

THE GOOD NEWS ACCORDING TO
ABRAHAM

Part 5

Sarah Laughed

Genesis 18





Carchemish
Haran

Nineveh
Assyria

MESOPOTAMIA

Mediterranean Sea

Sidon
Tyre
Dan
Damascus
Hazor

Canaan

Shechem
Bethel
Ai
Mt. Moriah

Gerar
Hebron
Beersheba
Negev

Kadesh Barnea

Zaan

Egypt

Wilderness of Shur

Aleppo

Hamath

Tadmor

Mari

Asshur

Nuzi

Euphrates R.

Tigris R.

Eshnunna

Babylon

Babylonia

Erech

Larsa

Eridhu

Ur



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Babylon

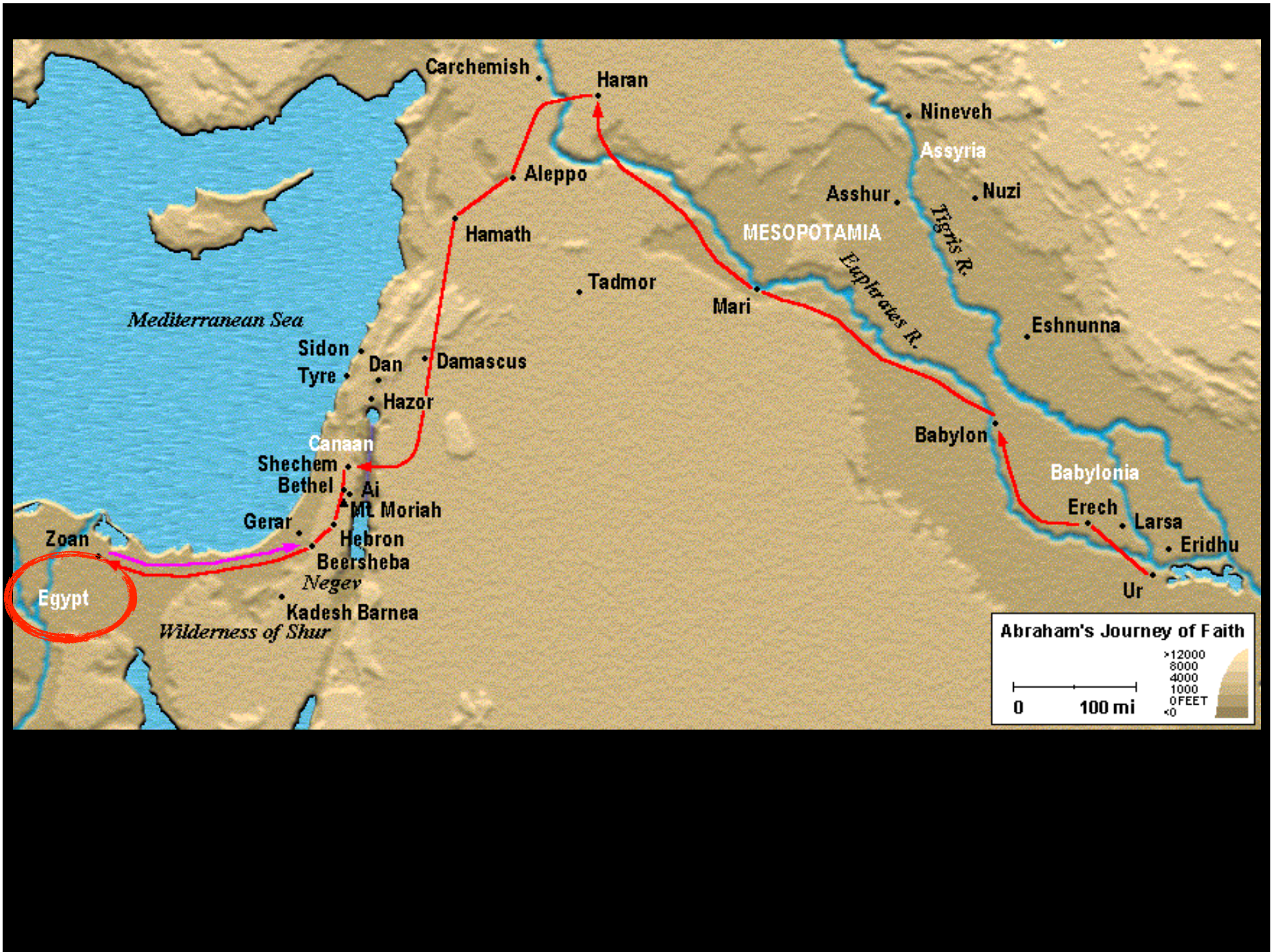
Babylonia

Erech

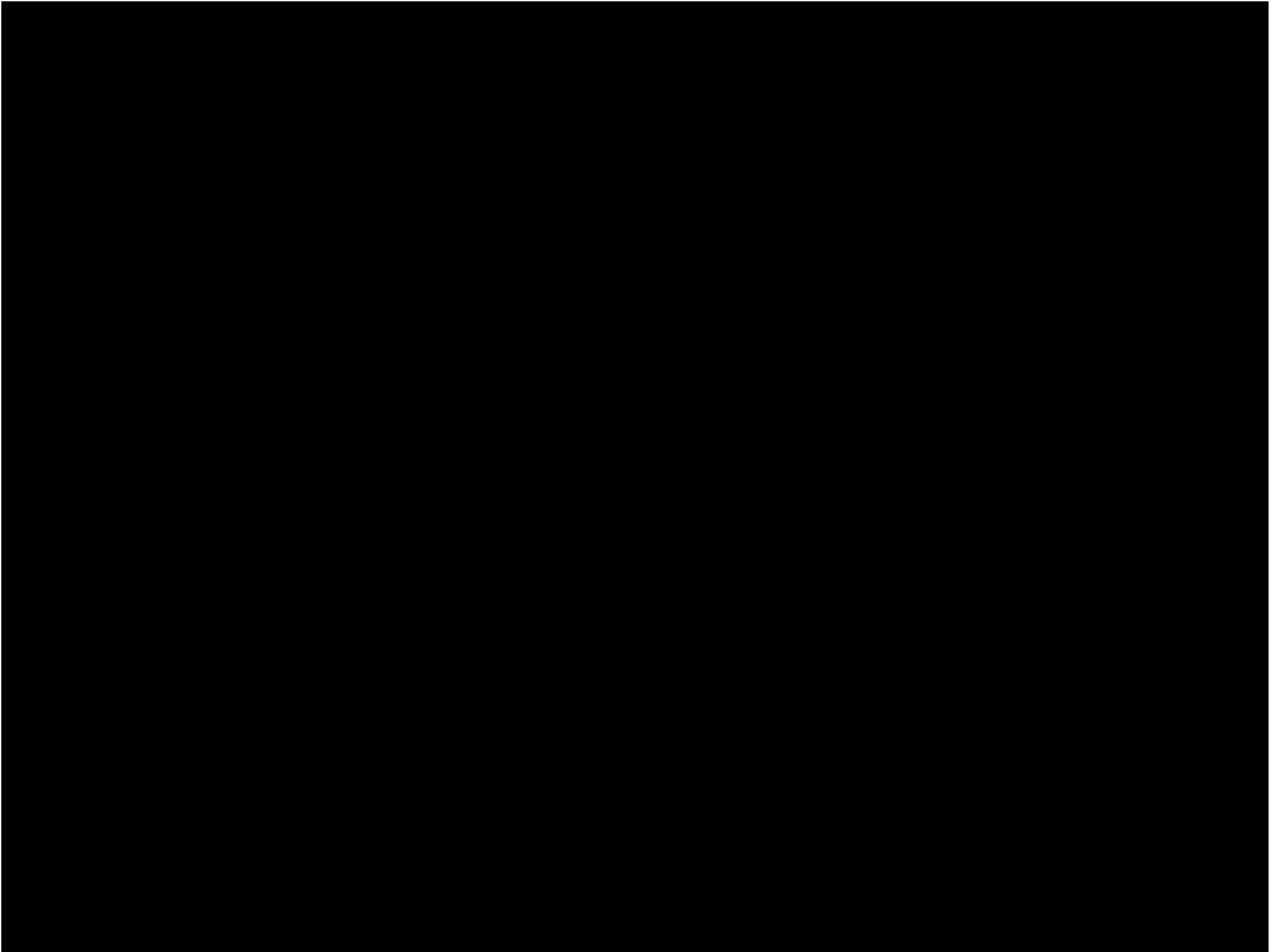
Larsa

Eridhu

Ur







¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants.”

Genesis 17:15 – 16 NLT



Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

Genesis 17:17 ESV



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Genesis 18:1-10



The **LORD** appeared to Abraham . . .

