

## It Begins with a Promise

Genesis 21:1-7, 12:1-3

*Welcome to our new series on the Story of Israel.*

### Series introduction: The Story of Israel in Ten Episodes

- **Promise**, Salvation, Law, Land, Covenant, Temple, Division, Prophets, Exile, Restoration
- This story is (true) history, it is sacred history, and it is our family history.
  - True history: listen for archaeological facts in this series
  - Sacred history: God is the primary actor
  - Family history: *Father Abraham had many sons... I am one of them, and so are you!*

### The story of Israel begins around 2000 BC with God's Promise

- **Immediate promise** to Abraham and Sarah: a baby (Gen 21:1-7; Romans 9:9)
- **Distant promises**: many descendants, land, and more (Gen 12:1-3, 18:17-19)

### What does it mean to live by God's promises? What can we learn from Father Abraham?

- It means to live by *faith*. (Rom 4:16-25)

### Questions for Reflection and Application

1. The story begins with a promise from God (Genesis 21:1-7). What does this say about God? And history?
2. Why do we sing that Father Abraham is *our* father? How so?
  - a. Consider Romans 4:16-17.
3. Instead of a vague spirituality, Abraham lived by specific promises made by God.
  - a. What specific promises from God do you live by? (Any Scripture references?)
  - b. How do you know if you truly live by them?
  - c. How do you grow in living by them?