

Overview

For an outline of this time period refer to The Great Adventure Study Guide, page two, Outline of Bible Periods, item 2, **The Patriarchs 2000 – 1675 B.C.**

THE PATRIARCHS

The Call of Abraham

"The history of salvation enters a new phase with Abraham. Until then people had known God only through the work of creation. From the moment God chooses Israel in the person of its founder, Abraham, to be his special people, God ties the manifestation of his own self to the history of a people. The history of Israel becomes, in some way, God's history." [1]

The history of Israel is in some way the history of us all. Just as God revealed Himself to Abraham, He reveals Himself to each one of us. He calls us to come follow him and as Abraham responded in faith, so too we are given the opportunity to leave our old life behind and find a new life in Christ.

In the call of Abraham we can clearly see the various levels of history at work:

Surface event: a man hears the voice of God and leaves behind his home and family to follow that call.

Universal event: this call is the beginning of the election of the people of Israel as God's chosen people.

Personal meaning for our lives: God calls each of us to follow him, to join into relationship with Him and He gives us a promise of faithfulness if we believe in Him.

"Abraham thus fulfills the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen': 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Because he was 'strong in his faith', Abraham became the 'father of all who believe'. [2]

Abraham is our father in faith. Surrounded by the temptations of a pagan culture he perseveres in faith just as we must also. We can look to Abraham for an example to follow in our own daily lives. And just as God presents Abraham with a promise for the future, so we are also given a promise that Christ will return and institute a new heaven and a new earth for his faithful children.

References:

1. Sofia Cavalletti, History's Golden Thread: The History of Salvation, pg. 59
2. Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 146

THE SUMERIANS

The Sumerians, a non-Semitic people, settled the area of Sumer (including the city-states of Kish, Erech, Ur, Sippar, Akshak, Larak, Nippur, Adab, Umma, Lagash, Bad-tibira, and Larsa) between 4500-4000 BC. Individual city-states were made up of a walled city, a village and surrounding land. Each city-state was independent and worshipped their own deity whose temple was located at the center of the city. Originally political power belonged to the citizens, but as warring between the city-states increased each area instituted a kingship governing body. Archeological documents indicate that there were eight kings before the great Flood. Around 1900 BC the Amorites conquered all of Mesopotamia with the result that the Sumerian identity was lost. (The Amorites are mentioned for the first time in Gen. 10:16 as having descended from Canaan, the son of Ham.) The technological and cultural advances left by the Sumerians include the first writing system (cuneiform), the first codes of law (the Codes of Hamurabi), wheeled vehicles, potters wheel, and the city-state system of government.