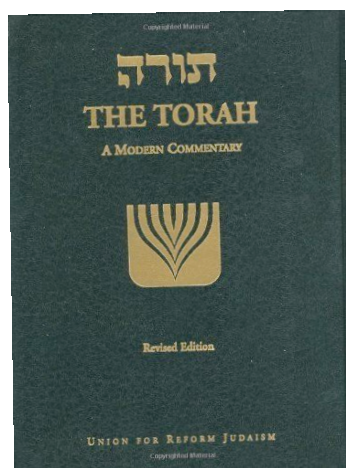
YHWH יהוה

Exodus 3:14 & 15

¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I Am has sent me to you.’”

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The **LORD**, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob —has sent me to you.’”

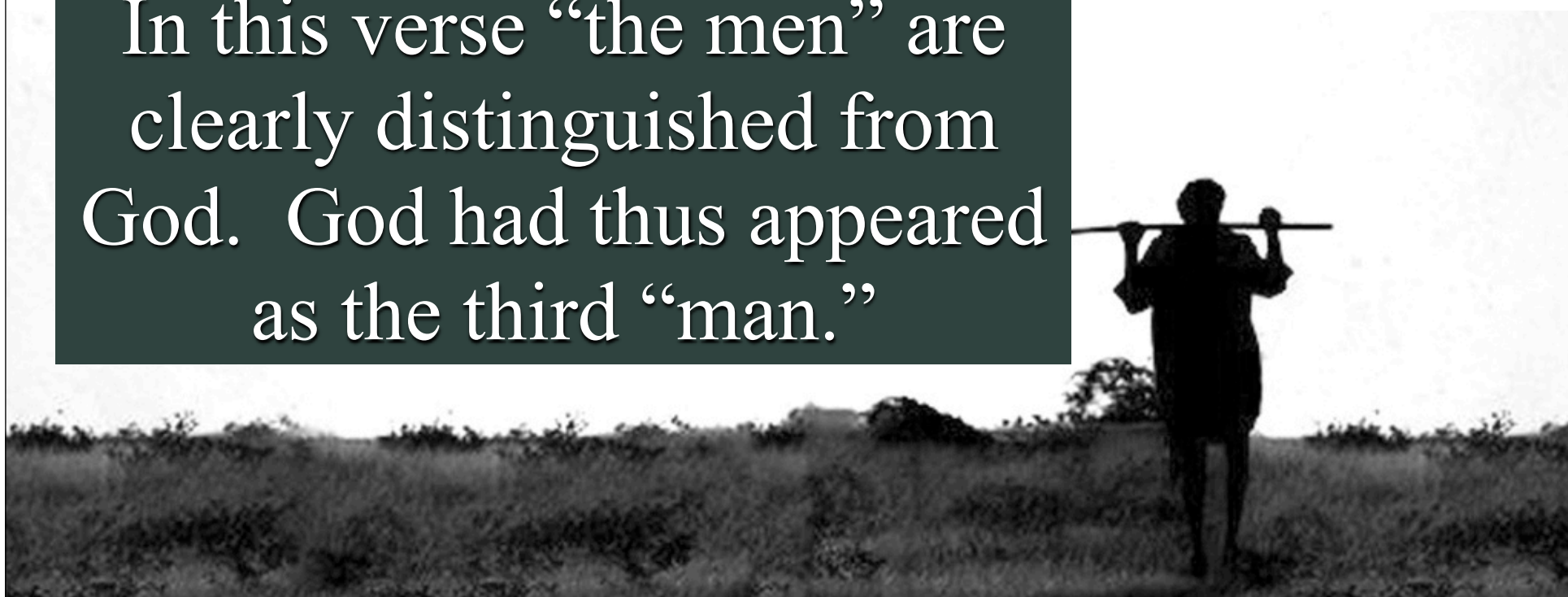
This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.”

