

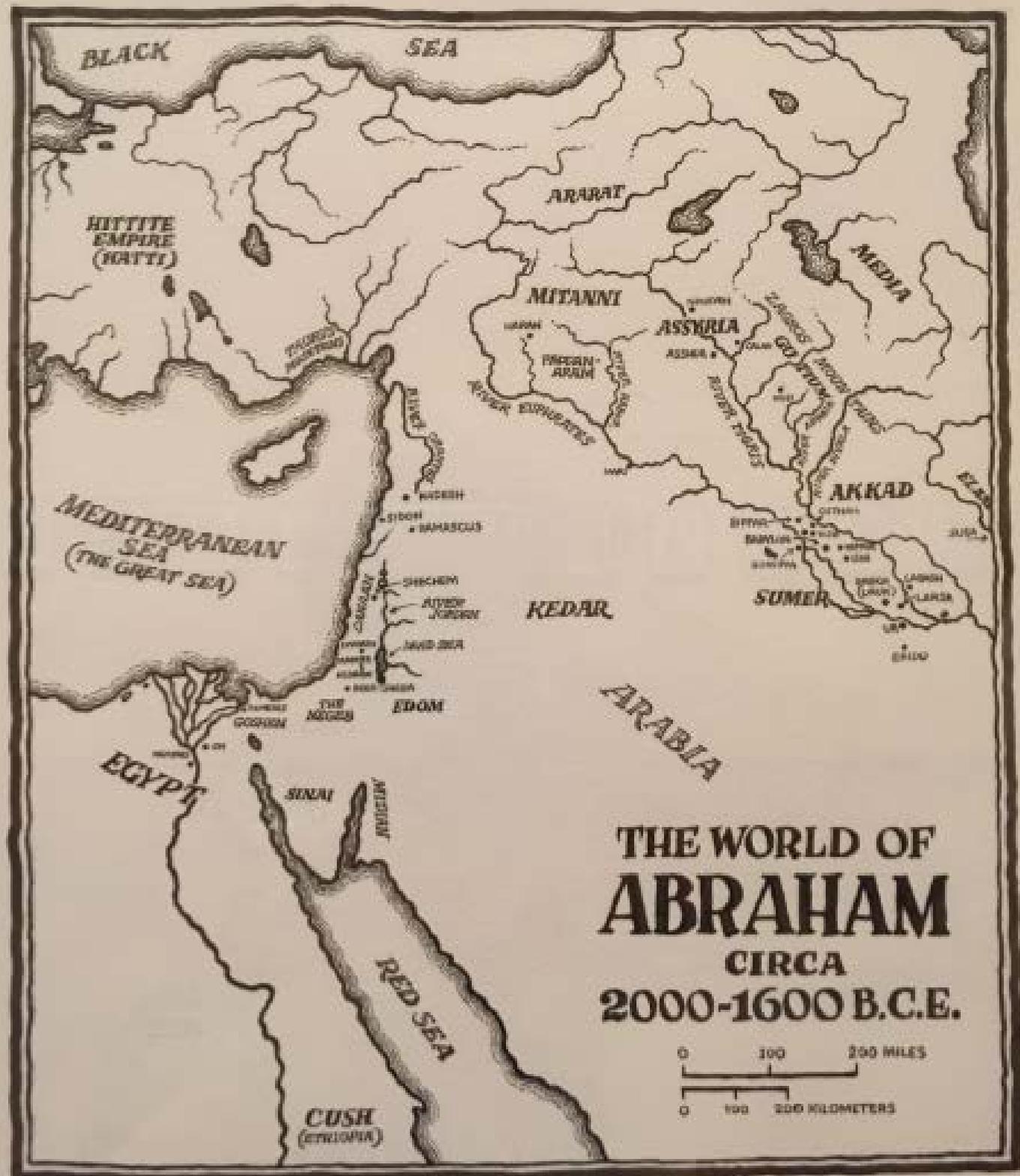
THE BIG STORY

Faith Journeys

Week of September 27

*"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."*

Genesis 12:2-3



Legend

CARAVAN! (FOR GROUPS)

Unpacking is designed for a discussion of Sunday's message. It gives a chance to interact further with the Sunday message as a group.

Trip Planner Bible study that explores the story that we will be studying in the coming Sunday – explore the stories before Pastor Laurie preaches.

