

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

JN. 5:39



Jn. 5:39 “**Search the scriptures....they are they which testify of me.**”

Genesis 16:1-16

We began in Genesis with the beginnings of the human race.

- I. THE PRIMEVAL HISTORY: BEGINNINGS OF THE HUMAN RACE, 1:1—11:32
 - A. The Creation, 1:1—2:25
 - B. The Curse, 3:1—4:15
 - C. The Catastrophe, 4:16—9:29
 - D. The Coalition, 10:1—11:32

II. PATRIARCHAL HISTORY: BEGINNINGS OF THE HEBREW RACE, 12:1—50:26

A. The Progenitor: Abraham, 12:1—25:11

1. The Path of Faith, 12:1-20

2. The Price of Faith, 13:1-18

3. The Power of Faith, 14:1-24

4. The Pledge of Faith, 15:1-21

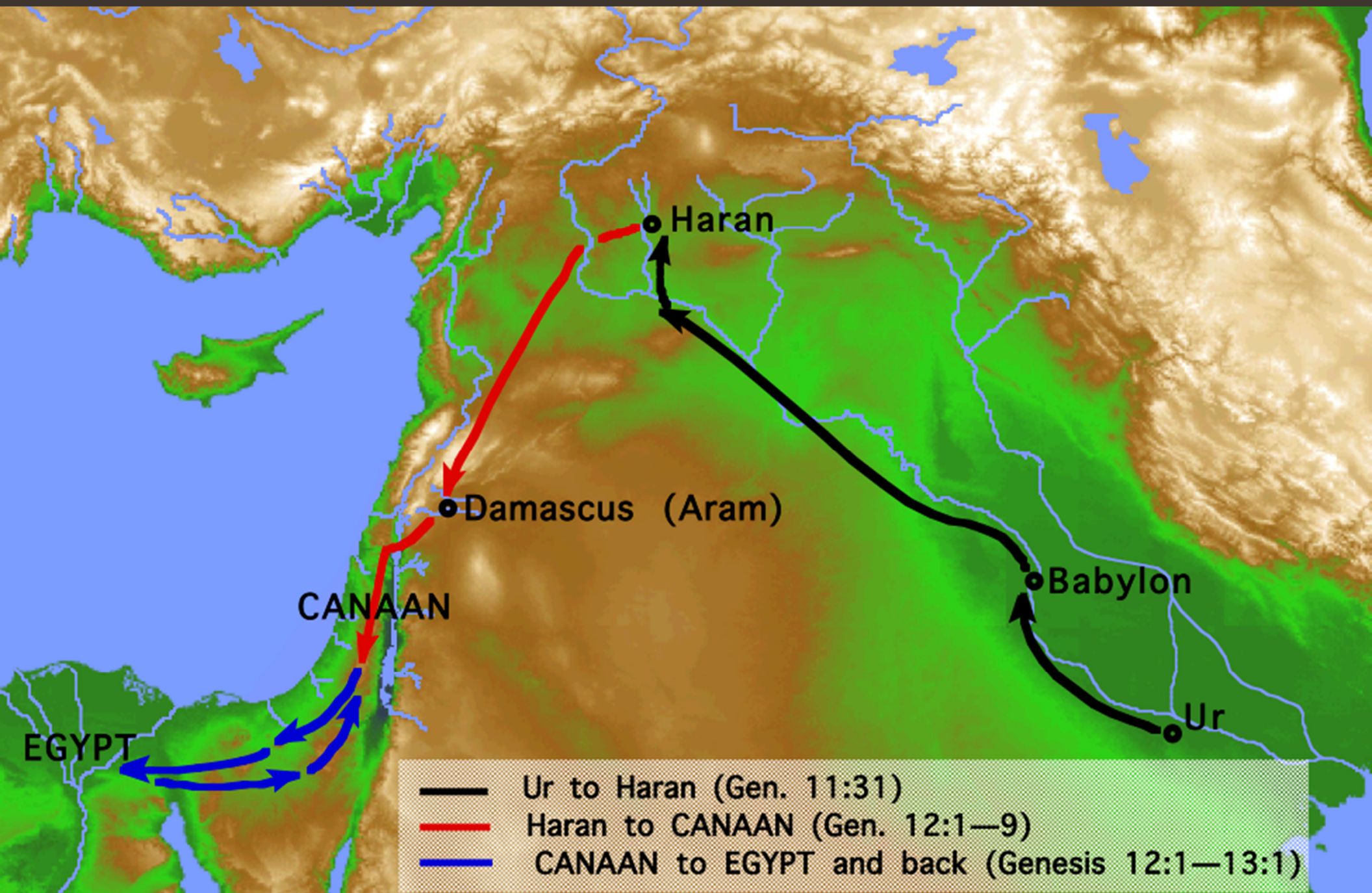
5. The Pawning of Faith, 16:1-16

a. Sarai's Reasoning, 16:1-3

b. Sarai's Response, 16:4-6

c. Sarai's Reunion, 16:7-14

d. Sarai's Repercussion, 16:15-16



6. The Potential of Faith, 17:1-27

a. The Reminder of the Covenant, 17:1-8

Gen. 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, **I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.**

2 And **I will** make my covenant between me and thee, and **will** multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 **Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham;** for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And **I will** make thee exceeding fruitful, and **I will** make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And **I will** establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for **an everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And **I will** give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and **I will** be their God.

- ❖ Since the birth of Ishmael, 13 years have passed. God was not in a hurry to fulfill His promise of an unconditional covenant to Abram.
- ❖ As He was about to change the world, the Lord reminded Abram of the covenant.
- ❖ Note the “I will” remarks:

Gen. 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, **I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.**

2 And **I will** make my covenant between me and thee, and **will** multiply thee exceedingly.

❖ The Lord's priorities prefaced the promises He reminded Abram : "...**I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.**"

Original Word: אֱלֹהִים

Transliteration: el

Definition: God, in pl. gods

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7706.htm>

Original Word: שַׁדַּי

Transliteration: Shadday

Definition: field, land

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/410.htm>