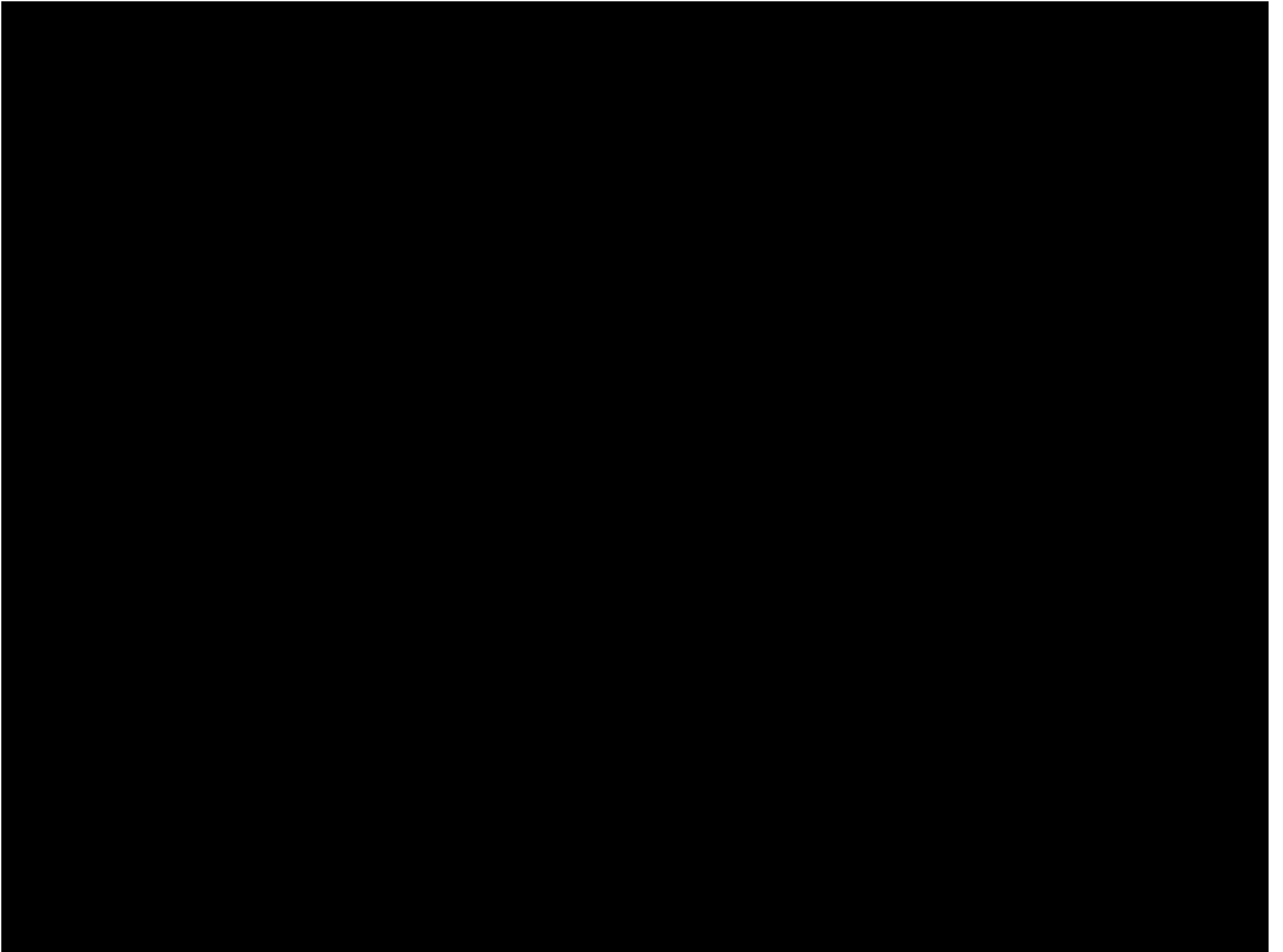


The men now turned away and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Eternal.

Genesis 18:22

In this verse “the men” are clearly distinguished from God. God had thus appeared as the third “man.”





Lesson 1

God isn't a detached observer, watching from a distance . . .

- * he is the God who comes down
- * he is the God who is intimately involved in my life
- * he is the “God who sees me”

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Genesis 18:10 - 15

Sarah laughed

Is anything too hard for the Lord?



