

YOUTH



LEVEL 5

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 3



A Fresh New Start

A FRESH NEW START

How much do you know about Noah and the huge ship God told him to build? How did the earth come to have people of different skin colors after the Flood? Who was “the father of the faithful” and why was he called this? These are a few of the interesting subjects you will learn more about in this month’s lesson.

But before you begin, do you have your Bible and a pencil or pen with you? If not, get them before you read any further.

NOAH BELIEVES AND BUILDS

God looked down with great sorrow upon the earth He had made. The human beings who were created to become His very sons were totally set upon only doing evil! So God decided to destroy all human life and end the misery caused by their disobedient ways (Gen. 6:5-7 and 11-13).

However, God found one man who was seeking to live His way of life. This one righteous man was Noah. You

learned in last month’s lesson of God’s plan to have Noah build a huge ship.

Noah was already nearly 500 years old when God told him of this plan.

A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Building the Ark would not be an easy job. Nor was it something that Noah could do secretly in his backyard. This was a massive project! The Ark was to be higher than a four-story building and as long as a city block!

Word spread quickly about what Noah and his sons were doing. Curious onlookers came to watch. They asked many questions.

“Why are you building a boat?”

“Why are you making it so large?”

“How will you ever get it into water deep enough for it to float?”

These questions gave Noah a chance to tell people about God. He told them God was displeased with them because of the way they were living. He warned them of God’s plan to destroy mankind with a worldwide flood because of their disobedience.

“This is why my sons and I are building this giant ship,” Noah explained. “We are following God’s instructions. God also has instructions

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

A beautiful sunrise pictures the start of a new day.

Cover photo: American Stock Photos

for all of you. If you will believe and obey Him, you can be spared from death in this coming watery destruction.”

How do you think these people felt about Noah’s answers to their questions? Do you think they believed what he told them?

They probably responded in much the same way as people do to God’s message today. Some were polite enough to listen as if they were interested. But others scoffed openly and couldn’t believe for a minute that such a thing could happen *to them*. “It has never happened before! Why should we believe it will happen now?” they probably asked.

Some saw it as a big joke. But this was no joke! God had decided to allow mankind 120 more years in which to change their ways (Gen. 6:3). If the people took Noah’s warning message seriously and began to obey God, God would not destroy them in the Flood.

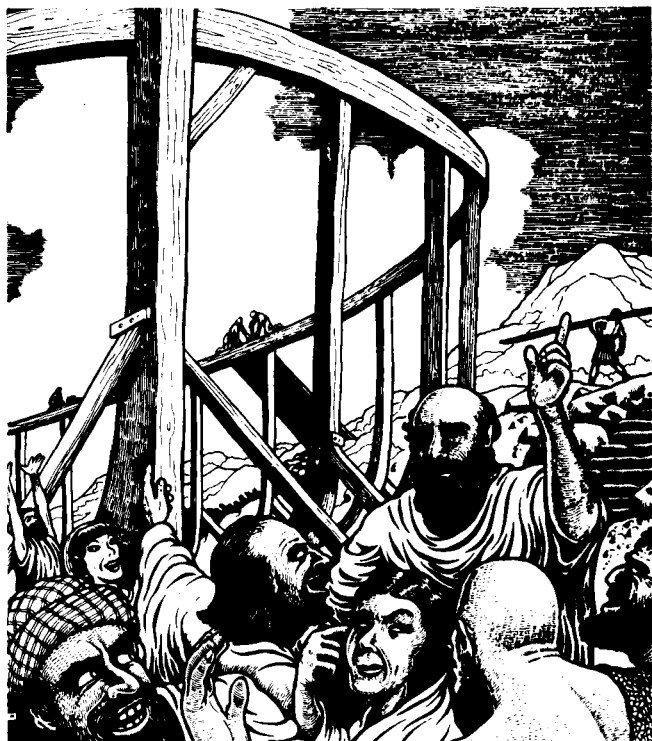
Noah probably spent most of this 120 years building the Ark and warning the people of the coming Flood. But he always told them that there was a sure way of escape. God wanted them to repent of their disobedience and turn to Him. He didn’t want to see them die (Ezek. 33:11). But it was up to them whether they would live or die.

