

# “Abraham-Looking Beyond the Promise”

By Jesse Rairdon

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Please remain standing; I’m going to ask Pete to come and lead us in prayer.

**Pete:** Lord Jesus, thank You for this day. Thank You for this time of worship and celebration. Lord, thank You for Father’s Day. Bless the fathers that are here. Bless the rest of everyone that’s here. Help us to open our hearts and our ears to learn from this message, and take what You would have for us; spread it out, and live it throughout the week, and not just close our Bibles at the end of service, and walk away, forgetting what manner of people we are. Lord Jesus, I ask Your blessing on Brother Jesse. I know that he would have You to speak through him; help him to stay out of Your way during this message. Help him to say what You would have him to say. Lord, bless all of us, and keep us, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Please be seated. Good morning, and, again, happy Father’s Day. A group that I am honored to be a part of. This morning, as I was shaving, my little girl came in with this card, and she already had crayon all over it--she was practicing her writing—wished me a happy Father’s Day. She was ready to hand me the card, and I was ready to receive it, but she took it away, and ran, and laughed, and said, “Mine!” But it was the thought of it, and her little heart was in the right place. What a blessing. What a blessing.

Men of purpose. This month, our Scripture theme is:

**1 Corinthians 16:13** *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

Be strong. So, I thought, as I was praying, and preparing, and was talking with the preaching team, it was really on my heart to really talk about Abraham, the father of our faith. And, usually, I talk about a number of people throughout the Scriptures, but, really, God had my focus be on Abraham this time.

Three main areas we’re going to cover, if you’re taking notes:

1. Obedience brings understanding
2. Eternal Perspective vs Temporal Perspective
3. Finishing well

## Part 1: Obedience Brings Understanding

**Genesis 12:1-8** *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and*

*pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.*

If I had a title for this message, it would be, "Looking beyond the Promise." Imagine driving by a place; someone shows you a place, like a realtor—Mike's a realtor—and he takes me to show a place, and he says, "This is the place you're going to have, Jesse." There is no "For sale" sign, it's not listed anywhere, there's people living there, and he says, "This is going to be your place, but not right now. Oh, and, by the way, the people that are there, they're not going to like it when you come to take it, so you're going to have to kick them out. Imagine that whole, "You can't stay, long, now, because it's not yours yet. So, let's keep moving." "Can we see any other places?" "No, that's the place I have for you. That's it. Keep moving, Abraham. Get your stuff, keep going keep walking." Imagine the kind of faith, to have that kind of a promise, and say, "This is your promise, but you can't have it. It's going to be for someone after you, many generations down the road." Imagine the faith; he didn't understand a lot, did he? But, until he obeyed, and left his father's house, he didn't understand any of it. And, as he goes along, we'll see in Scripture, that God gives him more understanding. Goes a little further, God gives him more understanding, changes his name, does things in his life... I guess you could say he gets a calling, and a purpose, and a promotion, right, Parrish? He goes a little further along. We don't understand everything in our life; when I was first baptized, I thought I could do a lot of things in my life, but those weren't my callings and purposes. When God showed me I was going to be able to preach, it was ten years before I first preached a message. So, sometimes your calling and your purpose, the things God has for you, you have to have a little bit of obedience, and patience, and understanding before God brings those things about in your life. Pastor Ulysse was saying that is you bring people, and save them in church, and you don't have any understanding, you're basically raising weak disciples. You've got to go through a process in your life. You've got to be called. You've got to have purpose. You've got to get that understanding. You got to start to grow in God before you can bring others to Christ. Amen? And, sometimes you bring it to other people who are a little wiser, they've been around a little while, and they will help you understand the Scriptures. That's okay, too, because the blind man said, "All I know is, I was blind, and now I see. This Jesus did it. You have a problem? Go talk to Him." (John 9:25) Sometimes that's all we have is our testimony, at the start, but, as we grow and mature in God, God gives us understanding.