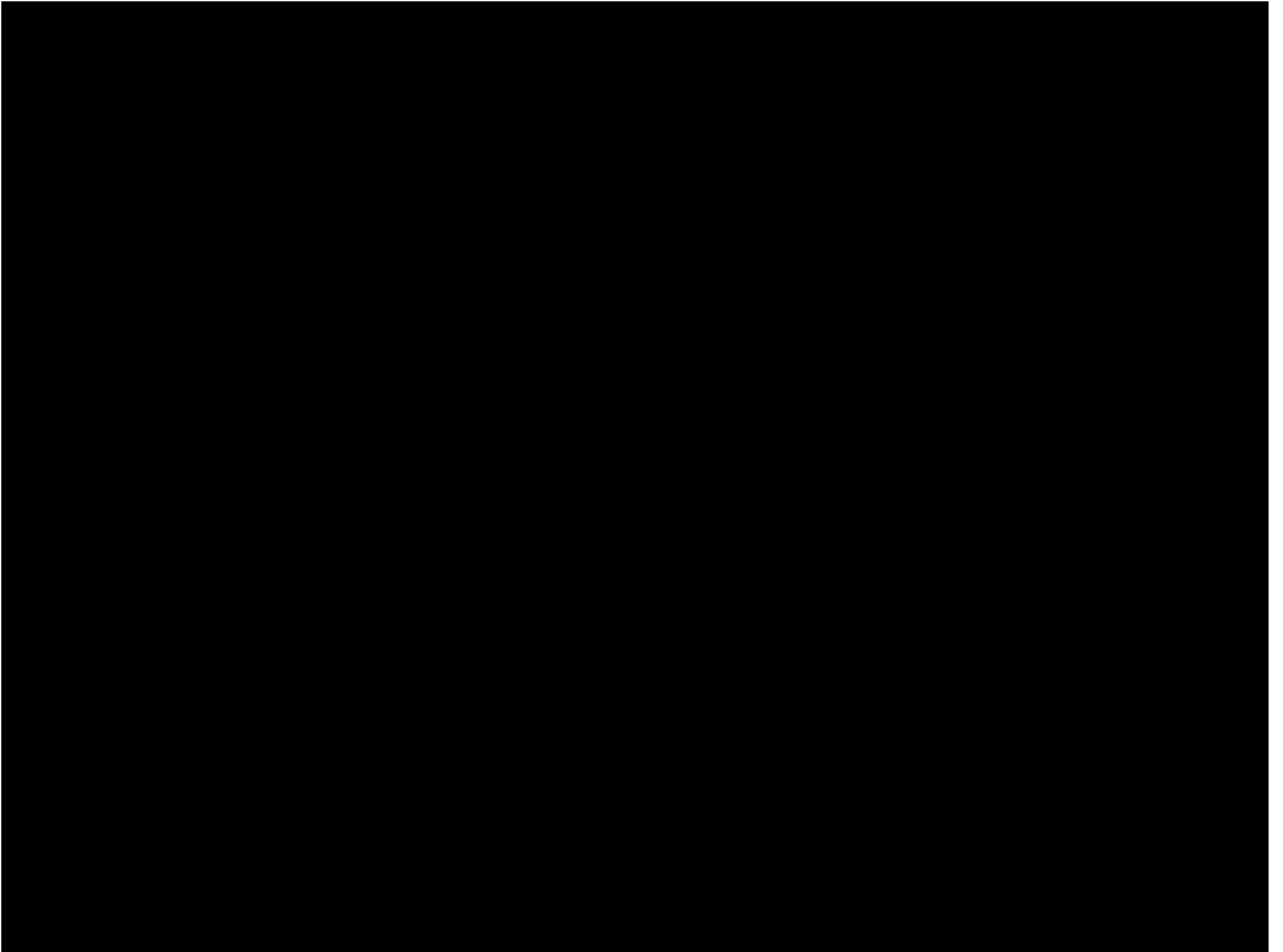
549 LBS



8 lbs



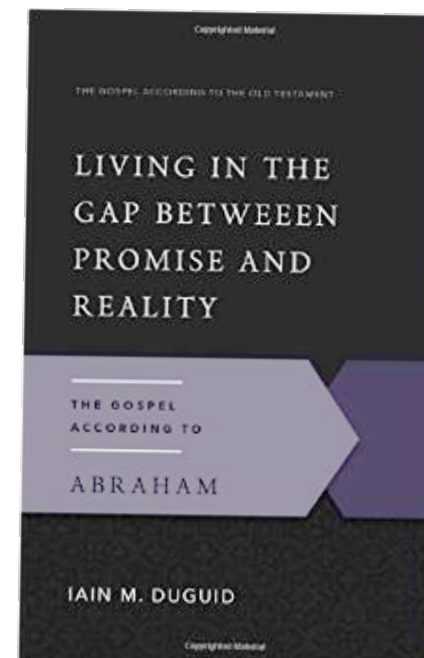
7 lbs



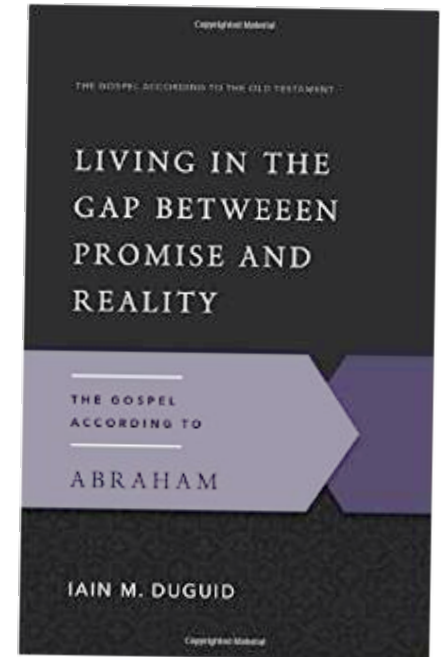
Do you see how this confronts our intuitive beliefs about God?