In Noah’s time the people heard the warnings, but few gave them much thought. In fact, *not one person* turned from his evil ways to God’s way of righteousness! How can you be sure of this? If anyone had repented and turned to God, God would have saved him just as He saved Noah and his family. But

there were no other people on the Ark!

Months passed into years and years into decades. The people paid less and less attention to Noah and his sons and their “crazy” construction project. Noah, however, faithfully followed God’s instructions. He continued his work on the Ark and his preaching of God’s warning message.

Though the people didn’t believe Noah and thought him to be a bit crazy, they had to admire and respect his persistence and his building skills. Day after day, month after month, year after year Noah kept at the task God had given him! His example was a lesson in faithfulness to all who watched him then. And for those who read about his life in God’s Word, that lesson continues to be taught today.



Noah warned the people that God was going to punish the world for its sins.

You can learn from it right now. Do you faithfully stick with the jobs you are given until they are finished? Most of your tasks can be completed in a few hours or a day or two. How persistent and faithful are you? If you learn to be faithful in these small things now you will be given more important jobs and responsibilities as you grow older. (See Matthew 25:21, 23 and Luke 16:10.)

“AND THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN WERE OPENED!”

After many difficult years of building, the Ark was finished! Noah, his sons and possibly other hired workers next began the job of loading the Ark with food for the animals. This must have taken weeks or even months of heavy labor. The animals also had to be housed within the Ark.

Have you ever wondered how Noah caught all the animals and put them into the Ark? In reality this was no problem at all! Read what the Bible says in Genesis 7:15, then write this verse on the lines below. _____

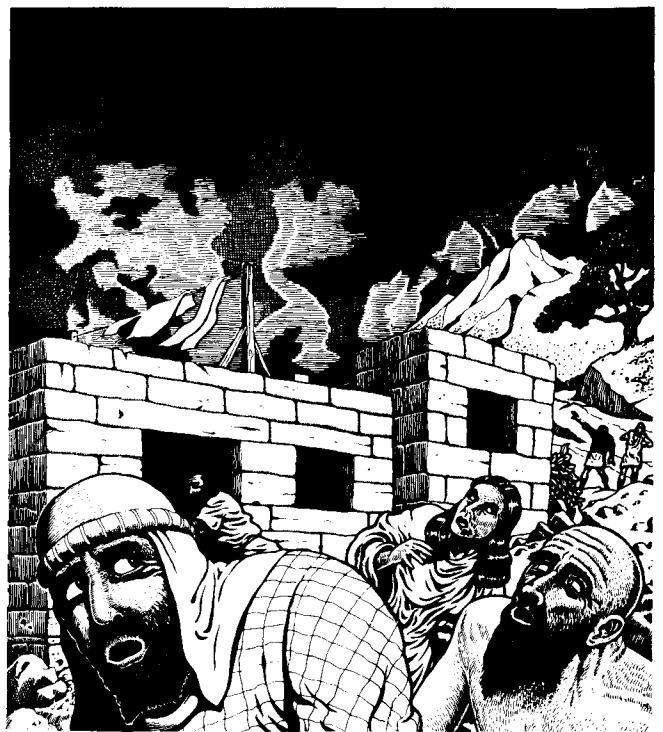
God *caused* the animals to come to the Ark! Noah didn't have to trap or corral them. All he had to do was put them in their cages and stalls as they arrived.

With food aboard the Ark and all the animals safely caged inside, Noah's work was finally finished. God now told him to enter the Ark with his family. When all were safely inside, God closed and sealed the great door in the side of the Ark.

“Will it begin raining now?” the people must have wondered when they found the Ark closed and sealed. “Could it really rain hard enough or long enough to flood the whole earth?” Only time would answer their questions now. But, as far as God was concerned, their time had already run out! He had given them 120 years to repent, but none had changed.

Clouds loomed upon the horizon. They grew larger and darker and more frightening as the hours passed!

With a sudden, blinding flash of lightning followed by a deafening clap of thunder, the rain began to fall! As the hours stretched into days the storm increased in force. Winds whipped at the Ark and the rain continued to beat down upon the earth. God also caused the



Ominous storm clouds gathered on the horizon after Noah was safely sealed in the ark.

surface of the earth itself to break open. Great fountains of water shot skyward from these cracks and flowed out over the land (Gen. 7:11).

