



God Makes a Promise to Abram

Genesis 11:27–12:9



LESSON GOAL

Students will learn that God keeps His promises.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- Abram worshiped idols before God called him.
- God promised Abram many children and grandchildren.
- God promised Abram many descendants, a great land, and a great nation.
- God said that a blessing would come from Abram. That blessing would be Jesus Christ.

KEY VERSE

“I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3).

APPLICATION

- Trust God to keep His promises.
- Trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior to become part of the promise to Abram.
- Obey God’s commands even when they are difficult.

NEXT WEEK

Abraham and Sarah Doubt God
Read Genesis 16–17, 18:1–15.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

In this lesson, we will see God preparing for Himself a people who can become the mouthpiece of divine revelation. After the tragedy of Genesis 3 (the fall of Adam and Eve), man’s only hope was that his relationship to God might be restored (something he could not accomplish himself). The Lord had planned this restoration from eternity past. It was to be realized through the descendants of one man—Abram. Why did God select Abram? He chose him because He is the sovereign God, free to choose anyone He wants for whatever reasons He thinks best.

About 2,100 years before Christ’s birth, Terah, Abram’s father, moved his family from Ur (a city in the land of the nomadic Amorites) to Haran, another city in the same area but about 50 miles northwest. Terah originally had planned to go to Canaan, but he settled at Haran instead. From Haran, God called Abram to leave his country and all his relatives and depart for Canaan. God promised to show him his exact destination en route. The writer of Hebrews commends Abram for leaving everything he knew for an unknown destination, relying only on his faith in God (Heb. 11:8).

Three basic aspects to God’s promise were revealed in Genesis 12:2–3: (1) Abram would have many descendants; he would begin a great nation (Israel); (2) his name would be honored; and (3) his family would be a blessing to “all the families of the earth.” The importance of this covenant cannot be overemphasized because it predicts the ultimate blessing and reversal of Adam’s curse—the advent and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. All families on earth would wish for this blessing, and they would receive it in Acts 10 when Gentiles were welcomed into the church along with Jews.

The wording of Genesis 12:4 is interesting. It shows that Abram left Haran in obedience to God. Abram took all his transportable possessions with him. God had blessed him mightily, and he had gained substantial wealth. Besides his other acquisitions, Abram had gained a number of slaves, some who were born to adult slaves he already owned and others whom he had purchased. The rich man who lived in Haran was about to become a nomad living in tents.

The whole entourage traveled south to Shechem. Although he had no way of knowing it at the time, Abram was camped at the center of the territory that God was going to give him and his posterity. The Lord appeared to Abram, revealing to him a fourth aspect of His promise: all the land he could see around him eventually would be a part of his legacy from God. This land was an aspect of the covenant that had not been previously revealed. (Genesis 12:2–3 does not mention it.) Abram camped at what must have been a widely recognized landmark—the massive terebinth tree of a man named Moreh. No such landmark remains today.

On several occasions in this passage Abram built an altar. He would travel a little and then pray; a little more progress, a little more prayer—always the same pattern. The

Additional Reference Materials

Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis by John J. Davis

The MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur
Creation and Blessing by Allen P. Ross

Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, edited by Merrill C.

Tenney. The article entitled “Ur of the Chaldees” (vol . 5, pp. 846-848) is helpful in understanding what the city of Ur was like back in the day Abraham lived in it.

word for *altar* in Genesis 12:7 is “a place for slaughter.” Long before Moses received the Law, God had instituted blood sacrifice as the means of communion with Him. Again, in Genesis 12:8, Abram traveled the short distance from Shechem to Bethel and built another altar. He is probably the best early example of a man who walked by faith rather than by sight. He always seemed to need to pray.

The writer of Genesis was, of course, Moses. His inclusion of specific landmarks such as Shechem, Bethel, Ai, and the terebinth of Moreh must have created a heightened sense of national heritage and anticipation for the people of Israel as they wandered about in the wilderness centuries later. Bethel was called Luz at the time of Abram, but its name had been changed before Moses’ time. Abram probably journeyed to this mountainous region to provide pasture for his flocks.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth”
(Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

Did God tell the people to spread throughout the earth?

Yes.

Did the people obey?

No. Many of the people settled in Shinar.

Why did they disobey?

They were proud. They said “no” in their hearts. They wanted to be their own gods.

What did they do?

They built a tower to be famous and powerful.

What did the Lord do?

He confused their language and scattered them throughout the earth.

What should the people have done?

They should have been humble and obeyed.

Should you obey God?

Yes, you should be humble and obey.



Introduce the Friend on Your Left

Ask each student to tell you the name of the student on his left and one thing he knows about that student. When every student has had a turn, open your Bible and tell the students you are going to introduce them to a new person in the Bible lesson today. His name is Abram, and they can read about him in the book of Genesis.



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Going on a Trip

Have the students sit in a circle and play “I’m going on a trip and taking my...” Have each student say what he would take on the trip. Tell the students that in today’s lesson they are going to learn about a man who took a trip to his new home.



