

## **Iraq in the Bible**

### **Part 2**

#### **Introduction**

If my arithmetic is right, approximately 400 years after the flood, Terah, a descendant of Noah became the father of Abram (Abraham). They lived in UR, which was in southern Iraq. Eventually, they settled in Haran.

#### **Our Study**

**It was in Haran (located in modern day Iraq) that God called Abram.**

**The Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3**

*"The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 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.' "*

1. What did the Lord tell Abram to do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did He promise him? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Scripture: Genesis 12:4-5**

*"So Abram left as the Lord had told him and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew, Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the Land of Canaan."*

3. What did Abram do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When Abraham was an old man, his son Isaac was still unmarried. Abraham was unwilling for Isaac to marry a heathen woman, so he sent his servant to his former homeland to find a bride for Isaac from among his kin.

You will remember that Abraham had come from southern Iraq and this is where the servant went.

When the servant arrived, he went to a local spring where he prayed for specific success.

**The Scripture: Genesis 24:15**

*"Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah....The girl was very beautiful, a virgin."*

4. Who came to the spring?\_\_\_\_\_

5. How is she described?\_\_\_\_\_

After the servant told Rebekah's relatives why he had come, they agreed she should return with him to become the bride of Isaac.

**The Scripture: Genesis 24:59, 66**

*"So they (her relatives) sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men....Then the servant told Isaac all he had done."*

6. What happened next?\_\_\_\_\_

Isaac immediately loved Rebekah and they were married. Years passed. Rebekah bore twins, Jacob and Esau. When they were adults, Jacob tricked his brother out of his birth right. Fearing for his life, he fled to Haran where Rebekah's brother lived.

Jacob lived in Haran for twenty years where he successfully served his uncle, Laban. He married two of Laban's daughters, Rachel and Leah, who bore him many children. In time, the relationship became extremely strained and Jacob took his family and returned to his family home.

**All the events of the book of Esther transpired in the place which is now Iraq.**

One of the most inspiring stores in Scripture is the story of Queen Esther, the wife of King Xerxes, ruler in the citadel of Susa. Esther was a Jewess and became queen when her predecessor, Queen Vashti, was dethroned. At a crucial time in history when all the Jews in Susa were in danger of being put to death, Esther risked her own life to save them. Today, Purim, which celebrates this occasion, is still celebrated each year.

**The city of Nineveh was in a place which is in modern day Iraq.**

The sometimes humorous book of Jonah was written to emphasize God's love and mercy for all people.

**The Scripture: Jonah 1:1-2**

*"The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."*

7. What did God say to Jonah?\_\_\_\_\_

8. Why?\_\_\_\_\_

Jonah hated the Ninevites and did not want any part of extending God's mercy to them.

**The Scripture: Jonah 1:3**

*"But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord."*

9. What did Jonah do instead? \_\_\_\_\_

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Most of us know the story of how Jonah was swallowed by a big fish. After three days the fish expelled Jonah and the Lord repeated His message for the king of Nineveh.

**The Scripture: Jonah 3:4-5**

*Jonah preached: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned. The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth."*

10. What was Jonah's message? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. What did the people do? \_\_\_\_\_

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**The Scripture: Jonah 3:6-7**

*"The king of Nineveh...rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust."*

12. What did the king do? \_\_\_\_\_

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The king also commanded that all people and beasts be covered with sackcloth, fast, and give up their evil ways.

**The Scripture: Jonah 3:10**

*"When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction He had threatened."*

13. What were the results? \_\_\_\_\_

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We called this story "sometimes humorous" because of Jonah's reaction. Jonah was angry at the Lord for His mercy toward the Ninevites.

Iraq's position in biblical history continues on and on. Daniel's experience in the lion's den occurred in Iraq as did that of the three Hebrew young men in the fiery furnace from which they escaped unscathed. The writing on the wall appeared to King Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar, another king of Babylon, carried the Jews captive in Iraq. The wise men of the New Testament came from Iraq and Peter preached there as well.

Today Iraq stands in the forefront of the Islamic nations opposed to Israel and Christianity. It is fascinating to speculate on what God has planned for its future.

### Answers

1. To leave his land and his people
2. That He would make a great nation of Abram and all people would be blessed through him
3. He took his wife, his nephew, and all their possessions and people, and they set out for Canaan
4. Rebekah
5. As very beautiful and a virgin
6. Rebekah returned with Isaac's servant and the servant told Isaac everything that had happened
7. To go to Nineveh and preach against it
8. Because of its wickedness
9. He ran away from the Lord and got on a ship bound for Tarshish
10. That Ninevah would be overturned in forty days
11. They declared a fast and put on sackcloth
12. He took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust
13. The Lord had compassion on the Ninevites and did not destroy them.

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