



WEEK 5

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Read:

Genesis

11:27~23

Traveling God's Word

A chronological study of the Bible

The story of Abraham is not the beginning, and not the end, but an important chapter in the story of God's redemption of His people. God is setting things in place to accomplish His plans for the future. An over riding message in this part of God's story seems to be—wait. Wait twenty five years for the Lord to provide an heir. Wait what must have seemed an eternity for a ram to show up as a sacrifice in the place of Isaac. Wait in affliction over 400 years for the Lord to establish a people set apart as His. Wait for the sinfulness of the Amorites to reach a scale warranting their destruction. Wait one or two thousand years for the Messiah to come offer salvation to all nations. Wait even longer for His eventual return. Why did God promise Abram a son so long before the delivery? Was it to say, “you think this is a long waitjust wait!”

We are more accustomed than ever to doing things in a hurry. I get impatient with mere seconds ticking off as I wait for the internet to churn out its answers for me from every part of the globe. I start getting agitated if I have to wait more than 5 minutes on the child I am picking up from some activity. Waiting on the promises of our Lord and Savior can severely try our patience. That is why I need the reminder to see things in God's time frame. He has a plan, and He is patiently executing it that all might come to know Him and fall under His saving grace. Can we wait for the fullness of His timing, or will we try to rush Him like Sarai did by giving Hagar to Abram? Can we believe God's words to us enough to wait on Him and His good and perfect plan?

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” Psalm 27:14

SPOTTING CHRIST

There are two main events in this section that have been interpreted as pre-incarnate appearances of our Lord Christ.

The first is in the appearance of mystery man Melchizedek in Genesis 14. The name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness” He was the king of Salem (later called Jerusalem). Who will one day reign over a new Jerusalem? (Rev. 21:2 and 22:3)

What did Melchizedek offer to Abram? _____

What did Christ offer His disciples at the Last Supper? _____

What did Abram give to Melchizedek? _____

According to custom, this was an offering to deity. Do you think that how Abram saw Melchizedek? _____

What title was Melchizedek given other than king? _____

What prophecy is given in Psalm 110:4 and again quoted in Heb. 5:6? _____

What other similarities between Melchizedek and Christ does Heb. 7: 1-28 point out? _____

If Melchizedek, a priest of The God, was king of Salem, then were there a whole group of people already in the land of Canaan that worshipped God before Abram's descendants? If so, what happened to them?

Who were the people that were crying out about the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah in 18:20? Were they some of Abraham's people that had moved there with Lot, or were they already there? Were there cries directed to God, or did He just “overhear” them?

If one was Christ, who were the other two? _____

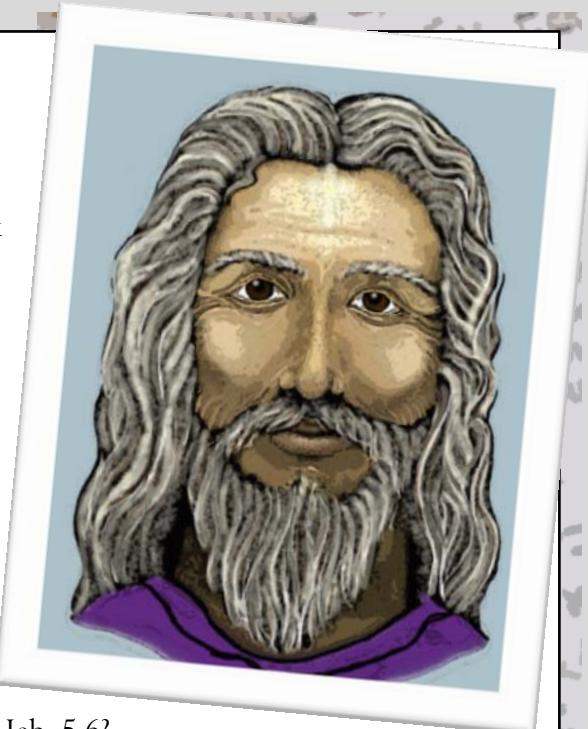
How did Abraham receive them? _____

What promise was given? _____

What bad news did they share with Abraham? _____

What did Abraham do? _____

Whether either of these was an actual appearance of Christ or not, I am reminded that He can and does appear among us whenever He chooses to. He does not need to abide by the rules that we have set for His behavior. Our risen, eternal Lord is much more present in our lives than we probably realize.



