1:1–2:25).
- › Instead of acting as God's representatives on earth, the first man and woman—Adam and Eve—listen to the serpent and follow his advice. Their disobedience has devastating results for all mankind and for the entire created world (3:1–24; 6:5–6).
- › God graciously announces that Eve's offspring will free humanity from the serpent's control (3:15). Genesis then traces a unique family line (Israel), highlighting how its members enjoy a special relationship with God and are a source of blessing to fallen humanity. (12:1–3).

- › As a result of Adam's disobedience, his unique relationship with the ground degenerates, resulting in hard work and later in flood and famine. But the special family descending from Adam also brings relief from the difficulties (3:17–19; 5:29; 50:19–21). While Eve's punishment centers on pain in bearing children (3:16), women play an essential role in continuing the unique family line. With God's help, even barrenness is overcome (11:30; 21:1–7; 25:21; 38:1–30).
- › The corruption of human nature causes families to be torn apart (4:1–16; 13:5–8; 25:22–23; 27:41–45; 37:2–35). Although Genesis shows the reality of family conflicts, individual members of the chosen family can also be agents of reconciliation. (13:8–11; 33:1–11; 45:1–28; 50:15–21).
- › The wicked are exiled from Eden and scattered throughout the earth (3:22–24; 4:12–16; 11:9), but God is kind to his chosen people and promises them a land of their own (12:1–2,7; 15:7–21; 28:13–14; 50:24).
- › God is prepared to destroy almost the entire human race because of its corruption (6:7, 11–12; 18:17–33), but he still wants to restore his people (1:28; 9:1; 15:1–5; 35:11)

OUTLINE

- I. Primeval History (1:1–11:26)
 - A. God's creation and ordering of heaven and earth (1:1–2:3)
 - B. Earth's first people (2:4–4:26)
 - C. Adam's descendants (5:1–6:8)
 - D. Noah's descendants (6:9–9:29)
 - E. The descendants of Noah's sons (10:1–11:9)
 - F. Shem's descendants (11:10–26)
- II. Patriarchal History (11:27–50:26)
 - A. Terah's descendants (11:27–25:18)
 - B. Isaac's descendants (25:19–37:1)
 - C. Jacob's descendants (37:2–50:26)

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. **2** The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light", and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse^A in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." **7** And God made^B the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. **8** And God called the expanse Heaven.^C And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth,^D and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants^E yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,^F and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. **16** And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds^G fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." **21** So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. **25** And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make man^H in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

^A1:6 Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20

^B1:7 Or fashioned; also verse 16 ^C1:8 Or Sky; also verses

9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ^D1:10 Or Land; also verses

11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ^E1:11 Or small plants;

also verses 12, 29 ^F1:14 Or appointed times

^G1:20 Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19–20

^H1:26 The Hebrew word for man (*adam*) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name *Adam*

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

THE SEVENTH DAY, GOD RESTS

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

THE CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

5 When no bush of the field^a was yet in the land^b and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, 6 and a mist^c was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— 7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And

CAN I REST?

Have you ever wondered if it is okay for a woman to rest? Life can be full of tasks - moving from one thing to the next. For example, as a woman one must make sure that the children are clean, fed, taught good manners and ready for school on time if it is a school day. If married, all this without neglecting the spouse. For the family to be fed there should be food in the house and the food needs to be cooked. This needs to happen in a clean house.

A working mother not only needs to fulfil these tasks and deadlines at home but others at work as well. In all this when does one rest? Is it acceptable to rest?

In Genesis 2:3 it says that God rested from all the work He had done in creation.

Lord, I thank You for giving me wisdom to rest when I am tired. Lord, please help me not to be lazy but to be like You to do my work well and rest well also. Amen.

out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. 11 The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. 13 The name of the second river

^a2:5 Or open country ^b2:5 Or earth; also verse 6

^c2:6 Or spring

is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat^A of it you shall surely die."