As the waters inched higher the Ark was lifted from its resting place and floated freely. For 40 days and nights the storm raged and the waters rose higher. The Ark was the only place of safety!

When the rain ended, all the hills and mountains were covered by water! Even the highest peaks were under 20 to 30 feet of water (Gen. 7:20). All land-dwelling, air-breathing forms of life were dead. Only Noah and those with him in the Ark remained alive (Gen. 7:21-23).

The earth was washed clean of the evil and violence that had caused God to send this awful destruction. The “windows of heaven” were shut. The “fountains of the deep” were closed. God now caused a drying wind to blow over the surface of the Flood waters (Gen. 8:1).

ANOTHER BEGINNING

For months the Ark with its precious cargo safely rode the waters of the Flood. Finally, 150 days after the rain began, the Ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat in what is today part of the nation of Turkey (Gen. 8:3-4).

About four more months passed before Noah opened the window of the Ark and released a raven and a dove. Read Genesis 8:7-9 to learn what happened to them.

Noah waited one more week, then released the dove again. This time the bird returned in the evening with an olive branch in its beak. From this Noah knew that plant life was growing again on the earth. A week later the dove was sent out once more, but it did not return. Noah knew from this that the earth would soon be ready to support human life once again. He removed the covering of the Ark and looked out upon the face of a clean, new world (Gen. 8:13).

On the 27th day of the second month, one year and 10 days after entering the Ark, God told Noah to bring his family and all the animals out into this fresh, new world.

The Almighty God had brought them safely through the Flood. Noah was very thankful. To express his gratitude, he built an altar and offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to God.

God was pleased with Noah's attitude of gratefulness and thanksgiving. He now made another promise to Noah. He promised to never again curse the ground because of man or to destroy every living thing as He had just done (Gen. 8:13-22). He sealed His promise to them with a heavenly sign. Read Genesis 9:12-17 to discover what this sign was, then write it on the line below:

God's promise was not just to Noah and his family. It is also a promise to all of us today. Whenever you see a rainbow in the sky it should remind you of God's promise. And remember, God

is just as faithful now as He was then.
He does not lie! (See Titus 1:2.)

Do You Remember?

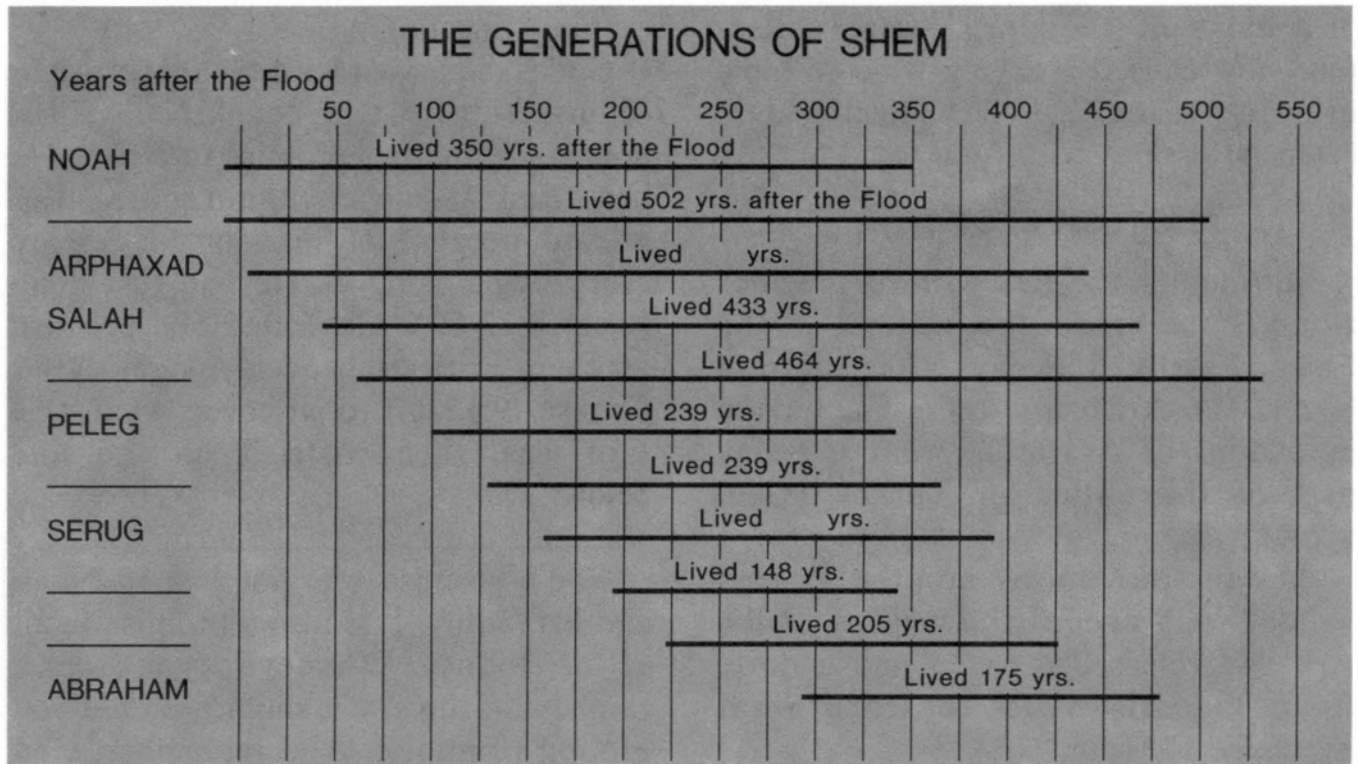
1. God chose to give mankind _____ more years to repent and turn from their evil ways.
2. How many people believed Noah's warning message and turned from their wicked way of life? _____
3. How was Noah able to collect all the animals for the Ark? _____
4. Where did the water that flooded the earth come from? (Give two sources.) _____
5. About how long did Noah and his family live in the Ark? _____