Abraham's People

The Jewish people found it very important to be able to trace their lineage back to Abraham, proving themselves a true Jew, a chosen child of God. The term "Jew" was not used until after the twelve tribes of Israel split into northern and southern kingdoms. In the Bible, we do not see the word Jew used until in the book of Esther while the Jewish people were captives of the Persian Empire. The word Israelite was not used to refer to God's chosen people at least until Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and we see the term first used in Scripture in Exodus 3:15.

As the father of Ishmael, Abraham is also considered the father of the religion of Islam.

Abraham, originally called Abram, is considered the father of the Israelites, and the Jewish people. Where were Abram and his family originally from? _____ Where was Abram when God called him in Genesis 12? _____ Both of these were areas that Shem, Noah's son, had originally settled in. God called Abraham to move into the land occupied by the Canaanites, in between the Amorites and Philistines - all descended from Noah's son Ham. The whole area is lumped together under the general term Canaan, and this region is characterized by numerous city-states, mainly settling in the area to the west of the Jordan. The Aramean roots of the earliest Israelites is evident in a variety of ways. In Gen. 24:10 and Gen. 25:20, Abraham's servant returns to the patriarch's relatives to find a wife for Isaac. What were the names of these locations? _____

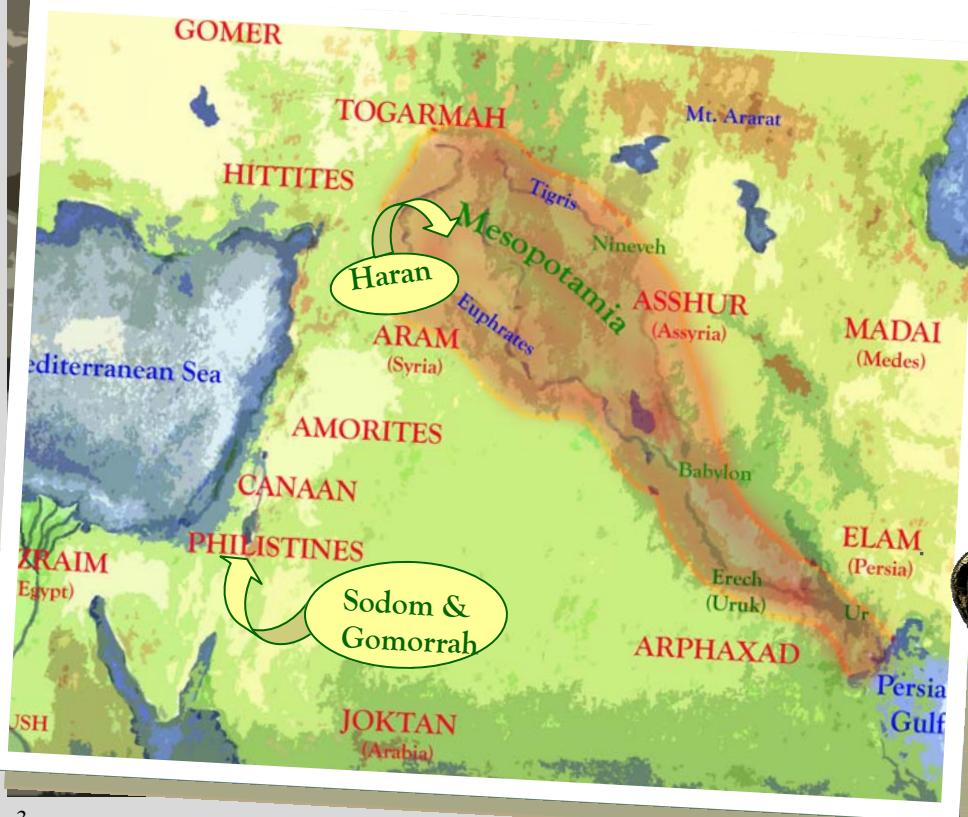
The names Serug, Nahor, and Terah from Gen. 11: 20-26 have endured as the names of towns in this area and can be found in ancient texts other than the Bible. What does Moses instruct the people to say before the Lord in Deut. 26:5? _____