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for^B him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God formed^C every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam^D there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made^E into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."^F

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

THE FALL

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You^G shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" ² And the woman said to

the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,^H she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin-cloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool^I of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;

^A2:17 Or when you eat ^B2:18 Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ^C2:19 Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ^D2:20 Or the man ^E2:22 Hebrew built ^F2:23 The Hebrew words for woman (*ishshah*) and man (*ish*) sound alike ^G3:1 In Hebrew you is plural in verses 1–5 ^H3:6 Or to give insight ^I3:8 Hebrew wind ^J3:9 In Hebrew you is singular in verses 9 and 11

on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between
you and the woman,
and between your offspring^A
and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

16 To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your
pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring
forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary
to^B your husband,
but he shall rule over you.”

17 And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to
the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it’,
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all
the days of your life;

18 thorns and thistles it shall
bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the
plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

20 The man called his wife’s name **Eve**,
because she was the mother of all liv-
ing.^C **21** And the LORD God made for Adam
and for his wife garments of skins and
clothed them.

^AFirst woman, wife of Adam.

22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the
man has become like one of us in know-
ing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out
his hand and take also of the tree of life

and eat, and live for ever—” **23** therefore
the LORD God sent him out from the gar-
den of Eden to work the ground from
which he was taken. **24** He drove out the
man, and at the east of the garden of
Eden he placed the cherubim and a flam-
ing sword that turned every way to
guard the way to the tree of life.



CAIN AND ABEL

4 Now Adam knew **Eve** his wife, and
she conceived and bore Cain, saying,
“I have produced^D a man with the help
of the LORD.” **2** And again, she bore his
brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of
sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.
3 In the course of time Cain brought to
the LORD an offering of the fruit of the
ground, **4** and Abel also brought of the
firstborn of his flock and of their fat
portions. And the LORD had regard for
Abel and his offering, **5** but for Cain and
his offering he had no regard. So Cain
was very angry, and his face fell. **6** The
LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry,
and why has your face fallen? **7** If you do
well, will you not be accepted?^E And if
you do not do well, sin is crouching at
the door. Its desire is contrary to^F you,
but you must rule over it.”

8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother.^G And
when they were in the field, Cain rose up
against his brother Abel and killed him.
9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where
is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do
not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”
10 And the LORD said, “What have you
done? The voice of your brother’s blood
is crying to me from the ground. **11** And
now you are cursed from the ground,
which has opened its mouth to receive
your brother’s blood from your hand.

^A3:15 Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis

^B3:16 Or *shall be towards* (see 4:7) ^C3:20 *Eve* sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* and resembles the Hebrew for *living* ^D4:1 *Cain* sounds like the Hebrew for *produced*

^E4:7 Hebrew *will there not be a lifting up* [of your face]? ^F4:7 Or *is towards* ^G4:8 Hebrew; Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate add *Let us go out to the field*

12 When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” **13** Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.”^a

14 Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” **15** Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. **16** Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod,^b east of Eden.

17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. **18** To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. **19** And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was **Adah**, and the name of the other **Zillah**. **20** **Adah** bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. **21** His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. **22** **Zillah** also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was **Naamah**.

^aA wife of Lamech and the mother of Tubal-cain and Naamah.
^bSister of Tubal-cain.

23 Lamech said to his wives:

“**Adah** and **Zillah**, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech,
listen to what I say:
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.
24 If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold,
then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed^c for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.” **26** To Seth also a son was

born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

ADAM’S DESCENDANTS TO NOAH

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. **2** Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man^d when they were created. **3** When Adam had lived for 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. **4** The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. **5** Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

6 When Seth had lived for 105 years, he fathered Enosh. **7** Seth lived after he fathered Enosh for 807 years and had other sons and daughters. **8** Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

9 When Enosh had lived for 90 years, he fathered Kenan. **10** Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan for 815 years and had other sons and daughters. **11** Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