We tend to think that God will answer our prayers only if we have enough faith, but here we see God answering the prayers of those who have no faith.

We tend to think that we should put on our best face before God, praying the prayers we think he wants to hear, not voicing the real truth of how we feel.



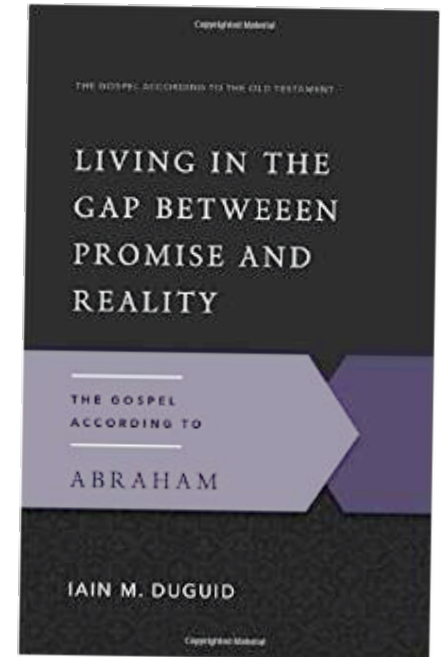
In short, we don't really believe that he is our friend. We believe that he is a distant deity, at best ambivalent toward us, ready to cut us off in an instant if he senses weakness or dividedness in our hearts.



So we hide and deny our sins, pretending to God and one another that we are living the victorious Christian life, when the truth is the very opposite.

We doubt that he has our best interests at heart, disbelieving the promises in his Word that he will protect us, provide for us, sanctify us, and work all things together for our good.

Yet God knows your persistent doubts, your insistent fears, your unfulfilled dreams, and your dark desires, and when you spread them out before him he deals with you gently and graciously, as with a friend.

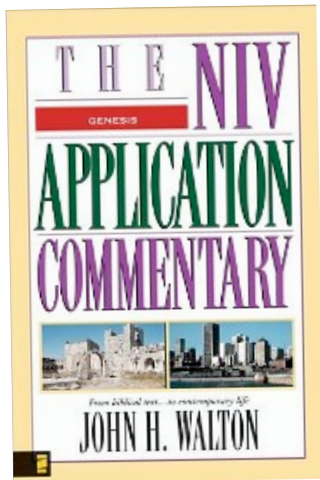


Lesson 2

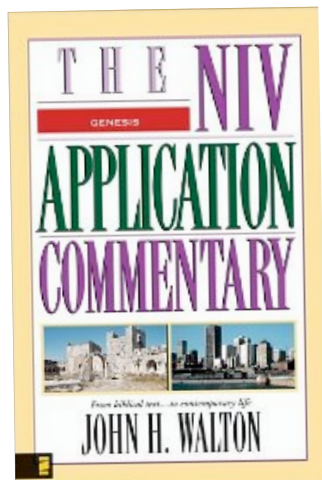
Don't give up
Don't give up on God

This is not a promise to claim but an attribute to embrace, a faith to aspire to, and a hope to sustain us. When we face difficult circumstances, we cannot claim this verse as confidence that God will change our circumstances.

He is capable of changing any circumstances, but perhaps the hard thing that he will do is to help us to accept our circumstances and grow through them.



We must be cautious that as we accept by faith that nothing is too hard for God, we do not begin to dictate to him which hard thing he must do. He tends to have things in mind that go beyond what we are able to ask or even think.