What was Abram called in Genesis 14:13? _____

Some think this term may have had its roots in the word "habiru" found in the Amarna letters

(cuneiform tablets of communication between the Pharaohs in Egypt of

1500 to 1300 BC, and the local rulers of Canaanite city-states) referring to a troublesome social element in the land. This correlation between the habiru and the Hebrews has been dismissed by some scholars. (Rainey)



An Israelite jar from 1200 BC. The days of Abraham are earlier still!

Sarah

I know so many women who could be Sarah. Women who have done anything, gone to any lengths, even lied, for their men. Women who feel set aside, or like their own life holds little meaning or promise. Women living in the shadow of their husband's spotlight. Women whose hopes and dreams seem to crash around them, as others find the favor that they had hoped for. Women whose years of disappointments have turned them bitter and unkind, perhaps even cruel. Women who are too discouraged to trust in God's plans for them.

Sarah was all of these. She left her home to live the life of a nomad. Her husband persuaded her to lie to protect him and she ended up in Pharaoh's harem. Sarah surely began to doubt whether God's promises to Abraham included her at all. Maybe she began to see the disappointment in her husband's eyes that her barrenness caused. Maybe she even began to fear his frustration with her. In desperation, she made a foolish choice and suggested that Abraham father his longed for son through her handmaid Hagar. While she had waited unfilled decades for a pregnancy, Hagar got pregnant right away. Sarah must have felt more left out than ever, betrayed by her own body, her husband, her servant and her God. Her pain made her lash out in a cruel anger so severe that Hagar fled. Maybe Sarah secretly hoped that she would never come back, or might even perish along with the child

that was not hers. Hagar did come back, and for the next thirteen years Sarah must have struggled mightily with her attitude, especially toward God.