12 When Kenan had lived for 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. **13** Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel for 840 years and had other sons and daughters. **14** Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

15 When Mahalalel had lived for 65 years, he fathered Jared. **16** Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared for 830 years and had other sons and daughters. **17** Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

18 When Jared had lived for 162 years, he fathered Enoch. **19** Jared lived after he fathered Enoch for 800 years and had other sons and daughters. **20** Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

21 When Enoch had lived for 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. **22** Enoch

^a4:13 Or My guilt is too great to bear ^b4:16 Nod means wandering ^c4:25 Seth sounds like the Hebrew for he appointed ^d5:2 Hebrew adam

walked with God^A after he fathered Methuselah for 300 years and had other sons and daughters.²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not,^B for God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived for 187 years, he fathered Lamech.²⁶ Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech for 782 years and had other sons and daughters.²⁷ Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

²⁸ When Lamech had lived for 182 years, he fathered a son²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief^C from our work and from the painful toil of our hands."³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered Noah for 595 years and had other sons and daughters.³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

INCREASING CORRUPTION ON EARTH

6 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.³ Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in^D man for ever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."⁴ The Nephilim^E were on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.⁶ And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.⁷ So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."⁸ But Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD.

WALKING WITH GOD

Oh, the joys of friendship! Have you ever had a friend you can just talk to without putting up a front? Both of you can freely encourage, rebuke, and build each other up without losing each other or fearing that your weaknesses will be told to the whole world. How refreshing it is to spend time with each other!

In Genesis 5:22 and 25 we are told that Enoch walked with God. Noah also walked with God as stated in Genesis 6:9. Enoch and Noah had a special friendship with God. They could pour their hearts out to Him. He also trusted these two men and shared His secrets with them. They had an intimate relationship with God.

Is it possible to walk with God in this generation and have a deep intimate relationship with Him? Emphatically yes! We see that Noah had a very close relationship with God even when everyone around him turned away from God.

Dear Lord Jesus, please help me to want to walk with You. Help me to make the right choices that draw me closer to You each day. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

NOAH AND THE FLOOD

⁹ These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

^A5:22 Septuagint pleased God; also verse 24

^B5:24 Septuagint was not found ^C5:29 Noah sounds like the Hebrew for rest ^D6:3 Or My Spirit shall not contend with ^E6:4 Orgiants

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh,^A for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood.^B Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits,^C its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. 16 Make a roof^D for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. 21 Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." 22 Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. 2 Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals,^E the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate,³ and seven pairs^F of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. 4 For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and every living thing^G that

I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." 5 And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. 7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground,⁹ two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. 12 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, 14 they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. 15 They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. 16 And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

17 The flood continued for forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains

^A 6:13 Hebrew *The end of all flesh has come before me*

^B 6:14 An unknown kind of tree; transliterated from Hebrew

^C 6:15 A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimetres ^D 6:16 Or *skylight* ^E 7:2 Or *seven of each kind of clean animal*

^F 7:3 Or *seven of each kind*

^G 7:4 Hebrew *all existence*; also verse 23

under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰ The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits^A deep. ²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²² Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³ He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. ²⁴ And the waters prevailed on the earth for 150 days.

THE FLOOD SUBSIDES

8 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ² The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³ and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, ⁴ and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵ And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

⁶ At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷ and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸ Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹ But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰ He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. ¹¹ And the dove came back

GOD REMEMBERS YOU

Does God remember you during hard seasons? Hard times might include the death or loss of a loved one or loss of a job or some kind of opportunity. And yet in all these losses life must continue normally.

When we experience the loss of a job there is emotional hurt and there is no money, yet the bills need to be paid. This can take a huge toll on our marriage, family and even our health. It is easy to wonder, "Has God forgotten me?"

It is good to be reminded that God remembers us in all seasons of life. In Genesis 8:1 it says, "*But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.*" When God remembers us He becomes actively involved in our lives and brings positive change just like He sent the wind to Noah to lower the waters. And even when we don't see a change immediately, we know that God will never leave us or forsake us, even in the difficult seasons.