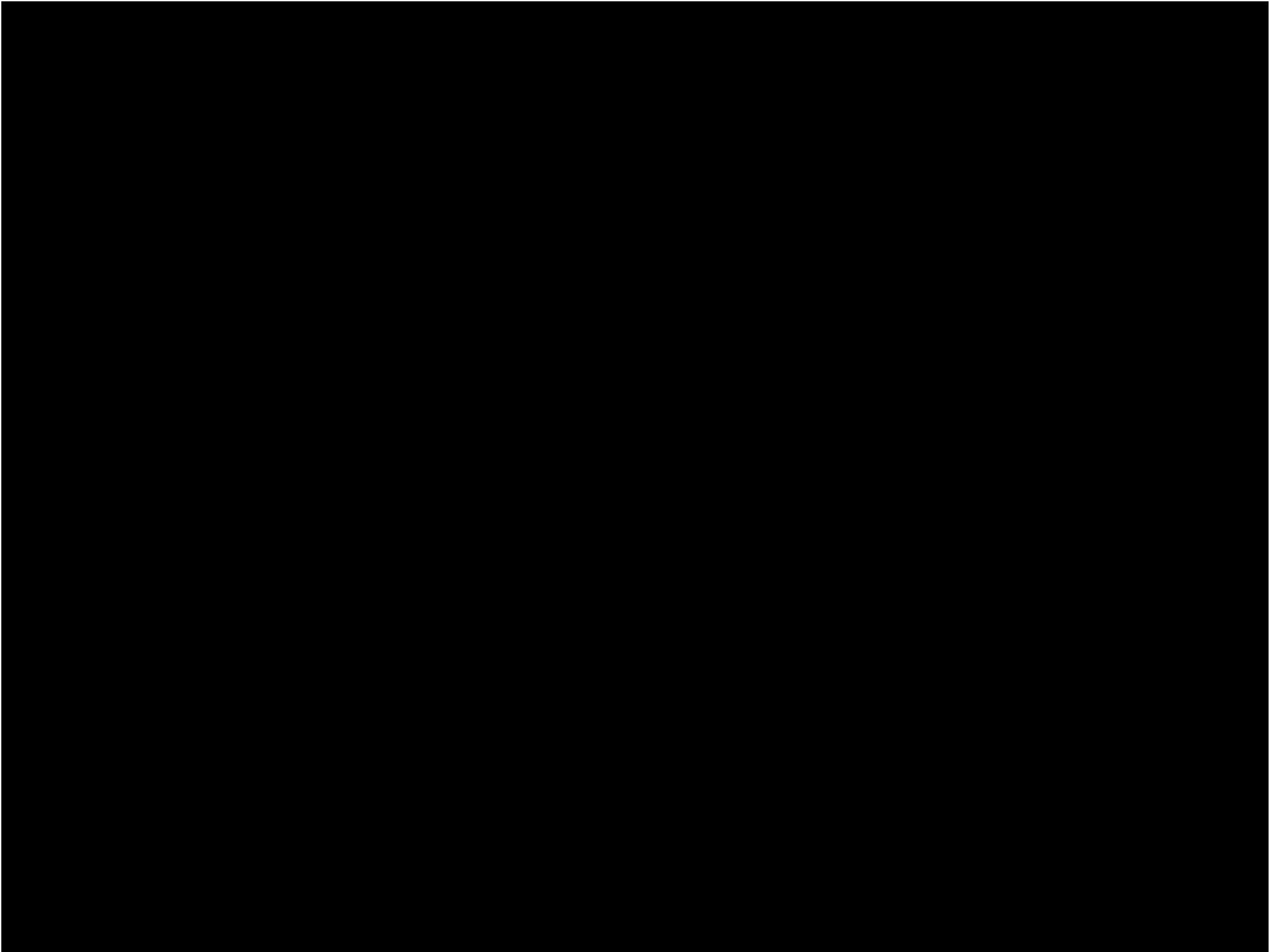


Lesson 2

... be strong and immovable.
Always work enthusiastically for the
Lord, for you know that nothing you
do for the Lord is ever useless.