Abraham had a lot of faith. He's called the father of our faith (Romans 4:11-12). Abram was comfortable where he was at. Now, does the Bible say that Abraham listened to God all his life, and was raised in a Godly home? No, he was right there with his dad, worshipping idols, but, for some reason, God said, "You." Now, if you look at the name, Abram—because his name wasn't Abraham yet—it means high father. The name itself means father, high father. Keep that in mind, it's going to be important as we go along, as Abram goes on his journey. I don't have enough time to go through every step—Parrish, it would take about two or three months to go through every lesson or topic that was coming to mind about Abraham's journey. We could really use a few months of Abraham, so, let's just try to narrow it down, today, to a few things. Take these Scriptures, Genesis chapter twelve all the way through twenty-two, and maybe even a little further beyond, and study them yourselves, and see what God gives you, okay? So, it's easy sometimes to say, "Well, Abraham had great faith, because he knew what God was going to do." No he didn't. Sometimes we're like that with our football team, on Monday morning. We're Monday-morning quarterbacking from the porch. "Well, they should have done this better," or, "They should have done that better. Look at what they did; they messed it all up." Sometimes we treat our leaders like that, too, but we don't have the level of obedience and understanding, sometimes, that God gives them, so, sometimes there's a little bit of—we're nearsighted; we don't see afar off. We only see what we see, and we get a little frustrated, a little impatient. We need a little patience to work with, amen?

Abram means father, but he wasn't a father yet. Interesting how the name meant father but he never—he was seventy-five when God first called him. Seventy-five years old. He was not a father, but his name meant father, high father. We see a lot of correlations, too, with our walk, as a Christian, with Abraham, as you study Abraham, too, had a walk with God, as you study Abram. You see, obedience brings understanding. So it doesn't just do any good to sit at home, and read the Scriptures, and meditate all day. I won't get the understanding unless I obey. Unless I start the walk, unless I step out in faith, unless I go visit somebody, unless I take the time to pray with somebody, unless I take the time to try to do a Bible study, to share with somebody. Unless I do those things, I don't get more understanding. Some people study, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; they study their whole life (2 Timothy 3:7) They have—they're great with the Scriptures, but they don't understand the things that God would have for them because they just do not obey Him.

## Part 2-Having an Eternal Perspective Vs Temporal Perspective

**Genesis 13:1-13** *And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*

So, Abram was rich and had a lot of possessions. So did Lot. But they both had different perspectives on how they seen what God had for them. Being rich and having possessions doesn't make you evil, or wrong, or necessarily a bad person. Because the Bible talks about the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). It's where your heart is, what your position is, where your insight is at, what you do with those things that you have.

Let's go to the New Testament for just a moment, and see Jesus's perspective on these things. There was a man that came to Him, and basically wanted Him to divide the inheritance up—Jesus to settle the dispute. Your perspective has to be eternal.

**Luke 12:13-21** *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no*

*room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

So, this man came to Jesus, and said, “Settle this dispute between me and my brother about all our stuff. Jesus basically said, “That’s not why I’m here. That’s not the perspective that you need to have.” Then He made the statement that’s hard for people with an earthly, with a temporary perspective to understand, He said, “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” Try telling that to anybody in the world today that doesn’t understand the things of God and they’ll look at you like you’re crazy. Especially red-blooded Americans—“Get all you can get, strive for the best, be on top,” you know, “Step on the person below you to get where you’ve got to go.” Right? That’s not what’s taught in our society, in capitalism, you know? Christ probably wouldn’t have had a great time with some of our leaders, you know? He kind of would have to dispute with them all the time, you know? Especially these presidential candidates and elections. Isn’t it crazy, some of the stuff that they come up with? And they try to quote Scripture, and bring God into it, and God has nothing to do with their aspirations. But I know God’s in control, so, amen; that’s enough about the political things.

And just in case you didn’t get it, He shares—He tells a story to make a point. Great teachers will often tell a story to make a point. Jesus did a lot of parables to make a point. In this parable, He talks about somebody that somebody that was so worried about all his stuff. His perspective was all his stuff. He was doing great, and he got more investments, bought more stocks, bought more bonds, got more this, got more that, got bigger houses; yeah, more than what he really needed, but he never had an eternal perspective. And God challenged him, and said, “Your soul is required of thee, and what will happen to these things that you’ve gathered, that you have for yourself?”

Let’s get back to Abraham and Lot. This is not a jump up and down and shout and scream message, today, because sometimes it gets into our little—as fathers, we want to be the protector, provider, and look to our future, make sure my daughter has something beyond us, and that’s good, but I’ve got to keep the proper perspective. And not sacrifice the relationship I have with my daughter or my family to go chasing after every single dollar. How far do think I’d really get ahead, having that kind of perspective? Is it worth losing my family? Let’s get back to the Scriptures. Now let’s get back to Abraham and Lot.