Among Christians, the most common interpretation of *shaddai* today is “mighty,” and *El Shaddai* would translate to “God Almighty.” Coinciding with this, one suggested root meaning for *El Shaddai* is “The Overpowerer,” meaning God will do what He purposes to do, overpowering all opposition.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/what-is-the-meaning-of-the-name-shaddai.html>

- ❖ The Lord says to Abram, remember Who I Am!
“...**I am the Almighty God...**”
- ❖ The Lord will do His part and tells Abram what his responsibility is – “...**walk before me, and be thou perfect.**”
- ❖ The word “perfect” is God’s desire for Abram to complete the purpose of the will of God for his life
= a total commitment.

Original Word: תָּמִים

Transliteration: tamim

Definition: complete, sound

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/8549.htm>

perfect

Finished; complete; consummate; not defective; having all that is requisite to its nature and kind; as a *perfect* statue; a *perfect* likeness; a *perfect* work; a *perfect* system.

<https://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/perfect>

❖ Abram's response was an act of humility – v. 3 “And Abram fell on his face...”

❖ God continued reminding His promises to Abram in verses 4-8:

17:4 As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 **Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham**; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And **I will** make thee exceeding fruitful, and **I will** make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And **I will** establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for **an everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And **I will** give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and **I will** be their God.

- ❖ The name change of Abram to Abraham was connected to the promise from God.
- ❖ God changed his name to Abraham to represent what would be done through him because of God's promises.
- ❖ His original name, Abram, means “exalted father” in Hebrew. His new name, Abraham, means “father of a multitude” (*Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*).
- ❖ The future of the unconditional covenants was reiterated: Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New.

<https://lifehopeandtruth.com/bible/blog/abram-renamed-abraham/#:~:text=God%20changed%20his%20name%20to%20Abraham%20to%20represent,means%20%20father%20of%20a%20multitude%20%28Brown-Driver-Briggs%20Hebrew%20Lexicon%29.>

b. The Role of Circumcision, 17:9-14

Gen. 17:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10 This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed.