Dear Lord, help me to know and be reminded that You are always with me. You remember me and my situation. I am not alone. In Jesus' name. Amen.

to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹² Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him any more.

^{A7:20} A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimetres

¹³ In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴ In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷ Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." ¹⁸ So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. ¹⁹ Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ And when the LORD smelt the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse^A the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²² While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

⁹ And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ² The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ⁵ And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man.

From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

⁶ "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

⁷ And you,^B be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹² And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

NOAH'S DESCENDANTS

¹⁸ The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.^C

^A8:21 Or *dishonour* ^B9:7 In Hebrew *you* is plural

^C9:19 Or *from these the whole earth was populated*

20 Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.^A **21** He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. **22** And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. **23** Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backwards, and they did not see their father's nakedness. **24** When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, **25** he said,

“Cursed be Canaan;
a servant of servants shall
he be to his brothers.”

26 He also said,

“Blessed be the LORD,
the God of Shem;
and let Canaan be his servant.
27 May God enlarge Japheth,^B
and let him dwell in the
tents of Shem,
and let Canaan be his servant.”

28 After the flood Noah lived for 350 years. **29** All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

NATIONS DESCENDED FROM NOAH

10 These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

2 The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

3 The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. **4** The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5 From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.

6 The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. **7** The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the

first on earth to be a mighty man.^C **9** He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.” **10** The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. **11** From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and **12** Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. **13** Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, **14** Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom^D the Philistines came), and Caphtorim.

15 Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, **16** and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, **17** the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, **18** the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterwards the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. **19** And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. **20** These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

21 To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. **22** The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. **23** The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. **24** Arpachshad fathered Shelah; and Shelah fathered Eber. **25** To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg,^E for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. **26** Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, **27** Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, **28** Obal, Abimael, Sheba, **29** Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. **30** The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east.

^A9:20 Or Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard

^B9:27 Japheth sounds like the Hebrew for enlarge

^C10:8 Or he began to be a mighty man on the earth

^D10:14 Or from where

^E10:25 Peleg means division

31 These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

32 These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. **2** And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. **3** And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. **4** Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." **5** And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. **6** And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. **7** Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." **8** So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. **9** Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused^A the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

SHEM'S DESCENDANTS

10 These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. **11** And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad for 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

12 When Arpachshad had lived for 35 years, he fathered Shelah. **13** And Ar-

pachshad lived after he fathered Shelah for 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

14 When Shelah had lived for 30 years, he fathered Eber. **15** And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber for 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

16 When Eber had lived for 34 years, he fathered Peleg. **17** And Eber lived after he fathered Peleg for 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

18 When Peleg had lived for 30 years, he fathered Reu. **19** And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu for 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

20 When Reu had lived for 32 years, he fathered Serug. **21** And Reu lived after he fathered Serug for 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

22 When Serug had lived for 30 years, he fathered Nahor. **23** And Serug lived after he fathered Nahor for 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

24 When Nahor had lived for 29 years, he fathered Terah. **25** And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah for 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

26 When Terah had lived for 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

TERAH'S DESCENDANTS

27 Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. **28** Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. **29** And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, **Milcah**, the daughter of Haran the father of **Milcah** and **Iscah**. **30** Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

**Wife of Nahor and daughter of Haran.*

**Daughter of Abraham's younger brother Haran.*

31 Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of

^A**11:9** Babel sounds like the Hebrew for confused

Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. ³² The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

THE CALL OF ABRAM

12 Now the LORD said^A to Abram, "Go from your country^B and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."^C

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^D of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going towards the Negeb.

ABRAM AND SARAI IN EGYPT

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'. Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you,

OBEEDIENCE

Have you ever moved houses, towns, or even countries? Can you imagine moving away from the people you grew up with - friends, relatives, family and church family? Far away from familiar shops and service providers.