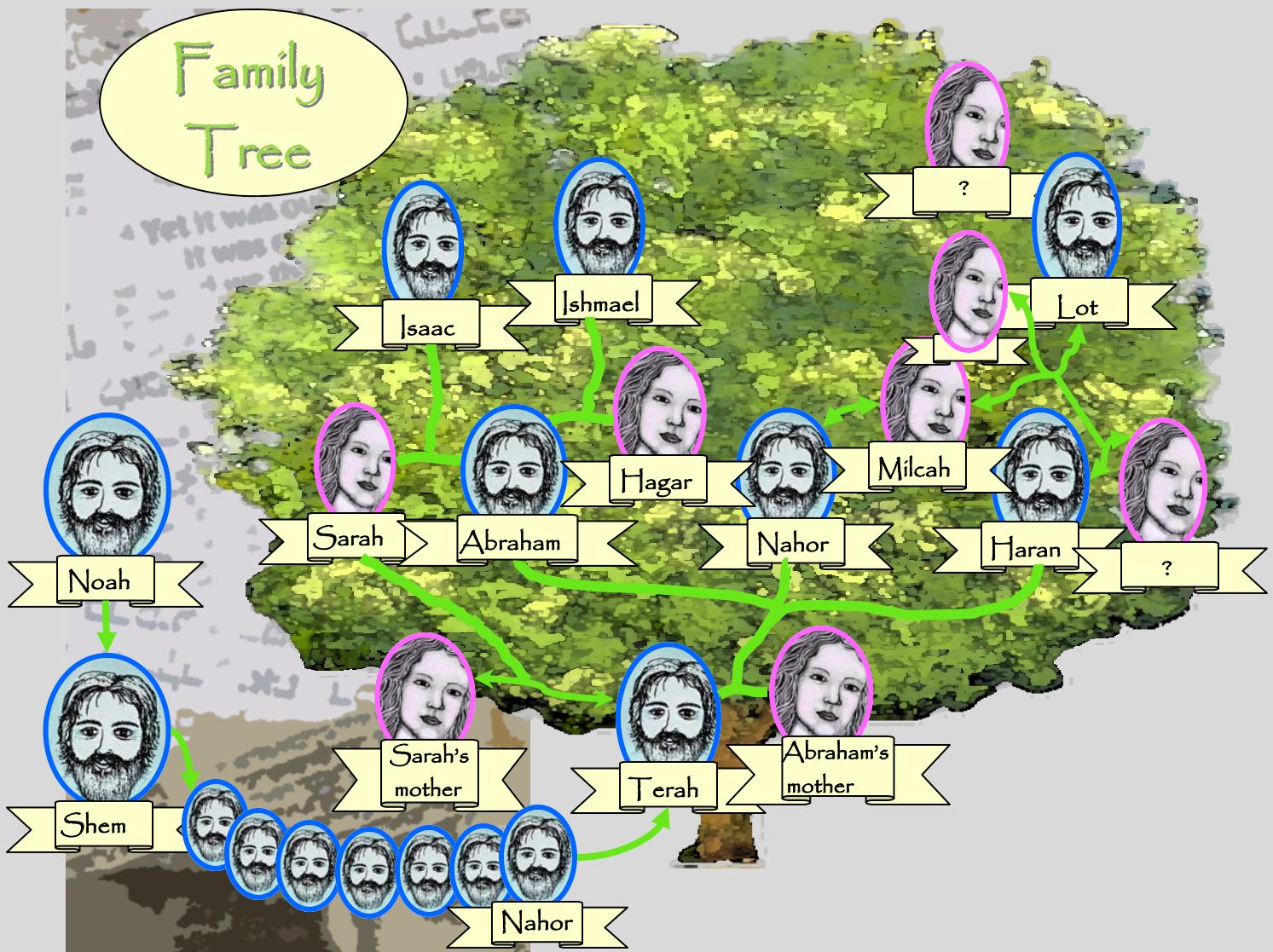
I guess that is what is such an encouragement to me. I see in Sarah so many of the things that I struggle with myself. Trying to choose what is right in a bad situation does not always seem so simple. Mistakes can bear huge, everlasting, consequences. My own hurts too often cause me to lash out and hurt those around me. I begin to feel insignificant, and hold a pity party about getting passed by. I get impatient with

God and even begin to doubt His word. But if

God still put Sarah right smack in the center of His plans for the redemption of the whole world, then I am reassured that He has a place for me as well—in spite of my missteps on the way. Sarah ended well, and so can I!

After all,

"is anything too hard for the Lord?" Gen. 18:14



Who are Abraham's Children?

The Jewish people have long settled this question through carefully kept lines of descent. They knew exactly which of Abraham's great grandson's families, or tribes, they belonged to. But God makes clear in the New Testament that we are not Abraham's offspring by our DNA, but by our faith. God told Abraham that no, his servant Eleazar would not be his heir. Neither would Ishmael, his son by Hagar. He and Sarah would have a son. Gen. 15:6 says that Abraham believed and that belief counted as righteousness. It is the same belief that makes us his children. What does Gal. 3:6-9,14 say about the identity of the children of Abraham? _____

What is necessary to be a true Jew according to Romans 2:28-29? _____

Romans 4 addresses the issue of "works" such as circumcision, and the relationship of law and faith. Which make us children of Abraham? _____

Are you Abraham's child? _____

Puzzle Clues

There are no references this week, but the answers can all be found in Genesis 11:27–23!