6. What sign did God give to seal His promise to never again destroy the earth with a flood? _____

THREE SONS — THREE RACES OF MANKIND

After leaving the Ark, Noah became a farmer. He lived another 350 years. His death came at the age of 950!

Noah's three sons had many children, as God had commanded. From their families the three major races of the earth developed (Gen. 9:18-19). Shem's family became the light-skinned, or Caucasian people. Ham became the father of the dark-skinned Negroid race. Japheth was the ancestor of the yellow-skinned, or Mongoloid families or nations. Every human being on earth



today is descended from Noah through these sons and their wives.

THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM

The middle verses of the 11th chapter of Genesis list the descendants of Noah through his son Shem. Shem had a son named Arphaxad who was born just two years after the Flood. Men from eight more generations, covering a period of about 500 years, are also listed in these verses. Complete the chart on page 6 and discover some interesting facts about these men.

Notice on the chart that Shem lived longer than nearly all of his nine descendants. His death came only about 30 years before the death of the last man listed!

Note also that Eber or Heber (Luke 3:35) outlived all six men who were born after him. This may explain why the Israelites were so often called Hebrews. They were the descendants of a very old man named Heber, the last of the long-lived patriarchs of the Old Testament.

In these 10 generations the human lifespan dropped from 950 years (Noah's age at death) to less than 200 years (Gen. 25:7)!

The final man on the chart, Abram, was to become one of the most important men of all earth's history.

Do You Remember?

1. Noah lived to be (95, 950, 600) years old.
2. What were the names of Noah's sons and which race of people did

each one father? _____

_____.

3. The last of the long-lived patriarchs of the Old Testament was a man named _____.

FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL

Near the time of Noah's death a baby was born in the land of Mesopotamia. This baby was named Abram. He was a descendant of Noah's son Shem. As young Abram grew he undoubtedly learned about God and was taught to obey His laws. In a world that again ignored God and worshiped idols, a man who would obey God's commandments was rare indeed. So Abram was very special to God.

BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE

When Abram was 75 years old, God told him to leave his homeland. If Abram would be obedient, God promised to make of him a great nation and make his name great. He told Abram that through him all families of the earth would be blessed! (See Genesis 12:2-3.)

Abram believed God, just as Noah had before him. He trusted God's wisdom. How did Abram respond to God's command to leave his homeland? Write your answer from Genesis 12:4.

Abram's life is an example for you to follow. God wants you to have the same willing, trusting faith and obedience that Abram had.

As you study more about Abram, ask yourself how your attitude compares to his. Do you obey your parents without question or complaint? Do you willingly follow the directions of your teachers at school? Or do you, like most people on earth today, resent being told what to do and resist doing it because you don't see *why* it should be done?