Today, we salute Sarah, who in Genesis 12:5 went with Abraham to Canaan without complaint. Sarah trusted God and Abraham. She went to Canaan in obedience, and respect for Abraham. She did not allow fear to hinder God's purposes in her life. The window of adjustment in a new place can be traumatic to a wife who seems to have lost everything in accompanying her husband, and as loneliness slowly creeps in.

Do you think you could leave the familiar for the unknown in obedience to God's Word so that God's purposes in your family could be fulfilled? Can you trust God enough to guide you through unknown waters?

Father, in Jesus' Name please help me to trust You and my husband to fulfil Your purposes in our lives. Help me to love You enough to be obedient to You even when it is hard for me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

and that my life may be spared for your sake." ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he

^A12:1 Or had said ^B12:1 Or land ^C12:3 Or by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves

^D12:6 Or terebinth

dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷ But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister', so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." ²⁰ And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

13 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

² Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³ And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD. ⁵ And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶ so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, ⁷ and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.

⁸ Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen.^a ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." ¹⁰ And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and

Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. ¹² Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northwards and southwards and eastwards and westwards, ¹⁵ for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring for ever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. ¹⁷ Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." ¹⁸ So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks^b of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

ABRAM RESCUES LOT

14 In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, ² these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³ And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). ⁴ Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶ and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. ⁷ Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.

^a13:8 Hebrew *we are men, brothers*

^b13:18 Or *terebinths*

SNAPSHOT ANGOLA

The majestic “*Imbondeiro*”, also known as the baobab, is a traditional tree found in this country. There is a popular belief that God planted this tree. It is found all over the country and even on local art.



⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹ with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. ¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. ¹¹ So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹² They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

¹³ Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks^a of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.

ABRAM BLESSED BY MELCHIZEDEK

¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the

King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said,

“Blessed be Abram by
God Most High,
Possessor^b of heaven and earth;
²⁰ and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your
enemies into your hand!”

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. ²¹ And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.” ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have lifted my hand^c to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’. ²⁴ I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.”

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” ² But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue^d childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my

^a14:13 Or *terebinth* ^b14:19 Or *Creator*; also verse 22 ^c14:22 Or *I have taken a solemn oath*

^d15:2 Or *I shall die*

DO NOT FEAR

After a long day of hard work in and out of the house, when you put your head on the pillow what thoughts flood your mind? Are you haunted by bills that need to be paid and insufficient income? Or by hurting relationships which can only be mended by God? Or by a potentially failing business? Or an unknown future?

Genesis 15:1 says, “*After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: ‘Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.’*”

God is our loving Father. He wants us to learn to trust Him and not be afraid even during times of uncertainty. As He protected Abraham, He also protects us from every danger. And He will reward us for our efforts and goodwill.

Dear Father help me not to let my insecurities overtake my faith in You. Help me not to be afraid but rather believe that You will always protect me and that Your reward is certain and great. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

household will be my heir.”⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son^a shall be your heir.”⁵ And he brought him outside and said, “Look towards heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”⁶ And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷ And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”⁸ But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”⁹ He said

to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.”¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.¹⁴ But I will bring judgement on the nation that they serve, and afterwards they shall come out with great possessions.¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give^b this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

SARAI AND HAGAR

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar.² And Sarai said to Abram, “Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children^c by her.” And Abram listened to the

^a15:4 Hebrew *what will come out of your own loins*

^b15:18 Or *have given* ^c16:2 Hebrew *be built up*, which sounds like the Hebrew for *children*

voice of Sarai. ³ So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took **Hagar** the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. ⁴ And he went in to **Hagar**, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.^a ⁵ And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" ⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

^aEgyptian handmaiden of Sarah, wife of Abraham. Hagar became the mother of one of Abraham's sons, Ishmael.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸ And he said, "**Hagar**, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai."⁹ The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."¹⁰ The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said to her,

"Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael,^b because the LORD has listened to your affliction.