Trouble was in the camp, sometimes just like at church, doesn’t it? We get some stuff, we get some callings, we get some attitudes, we get some people starting to dispute amongst one another. They each had different perspectives, didn’t they? So Abraham being the elder statesman, the wiser man, said, “Look, nephew, we need got to resolve this. We’ve got to be a testimony. We can’t be arguing and fighting amongst all these people we live amongst, here.” Especially since Abraham had a perspective beyond that. This was going to be where his family as going to be later. “We’ve got to maintain our testimony right here, right now. Let’s resolve this. There’s plenty of space. Look out, you pick first, and wherever you go, I’ll go the other way.” Interesting.

Abraham let Lot chose the path he wanted first. Wouldn’t you think, if you were Abraham, you’d want to pick the best place? I would, naturally, but, when I have an eternal perspective, things look a little different. The world’s perspective is “Do what seems right, this looks easier, this looks better. The ground’s already prepared, just go ahead. Plus, you’ve got cities right there, you can get all you need, and it’s all still there.” That’s what Lot chose. That’s the world’s perspective, not God’s perspective.

**Genesis 13:14-18**      *And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and*

*westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.*

That's a good habit Abraham had, too: Every time God talked to him, he built an altar, and gives thanks to God, and praised God. Do we really do that enough in our lives? Sometimes have to really consider what God is doing, and thank Him. Amen? So, after he has separated himself from Lot, he waited for God to enforce His eternal perspective. "This is what I have for you." Sometimes you have to separate yourself from people who don't have the same perspective before God will really give you a clear understanding, a clearer picture of what He has for you. Don't be dragging around a bunch of negative people in your life and expect to see an eternal perspective. Love them—Abraham still loved Lot; he rescued him several times. He actually bargained with God over his life, when Sodom and Gomorrah were going to be destroyed. Brought Him down to ten people, and He said, "I'll just deliver Lot out of there for your sake, Abraham." So, Abraham never forgot about his responsibilities to Lot, but he had to separate himself from him, because he didn't have a proper perspective. Amen?

You see, God had a much bigger plan for Abram, and the more he obeyed, the more he understood, and the more an eternal perspective came into focus. You have to look beyond the promise to see an eternal perspective. Amen? If Abraham would have stopped and said—at the first promise God gave him, he never would have continued, and never would have gotten to where we're going to go next. Remember, early in the Scripture, He said He was going to give him a greater inheritance?

**Genesis 17:1-8** *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*

Eternal perspective. "Keep following Me. Keep following My lead (now) Abraham." Look at the name change here: Abram was high father, now Abraham, if you look at the definition in Hebrew, is a father of a multitude. Father of a multitude. This is a much bigger picture than just one nation, or one group of people, this is many people. Kings, countries, bigger perspective.

Sometimes we want the whole picture, right away. We want to see everything God has for us, but, then, where would be our faith? We could just sit back and take it easy. There would be no trials. We would be just kind of walking along, smelling the roses, picking through the tulips. There wouldn't be any great question. But, through our trials, and the things we have to go through, that's how we let our light shine, that's how people see that we have an eternal perspective. We see things differently, we look at things differently. Look at this country as a whole, the world as a whole, look at how movies, over the past fifty years, what people tolerated... What is tolerated now, between so-called Christians, and what was tolerated then? Even my wife put me in check the other day. She said, "You shouldn't be watching that show." I said, "Amen." I turned that off, cut the subscription to that off, that particular channel, and I haven't watched it since, because that was conviction. Twenty years ago, when I first got baptized, I

wouldn't have even thought about looking at that. So, how did that get in? I lost my perspective; I started entertaining myself with things that weren't of God. Sometimes you've just got to turn that TV off, and seek God for that right perspective, get back into His Word. Read good books. Yes, read the Bible; let that be your main good book, but read some other good books, too. If you're married, read some books about your marriage, how you can relate better to your spouse. If you're a father or mother, how you can be better at that. Amen?

Parrish talked about, this first week, this process and promotion. He did mention Abraham in it, so I'm glad he left most of the meat of Abraham for me. Abram had his calling, but then he had to go through this process to get his promotion. His name, Abraham, was the promotion. That wasn't the end of the story; that wasn't the end of the promise. There's some more things that Abraham has to do, here.

### Part 3- Finishing Well

**Genesis 22:1-2** *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

Talk about a slap in the face. Now, if He had told him this maybe earlier on in his walk, he might not have believed Him. He might not have had enough faith. He might not have had enough understanding. He might not have had enough eternal perspective. And, at this point, Abraham didn't even disagree, he just, in faith, just, "Let's go do it. God said it. It's God, I got to go do it."