This doesn't mean you should become like an automatic, unthinking robot. God wants you to think. But He also wants you to learn to trust Him totally, knowing that He will never lead you wrongly and will always look out for you and bless your efforts.

This is what Abram did! This is why he is called the "father of the faithful." You will see this more clearly as you study the remainder of Abram's life.

CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Abram and his nephew Lot were both very wealthy men. They owned large flocks of sheep and great herds of cattle (Gen. 13:2, 5). These animals were so great in number that their herdsmen soon began quarreling over where to graze and water them. Abram offered Lot his choice of whatever part of the land he wanted.

Lot chose the rich, well-watered land of the Jordan Valley near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram agreed and took the less attractive mountain land to the west of the Jordan (Gen. 13:12).

Abram's attitude of generosity and selflessness was pleasing to God. He



God speaks to Abram, telling him to leave Haran and go to the land of Canaan.

promised Abram and his children after him all the land in every direction from the mountains where he lived. God also promised him that his children would become as many as the specks of dust on the earth! (See Genesis 13:14-17.)

Abram's attitude of giving and sharing is another lesson for you today. God will bless you for your kindness and generosity just as He blessed Abram. How does God feel toward those who give willingly? Write your answer from II Corinthians 9:7. _____

EVEN GREATER BLESSINGS PROMISED

As the years passed Abram became concerned about God's promises. He

and his wife Sarai were no longer young. Soon Sarai would be too old to give birth to a child. Abram wondered if perhaps God's promises were to be fulfilled through his servants and their children (Gen. 15:2-3). If he died childless, the eldest servant-child born in his house would be his rightful heir.

But God appeared to him again and repeated that he would have a son of his own, begotten from his own body. His heir would not be his servant's son, but his very own son! God repeated that his family would grow great, *as the stars of heaven* in number (verses 4-5). They would be given all the land of Canaan from the Nile River in the south to the great Euphrates River in the north (verse 18).

However, God revealed to Abram that these blessings would not come for many years. He told him that he would die and be buried long before the promises of possession of the land would be fulfilled. Abram's children would become slaves in a stranger's land and would serve there under great affliction. Then, after 400 years, they would be delivered from this slavery and come out with great wealth. Only after all this would they possess the land God promised to Abram and his children (Gen. 15:13-21).

A SON IS BORN!

Sarai was also concerned about God's promises to Abram. She was sure she was now too old to have a child. She saw no way that God's promises could ever be fulfilled through her.

After giving the matter much careful thought she came up with a plan. If Abram had a son by her handmaiden, Sarai thought, this child could be the son of his own body, whom God had promised. Abram took his wife's advice. He accepted Hagar, Sarai's handmaiden, and she became pregnant with Abram's child.

Life in Abram's household didn't go well after this. Instead of happiness over the coming birth of the child, there was hatred and sorrow. Hagar felt superior to Sarai because she could give Abram a child while Sarai could not. And Sarai grew to dislike Hagar because of this haughty attitude. She began to treat Hagar harshly. Finally, Hagar fled into the desert to escape the harsh treatment of her angry mistress.

There God appeared to her and told her to return to Abram and Sarai. He also told her that her child would be a son. She was to name him Ishmael. God promised that Ishmael would become the father of a great multitude of people! (Gen. 16:9-11.)

Hagar did as she was told and a few months later her son was born. Abram was very happy! "At last God's promises were beginning to be fulfilled!" thought Abraham. He was sure he now had the son whom God had promised would become the father of a large nation of millions of people.

Do You Remember?

1. Who was the "man of righteousness" born about the time of Noah's death? _____

2. What promises did God make to Abram when he was 75 years old?

3. Why has Abram been called “the father of the faithful”? _____

NEW NAMES AND THE PROMISED SON

Thirteen years after Ishmael’s birth, when Abram was 99 years old, God spoke again to him. This time God made His promises to Abram *even greater*. He made an *everlasting covenant* or agreement with Abram! God promised to be the God of Abram and his children *forever*. Also, the land of Canaan would be their *everlasting* possession. But God promised these blessings to Abram only if he would *continue* to obey Him.