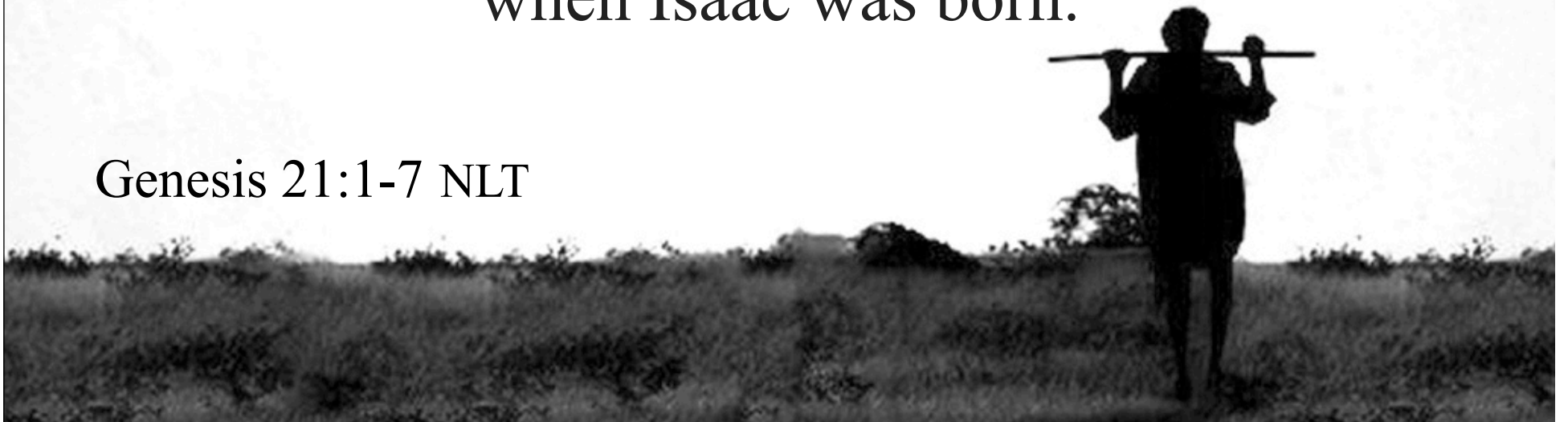
1 Corinthians 15:58 NLT

Whatever difficulty you're facing,
don't give up.



¹ The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. ² She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. ³ And Abraham named their son Isaac. ⁴ Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. ⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

Genesis 21:1-7 NLT



⁶ And Sarah declared, “God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me. ⁷ Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!”

Genesis 21:1-7 NLT



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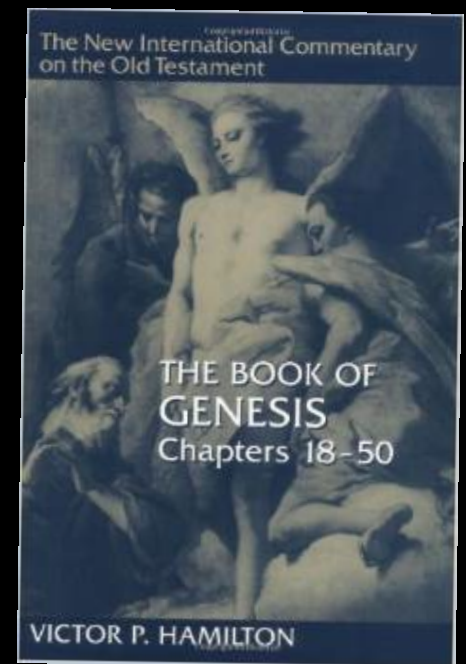
Genesis 18:16-33



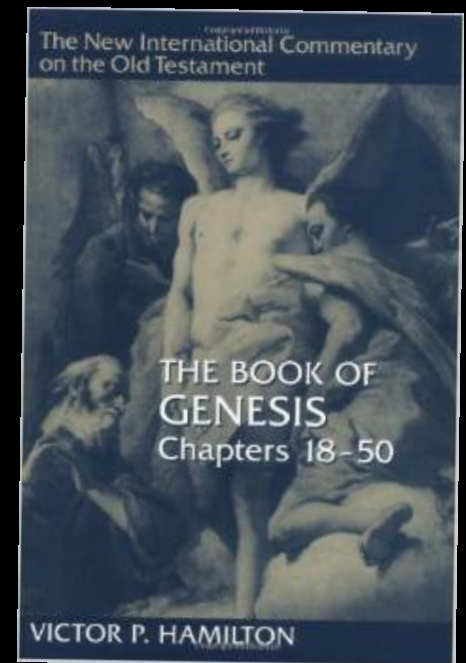
To be blessed in this context means to have one who intercedes before God regarding one's destiny, to have one who "makes intercession for the transgressor" (Isaiah 53:12).

(The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. Genesis 18 – 50, p. 19)

Yahweh can be merciful because he is righteous and just. Abraham's confidence in Yahweh's character is expressed in his stunning question: Shall not he who judges all the earth give right judgment?



Abraham's concern is: Which affects God more regarding Sodom's future—the many who are wicked or the few who are innocent? The transparent answer that is given is that it is the few who are innocent. Not only are the ten righteous more important, but they become a holy remnant and the means of the entire community's preservation. Just as the nations of the earth find blessing in Abraham and his seed, so the guilty of Sodom and Gomorrah find mercy in the lives of their fellow citizens who are innocent.



Lesson 3

Pray even for things that seem
beyond hope.

Pray relentlessly and boldly like
Abraham.

