Chapters 1-11 focused on 4 major events – Creation, the Fall, the Flood and the Tower of Babel. Chapters 12-50 will focus on 4 major people – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

In chapter 12, the scope changes from "universal" to "particular" and from "general" to "special" revelation.

Why did God choose Abram?

Why did God choose you?

The promise God made to Abram: "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 curse whoever curses you and all the people of the nations will be blessed through you."

The call of God will always be followed by testing.

Abram hears the call of God – there is initial obedience – then there is a big failure because of his inability to trust God fully – then God intervenes to rescue Abram – then Abram goes "back to Bethel."

Abram's nephew Lot went with him to the Promised Land.

Abram was no loser when he allowed Lot to have first choice of the land.

Lot was the loser for voting with his pocketbook alone.

The small walled cities of the Valley of Sodom now lie under the Dead Sea. Lot was now living IN Sodom.

Abram rushes to rescue Lot with a private army of 318 men.

Abram is now called "Abram the Hebrew." And these 318 men are his private "armed retainers."

Melchizedek appears: the mysterious King of Salem (probably Jerusalem) and the priest of God Most High (El Elyon). Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness."

At the very least, Melchizedek is a "type" of Christ.

The call of God will always be followed by testing.

Some believe Melchizedek is a "theophany", or more precisely, a "christophany" – a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ Himself.

"Abram believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

God told Abram that the Hebrew people would be slaves in Egypt for 400 years because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

The conversation between God and Abram concerning circumcision and the birth of a son occurred when Abram was 99 years old.

Though it would be great to have God talk to us as he did to Abram, there were often long periods between communications – God was the initiator, not Abram.

We have the written word of God, The Holy Spirit, and free access to talk to God anytime we choose.

My name is El Shaddai – God Almighty."

God chose to emphasize His omnipotence to Abram when assuring him that he and Sarah (ages 100 and 90) would have a son.

The Abrahamic Covenant is further clarified in chapter 17 (previewed in chapter 12, actually "cut" in chapter 15). The covenant is the focus of Abram's life.

God gives Aram the covenant sign of circumcision, and changes his name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (the father of many).

In chapter 18 we clearly have a special experience – a theophany (a direct encounter with a physical manifestation of God Himself) – "The Lord appeared to Abraham."

It is in the heart of God to reveal His plans to Abraham. It is the same for us – James 1:5 - "If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask, and the God who gives liberally to all – He will give it!"

Abraham actually negotiates with God over the destruction of Sodom.

A small number of righteous people have a mighty preserving influence upon the society around them.

Genesis 19 is one of the low points of Scripture, but "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Lot was a genuine believer. Peter, in the New Testament, tells us 3 times in just a couple of sentences that Lot was a righteous man.

Lot's choice to live near Sodom was motivated by economic consideration. He believed the people of this wicked city would not change him.

When Abram rescued Lot (Genesis14) God was giving Lot a chance to wake up and move out of Sodom.

When the angels went to rescue Lot and his family from Sodom before destroying it, they found him "sitting at the gate" - a leader of the city. He was doing what Psalm 1 tells us NOT to do - "walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, sit in the seat of mockers."

Lot was not strong enough to survive all by himself in the hostile, wicked environment of Sodom. He cut himself off from his most godly influence. We too need a godly support system.

No godly support system spells disaster.

Lot's failure was progressive - from pitching his tents towards Sodom to saying to the mob, "Here, take my daughters."

Genesis 19 reflects the Scriptural understanding of homosexuality.

Psalm 1, a wonderful Psalm of blessing is quite a contrast to Genesis 19. The keys the Psalmist mentions are the associations we keep and the role of the Word of God in our lives.

We are nearly half was through Genesis, so let's review:

Genesis 1-11:   4 events: Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Tower of Babel
            Key People: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah; scope was universal with an
            emphasis on general revelation.

Genesis 12-50:   The focus is on 4 people: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, with nearly 1/3 given over to the life of Abraham who was "blessed to be a blessing."

In Genesis 20, Abraham, the friend of God, gets a retest in the area of trusting God.

He fails the test again. God keeps trying, because there are certain lessons God wants us to learn in our lives.

God is patient - He keeps working on us.

Reading the Bible as we are doing now helps us to make connections - for example, between Abraham's failures and the greatest victory of his life on Mt. Moriah. What lessons is God trying to teach me in my life right now?

The account in Genesis 22 tells us of Abraham's greatest test which he passed with flying colors. "God will provide for Himself the Lamb…"

Why would God ask Abraham to do such a thing when He never intended for him to carry it through?

To settle Abraham's trust issue

So that Abraham would be the one human to understand what God would someday do with His only Son

To provide a "marker" on the road to redemption that would only be understood after Jesus died on the cross

Abraham's new name for God - Jehovah Jireh - the God who provides