Abram was to become “a father of many nations” (Gen. 17:4) and Sarai was to be “a mother of nations” (verse 16). All of God’s promises were to be fulfilled through Abram, Sarai *and* their child — not through a servant woman and her son!

God also changed their names to emphasize these promises and this covenant. From now on they were to be called Abraham and Sarah. *Abraham* means “father of a great multitude” and *Sarah* means “princess.” Every time they heard their new names they were reminded of the great promises God would fulfill through BOTH of them!

THE PROMISE RENEWED

Abraham could hardly believe his ears! He was nearly 100 years old and Sarah would soon be 90. How could they possibly have a child of their own! He prayed, asking God that these blessings and promises be fulfilled through Ishmael (Gen. 17:18).

But God was firm. “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him” (verse 19).

God encouraged Abraham concerning Ishmael, telling him that he also had been blessed. “But,” God repeated, “my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year” (verse 21).

GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL!

Soon after this, three strangers appeared at Abraham’s tent. He greeted them heartily and eagerly invited them to stay with him a while and be refreshed with food and drink.

The three accepted Abraham’s hospitality, and he and Sarah quickly prepared a special meal for them.

Abraham soon realized that these were not ordinary men. One of them, after asking about Sarah, said, “I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son” (Gen. 18:10, RSV).

Sarah, working nearby in the tent, overheard this statement and began to laugh to herself. She knew she was well

beyond the normal childbearing age.

By the end of their visit it was clear to Abraham and Sarah that one of these three “men” was the member of the God Family called the Word, who later became Jesus Christ. The other two “men” were actually angels!

Through this experience God was teaching Abraham and Sarah an important lesson, one that you should also learn and remember. When God promises to do something, no matter how strange or impossible it may sound, you should not laugh at it or doubt His promise. There is nothing too difficult for the Eternal God! He is all-powerful! (Gen. 18:14.)

THE SON OF PROMISE IS BORN

Sarah became pregnant as God had promised, and in the spring of the year she gave birth to a son. He was named Isaac according to God’s command. This long-awaited son was born to Sarah when she was 90 years of age! Abraham was now 100 (Gen. 21:1-5).

Abraham had waited faithfully and patiently for *25 years* for this *first step* in the fulfillment of God’s promises to him. This is another lesson you can learn

from his life. God doesn’t always answer your prayers immediately — or when you want them answered. Patience is a point of character that you must develop as you mature.

Abraham now had a son of his very own who was born of his wife, Sarah. This was the son through whom God would fulfill His great and wonderful promises — the promises that had been repeated and expanded so many times since Abraham (then Abram) left Haran a quarter of a century before.

Exciting and important things lay ahead for this baby who was born by a miracle. He was very special to his elderly parents. He was just as special to Almighty God!

Do You Remember?

1. What new names were given to Abram and Sarai and what did these names mean? _____
_____.
2. What name was given to Sarah’s son? _____.
3. How long did Abraham and Sarah wait for their promised son? _____
_____.

NUMBERS SEARCH

Can you answer the following questions without looking up the answers in your lesson or the Bible? Give it a try, then look up the ones you don't know.

How many people were saved in the Ark (Gen. 6:10, 18)? _____ people

What was the length of the Ark (Gen. 6:15)? _____ cubits

What was the height of the Ark (Gen. 6:15)? _____ cubits

What was the width of the Ark (Gen. 6:15)? _____ cubits

Length of time God gave people to repent before
sending the Flood (Gen. 6:3). _____ years

Length of time it rained upon the earth (Gen. 7:17). _____ days

How long Noah lived (Gen. 9:29). _____ years

Abram's age when he obeyed God's command to
leave his homeland (Gen. 12:4). _____ years

Age of Abraham when Isaac was born (Gen. 21:5). _____ years

Age of Sarah when Isaac was born (Gen. 17:17). _____ years

How long Abraham had to wait for first step of God's
promise to be fulfilled (Gen. 12:4, Gen. 21:5). _____ years

Now, can you find the answer numbers above in the numbers search box? All numbers are in straight lines, but they may be backwards, frontwards, upsidedown, or at an angle. Numerals in the search box may be used more than once. Circle the numerals in the puzzle and check them off the answer column as you find them.

Added challenge: Can you use all sixteen numerals?

0	7	5	0
5	0	0	1
9	2	3	0
5	1	8	4