¹² He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

¹³ So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing",^c for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."^d ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi,^e it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ And **Hagar** bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom **Hagar** bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when **Hagar** bore Ishmael to Abram.

ABRAHAM AND THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty;^f walk before me, and be blameless,² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."³ Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, ⁴ "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram,^g but your name shall be Abraham,^h for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

⁹ And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of

^a16:4 Hebrew *her mistress was dishonourable in her eyes*; similarly in verse 5 ^b16:11 *Ishmael means God hears* ^c16:13 *Or You are a God who sees me* ^d16:13 Hebrew *Have I really seen him here who sees me? or Would I have looked here for the one who sees me?* ^e16:14 *Beer-lahai-roi means the well of the Living One who sees me* ^f17:1 Hebrew *El Shaddai* ^g17:5 *Abram means exalted father* ^h17:5 *Abraham means father of a multitude*

the covenant between me and you. ¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, ¹³ both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

ISAAC'S BIRTH PROMISED

¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but **Sarah**^A shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover, I will give^B you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall **Sarah**, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" ¹⁹ God said, "No, but **Sarah** your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac.^C I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom **Sarah** shall bear to you at this time next year."

^AThe wife of Abraham and the mother of Isaac. Her name was originally "Sarai". According to Genesis 17:15 God changed her name to Sarah as part of a covenant with Yahweh after Hagar bore Abraham a son Ishmael.

²² When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. ²³ Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins

that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. ²⁷ And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

18 And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks^D of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, "O Lord,^E if I have found favour in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶ And Abraham went quickly into the tent to **Sarah** and said, "Quick! Three seahs^F of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹ They said to him, "Where is **Sarah** your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." ¹⁰ The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and **Sarah** your wife shall have a son." And **Sarah** was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and **Sarah** were old, advanced in years. The way of

^A17:15 Sarai and Sarah mean princess ^B17:16 Hebrew have given ^C17:19 Isaac means he laughs ^D18:1 Or terebinths ^E18:3 Or My lord ^F18:6 A seah was about 7 quarts or 7.3 litres

women had ceased to be with Sarah. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn-out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'" ¹⁴ Is anything too hard^a for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁵ But Sarah denied it,^b saying, "I did not laugh", for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

¹⁶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked down towards Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ For I have chosen^c him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." ²⁰ Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether^d according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."

ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM

²² So the men turned from there and went towards Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶ And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

NOTHING IS TOO HARD FOR GOD

Have you ever desired something so badly over a long time so much so that you could not sleep during that season until you felt sick? Often our dreams do not happen until the dream has died. The death of the dream might be out of frustration and an acceptance that maybe this is not for you.

In Genesis 18:14 it says, "*Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time, I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.*" At this point Sarah was so old that her womb was no longer functional. Sarah had experienced the physical death of her womb leading to the psychological death of the dream. And it was in this season that Sarah was told she would have a baby.

Have you had a God-given dream die due to financial constraints or other physical pressures? Nothing is impossible with God. He can heal and resurrect what we think is no longer possible.

Father, in Jesus' name I thank You that nothing is too hard for You. Amen.

²⁷ Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said,

^a 18:14 Or wonderful ^b 18:15 Or acted falsely

^c 18:19 Hebrew known ^d 18:21 Or they deserve

destruction; Hebrew they have made a complete end

"Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it."³⁰ Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there."³¹ He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."³² Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."³³ And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

GOD RESCUES LOT

19 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth² and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square."³ But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house.⁵ And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."⁶ Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him,⁷ and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.⁸ Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof."⁹ But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them."

Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down.¹⁰ But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door.¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

¹² Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place."¹³ For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."¹⁴ So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

¹⁵ As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city."¹⁶ But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.¹⁷ And as they brought them out, one said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away."¹⁸ And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my lords.¹⁹ Behold, your servant has found favour in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die."²⁰ Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!"²¹ He said to him, "Behold, I grant you this favour also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.²² Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.^A

^A19:22 Zoar means little