**Genesis 22:3-4** *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day...*

That's interesting. You look at the third day... It's also in Scriptures a lot of times, so look at that. This relates to Christ a lot, this story does.

**Genesis 22:4** *Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.*

Jesus rose on the third day, in case you were wondering.

**Genesis 22:5** *And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.*

He knew he was told to go up and kill his son, but still he told them, "We're going to come back together." So, he knew! He was looking beyond the promise, beyond the son, beyond what God had for him right there, and following God every step of the way. That's not easy to do, sometimes, is it? If God told you today, "Quit your job, sell your house, go to San Diego, there's a need to minister there," could you do it? If there's a need there, could you do it? Could you follow God with that amount of faith? Maybe it's a little more personal. Open up your home for Bible studies. Open up your home to host families when they come to visit. Share with your neighbors.

**Genesis 22:6** *And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.*

“You carry the wood; I’ll carry my stuff. Let’s go.”

**Genesis 22:7-10** *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, [This is where the faith comes in] My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.*

I mean, that’s really close. At some point, I might have been like, “God, what’s going on here? Am I really going to have to follow through with this?”

**Genesis 22:11-12** *And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*

There’s only one other place in Scripture where the son was sacrificed... Imagine what a friend Abraham was to God, that he could trust Him this much, that he could be tested on this level.

**Genesis 22:13-14** *And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*

God, Himself, will provide a sacrifice. God, Himself, has shown that this is going to be seen. God, Himself, was leading Abraham to look beyond the perspective he may have had, the promise he may have been given, to follow Him every step of the way, to be led by God to fulfil his calling and purpose in his life. You see the promise wasn’t just in his son alone, it was in every one of us. That’s how he could be the father of many nations, because the lamb that was given of God was for all of us. It was for all of us, but Abraham couldn’t have that perspective unless he just obeyed God, and followed God every step of the way. We’re wrapping up here, soon. God himself could raise one from the dead. God himself can change what appears to be hopeless and lost, and turn it into something bigger than we can even imagine. God want us to finish well.

There is a particular breed of the monarch butterfly, which starts in a place in Mexico. This particular breed of monarch butterfly migrates all the way up to Canada. A generation will stop, maybe even go a mile or two, then stop and die, and the next generation will take over. It just kind of autopilot, all the way up to this certain place in Canada. Until the last generation, which is called the Methuselah generation, the strongest generation, takes a flight all the way back down to Mexico, to a place they’ve never been before; to a country they’ve never seen, to a place they have a citizenship. This butterfly, with its little pea-brain—so don’t let someone think bad of you for calling you a pea-brain; think good. “You’re very narrow-minded, Jesse.” That’s great! I’m on the path; I’ve got eternal perspective, I’ve got my focus, I’m looking beyond the promise—so this little butterfly flies all the way back down to Mexico where it’s forefathers were from, at least, originally. This butterfly finishes well.

We need to finish well. We need to have the desire to finish well. Sometimes we think that, maybe, someone dies young, or early in their life, if they died in God, they finished well. Stephen was stoned; he finished well. Many of the prophets were stoned or killed; they finished well. Jesus’ life was

cut short, on this earth; thirty-three years old. “I will do a work, and I will cut it short, in righteousness.” Jesus’ life was cut short, but He did well; He finished well. Abraham didn’t always do everything right; he was deceitful at times. He made bad decisions, sometimes, but he finished well.

Let’s go to our last scripture, as Andy gets ready to come up and wrap things up for us in a few minutes.

**Hebrews 11:8** *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

The understanding would come, along the way.

**Hebrews 11:9-13** *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off [but not received them], and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

What kind of a cruel God would make you die before you receive your promise? A God that gives you an eternal perspective. Looking beyond the promise, to keep going; there’s a greater purpose.

**Hebrews 11:14-15** *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

It would be easy to back where you came from, if you already knew what you had.

**Hebrews 11:16** *But now they desire a better country...*

It was eternal. It wasn’t just Israel. It wasn’t just Israel; it was beyond Israel. It was a heavenly country, a city, a citizenship in Heaven, beyond the number of the stars, beyond the sand of the seas

**Hebrews 11:16** *...wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you. If it were not so, I would have told you. And, when I come again, I will receive you unto Myself.” (John 14:2-3)

**Hebrews 11:17-19** *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: [looking beyond the promise] Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead...*

Even from the dead! What faith!

**Hebrews 11:19** *...from whence also he received him in a figure.*

Amen. Give the Lord a praise.