SOLO TRAVELERS

Day Trips gives daily readings through the story cycle that we are on.

Playlist A curated list of songs from the Psalms just for this journey.

FRIENDS & FAMILIES

Travel Buddies has suggestions for spiritual friendships on journey together, while **Family Vacation** has ideas for household adaptations.

Where are we in the BIG story?

This week we make the move from the epic narratives of Genesis 1-11 to the story of God's mission through Israel. In October we will take a faith journey with the people of Israel – Abraham's sojourn following God's call – Moses' leading the people of Israel across the Red Sea and out of Egypt – the Wilderness Generation that wandered 40 years due to rebellion and fear – and finally, Ruth's journey from Moab to Bethlehem, the birthplace of kings.

Unpacking: Scattered | Genesis 11:1-9

Read the story: Genesis 11:1-9

What struck you from Laurie's discussion of what it meant to 'make a name for ourselves' with the resources that God had provided?

Laurie relates this instinct to idolatry, which means to take good things like technology and make them ultimate things, replacing God and God's glory. What is your understanding of idolatry in the Bible? What is God's mission in the midst of human idolatry?

Our story and the BIG story

What is your reaction to the discussion of idolatry in societies and nations as applying the authority and dominion/dignity that God has given apart from vulnerability and dependence on God? How does idolatry lead to exploiting and enslaving?

Laurie finished with the suggestion that without the gospel of Jesus, all that human society can do is move between control, comfort or being exposed/enslaved. Does this seem faithful to the witness in the BIG story of the Bible? How does faith in Jesus and God's mission give a new way?

BIG Questions

Laurie suggested two BIG story questions this week: Where are you AND where are we in this matrix of idolatry / safety / enslavement / image of God (righteousness).

Day Trips

With Abraham's Family!

Our stories this week travel with the matriarchs and patriarchs of Israel: Abraham and Sarah, their children Isaac and Rebekah, and their twin grandsons Jacob and Esau. Jacob, renamed "Israel" is the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Monday | Genesis 12-13

Tuesday | Genesis 15-17

Wednesday | Genesis 18-19

Thursday | Genesis 21-22

Friday | Genesis 25-28

Saturday | Genesis 32-33

THE BIG STORY

Trip Planner: Faith Journey with Abraham and Sarah!

Genesis 12

Each week in the sermon guide we will give Bible study questions that can be used in groups, friendships or families to work with the Bible text before it is preached. We have found that there is so much more gained from sermons if there is familiarity with the text beforehand.

Read Genesis 12:1-9

- What does God say and do in this story?
- What does Abraham do?
- What is promised to Abraham?
- How does Abraham's blessing relate to "all the peoples on earth"

Read Genesis 15:1-6

- What does God do and say in this story?
- What is Abraham's response?
- What is the threat to God's covenant promise in this passage?
- Last week Laurie spoke about "righteousness" as living in the image of God (dignity and dominion with dependence on God). How does this story speak about Abraham's righteousness in 15:6?

Read Genesis 21:1-7

- What does God do in this passage?
- How do Abraham and Sarah respond to God's actions?
- How do you respond to Genesis 21:6?

Playlist

Psalm 115

*Not to us, O Lord, not to us
but to your name be the glory ...*

Psalm 96

*all the gods of the nations are idols,
But the Lord made the heavens ...*

Psalm 135

*The idols of the nations
are silver and gold,
made by human hands ...*

Travel Buddies

The "Trip Planner" group questions can be adapted for Spritrial friendships – there is also an Abraham poem below to reflect on together. What line in Jessica Power's poem struck you? What is your journey like right now?

Abraham

Selected poetry of Jessica Powers, p. 66

I love Abraham, that old weather-beaten
unwavering nomad; when God called to him,
no tender hand wedged time into his stay.
His faith erupted him into a way
far-off and strange. How many miles are there
from Ur to Haran? Where does Canaan lie,
or slow mysterious Egypt sit and wait?
How could he think his ancient thigh would bear
nations, or how consent that Isaac die,
with never an outcry or an anguished prayer?
I think, alas, how I manipulate
dates and decisions, pull apart the dark,
dally with doubts here and with counsels there,
take out old maps and stare.
Was there a call at all, my fears remark.
I cry out: Abraham, old nomad you,
are you my father? Come to me in pity.
Mine is a far and lonely journey too.

Family Vacation

This BibleProject video is a great way to start conversation ...