13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, **must needs** be circumcised: and **my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.**

14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

❖ The physical act of circumcision was an identification of submission to the God's command.

Luke 1:59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

Luke 2:21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Phil. 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

- ❖ A token or confirmation of the covenant was that every male child in his lineage must be physically circumcised at eight days following their birth. In order to be part of the covenant (promises), each male child “must needs” be circumcised.

- ❖ Circumcision was neither entirely new nor ethically exclusive to Israel. It was practiced in ancient Near East for males in preparation for marriage, and was thus carried out in adolescence rather than infancy. Nevertheless, for Abraham and his offspring, as a physical sign of the covenant, circumcision bore special religious significance and remained a manifest theocratic distinctive.
- ❖ From the scientific standpoint, there are two noteworthy points:
 1. vitamin-K—dependent coagulant factors in the circulation peaks precisely at the 8th day after birth, theoretically resulting in the least hemorrhage;

2. epidemiologic studies show that Jewish women had the lowest rate of cervical cancer.

❖ From the spiritual standpoint, circumcision is a symbolism that reminds people to cut away sin and be cleansed. That is why for the Israelites to circumcise their hearts was both commanded (Deut. 10:16) and promised (Deut. 30:6) by God. Later, the apostate Israel was referred to as uncircumcised in heart (Jer. 9:26); Judah and Jerusalem were warned to circumcise the foreskins of their hearts in order to avoid God's wrath (Jer. 4:4).

❖ In other words, spiritual circumcision is deemed more important than the physical procedure. This theme was repeated in the New Testament, as Paul speaks of circumcision “not in the flesh” but “of the heart” is true circumcision.

Rom. 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Col. 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Acts 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

- ❖ Circumcision became of focal point of contention in the early church.
- ❖ Judaizers were trying to adulterate the Gospel by adding observance to the Law (among which circumcision stood out) as a necessary requirement for salvation.

Acts 11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

❖ The apostle Paul relentlessly refuted such damning legalistic heresy in his epistle to the Galatians:

Gal. 5:6 **For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision;** but faith which worketh by love.

Gal. 6:15 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision,** but a new creature.

c. The Rightful Child, 17:15-21

Gen. 17:15 And God said unto Abraham, **As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.**

16 And **I will** bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, **I will** bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and **I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.**

20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21 **But my covenant will I establish with Isaac,** which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

- ❖ The Lord also changed Sarai's name to Sarah – 17:15.
- ❖ Originally named Sarai which means “my princess”, her name was changed to Sarah meaning “princess” after a covenant with God. <https://amazingbibletimeline.com/blog/sarah-or-sarai/>
- ❖ Sarai = “*my princess*” which confines her dominion to one family; Sarah = “*princess*” simply and absolutely without restriction, or to a multitude, like Abraham.
- ❖ The Lord certified that Sarah would be the mother of Abram's child of promise: 17:16, 19.
- ❖ Both Abraham and Sarah laughed at the possibility of bearing a son in old age (see 17:17 and 18:10-15.)

❖ The child was to be named Isaac (*laughter*) and will inherit the birthright. Abraham pleaded for Ishmael but to no avail.

d. The Rite of Circumcision, 15:22-27

Gen. 17:22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin **in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.**

24 And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, 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 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

- ❖ The chapter ends as Abraham circumcised his entire household, Ishmael and all his strangers and servants
- ❖ Abraham immediately obeyed the Lord – 17:23
- ❖ Abraham did not need to pray about it as God said it and he did it – a wonderful example of obedience from this great man of faith.

Conclusion

- ❖ The word “perfect” is God’s desire for Abram to complete the purpose of the will of God for his life = a total commitment.
- ❖ Believers want God to do His part but seem unconcerned and unwilling about their part.

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and **perfect, will of God.**