Across

- 6** the promised land would extend to this river (9)
- 7** Abraham planted this kind of tree in Beersheba (8)
- 12** son of Lot and father of Moabites (4)
- 14** afflicted with plagues because of Sarai (7)
- 15** God called Abraham to be this (9)
- 17** a wicked city (5)
- 20** God made one with Abraham (8)
- 22** what Sarah did at the idea of having a child (7)
- 23** Abram said she was his sister (5)
- 28** Abraham lied to him about Sarah (9)
- 30** Abram's belief in God was counted as this (13)
- 31** Abram settled by these oaks (5)
- 32** Abraham was to make one of Isaac (8)

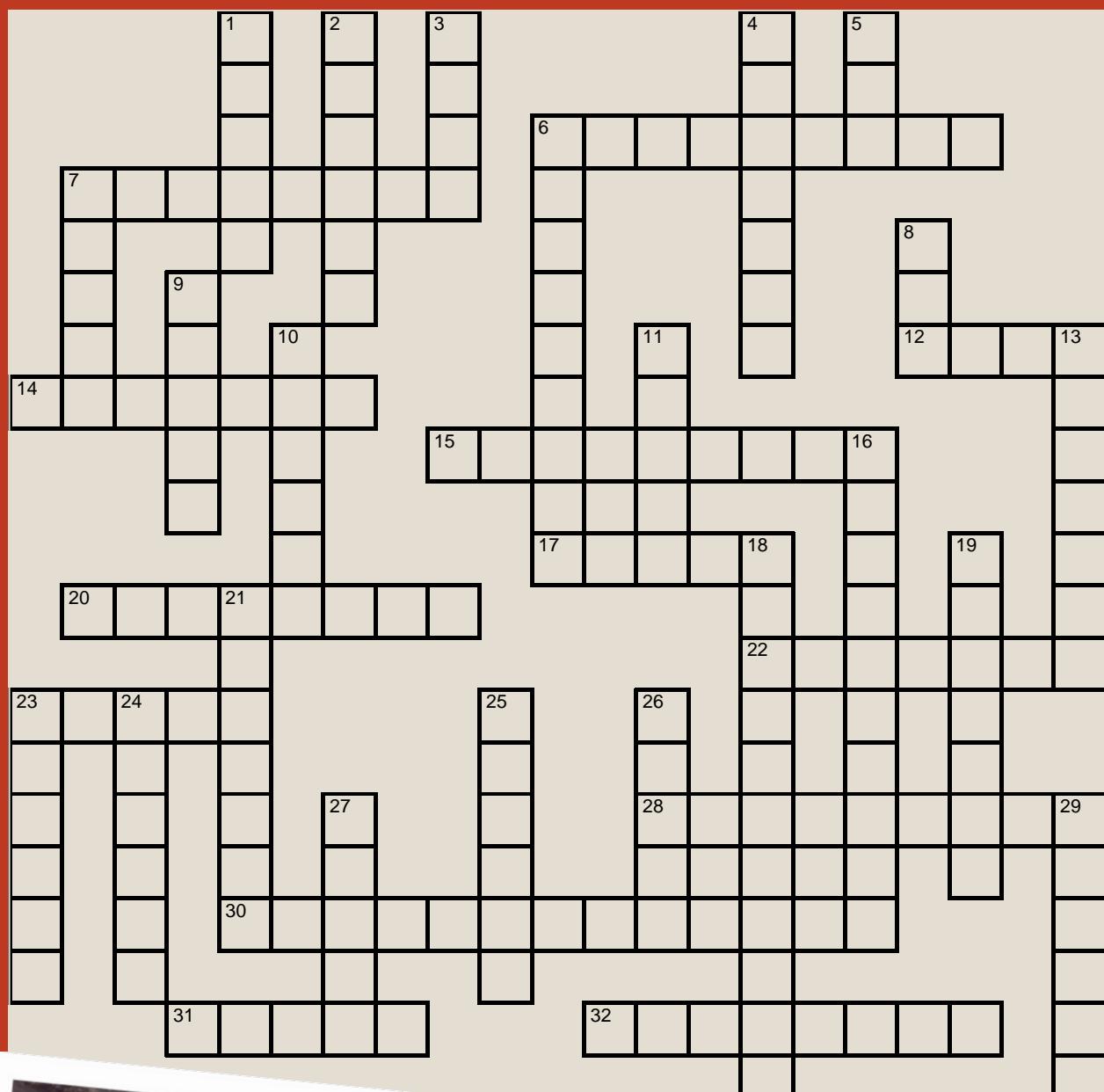
Down

- 1** Sarah's son (5)
- 2** caused Abram to go to Egypt (6)
- 3** Lot's wife looked here (4)
- 4** Abram's name was changed to this (7)
- 5** Abram parted ways with him (3)
- 6** saw that Sarai was beautiful (9)
- 7** Abram's father (5)
- 8** God supplied one for sacrifice (3)
- 9** Sarai's name was changed to this (5)
- 10** Lot chose this valley (6)
- 11** Abraham bought one to bury Sarah (5)
- 13** in Abraham, all the earth could be (7)
- 16** Abram's offspring would be this (10)
- 18** king of Salem (11)
- 19** Hagar's son (7)
- 21** Abram's servant and heir (7)
- 23** rained on Sodom and Gomorrah (6)
- 24** God said Abram's would be great (6)
- 25** Lot was Abraham's (6)
- 26** Abram's offspring would number as these (5)
- 27** Sarai's Egyptian servant (5)
- 29** Sarah died here (6)





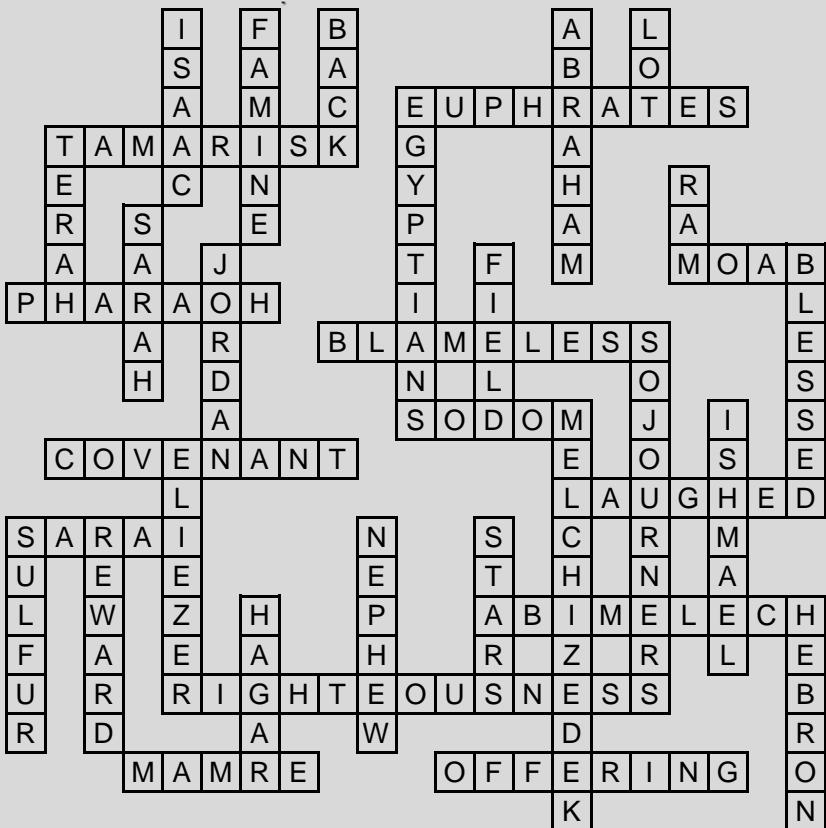
Puzzle Page



Thanks to Dixie Schoepf for this photo of a modern Bedouin tent dwelling.



ANSWERS AND SOURCES



Sources

Abraham's People p.3

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