Following God’s Map

Create a map of Abram’s journey or copy one from a Bible atlas. (Check copyright restrictions first.) Give each student a map and have him color it. Help him trace the path Abram took on his journey. You may even wish to tape a line to follow on the floor. Have the students follow you around the room to the spot where you are going to tell the Bible lesson.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included to use during worship time. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Reading of the Text

Read Genesis 11:27–12:9.

God always has the best plan. Sometimes His plan seems hard, dangerous, or scary. But His plan still is the best. We have been learning about God’s plan in the book of Genesis. God’s plan was to choose one man, named Abram, who would obey Him.

When Abram was in the city of Haran, he and his family worshiped idols (Josh. 24:2). God was gracious and called Abram away from that city to worship the true God in the land of Canaan. God said to Abram, “Leave your home and go to a special land that I will show you. I have a promise for you. I will make you into a big family-nation who believes in a great God. I will bless you and your children in Canaan.”

Abram lived in a nice city, but the people there did not love God. They prayed to the moon and the sun. God had a better plan—for Abram to pray to Him, the Creator. Abram listened to God. He made a good choice. He obeyed God and left his home in Haran.

Abram packed up all he owned—food, clothing, and dishes. His servants loaded all the boxes onto the donkeys’ backs. Abram and his family, his servants, and all the animals started walking. They walked and walked, day after day. They looked like a huge caravan crossing the hot, dry desert, climbing over rocky hills, and crossing cold rivers. It was a long, hot journey. At night, the servants set up the tents so the

families could sleep. The next day, they packed up the tents and walked again. Abram did not know where he was going, but he believed that God would show him the way.

Finally Abram arrived in the land of Canaan. The Lord spoke to Abram and said, "This is it! This is the land that I will give your children. I am making a promise to you. You will become a big family-nation who believes in a great God." He also said, "I will give you many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. All the families of the world will be blessed through you." Abram was grateful to God for bringing him to Canaan. Abram built an altar of stones, bowed on his knees, and thanked God for bringing his family safely to Canaan. Abram was glad that he had obeyed God. In coming weeks, we will hear more about Abram and Sarai in the promised land of Canaan.



Lesson Questions

Why did Noah's descendants disobey God and stay together in Babel?

Noah's children and grandchildren did not want to spread out. They wanted to become a great nation and make a name for themselves without God.

What did God do at Babel so that the disobedient people would have to spread throughout the earth?

God confused the people's words so that they could not understand one another.

What is the name of the man God chose to become a great nation with a great name?

God chose Abram and told him to leave his home and go to another land.

What happened when Abram arrived in the land of Canaan?

God promised Abram that Canaan would belong to his children.

What did Abram do after God promised him the land of Canaan?

Abram built an altar and thanked God.

Does God always know what is best for His children?

Yes. We listen to and obey God because He has the best ways for us.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards to present the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces to present the lesson.



Shield of Abram

Read Genesis 15:1. Cut a shield from a piece of cardstock. Use a marker to divide the shield into four sections. Each section will represent a portion of the covenant between God and Abram. In the first section, draw stars to represent Abram's many descendants (Gen. 15:5). In the second section, draw a compass to represent a special land (Gen. 13:14). The third section should contain a picture of the earth to represent blessings given to the entire world (Gen. 12:3). In the fourth section, write Abram's



name in bubble letters or in puff paint to represent a great name (Gen. 12:2). If you cannot draw, use stickers or magazine pictures in each section. Attach a strip of cardstock to the back of the shield for a handle.

Packed Suitcase

Bring a suitcase filled with bags of pennies (wealth); stuffed sheep or cows (herds or flocks); and blankets, a pot and pan, and clothes (possessions). Start the lesson by asking the students what they would bring if they were moving to a foreign country. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about a man named Abram and how God called him to live in a new land. Open the suitcase and describe the various things Abram took with him when he moved.



Travel and Tents

Set up a small tent, or throw blankets over a table to make a tent. When you talk about setting up and taking down tents, have another teacher set up or take down the tent. This will need to be done quickly as you talk about how the people set up the tents and took them down day after day.

Praise and Worship

Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down

*Father Abraham**

God Is So Good

In His Time

My Faith Has Found a Resting Place

Seek Ye First

Standing on the Promises

The B-I-B-L-E

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Trust and Obey

**Replace "so let's just praise the Lord" with "if Jesus is our Lord."*



God's Covenant with Abraham

God appeared to Abraham;
(Point upward.)

God promised him a special land,
(Move hands outward.)

Descendants like the grains of sand,
(Hold one hand flat; pretend to rub sand between fingers of other hand.)

A famous name that would withstand,
(Pretend to write in the air.)

And blessings for the world of man.
(Raise hands overhead; wiggle fingers while lowering hands.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Cookie Blessings

Review Genesis 12:3 before distributing the snack. Ask each student whether he will give his cookies to you. Reward the “givers” with a “blessing” by returning their cookies plus an additional treat. Talk about how the other students did not actually receive a curse; they simply did not get the extra treat.



Covered in Christ’s Righteousness

Read and discuss Genesis 15:6. Give each student a coloring page with an outline of a person drawn on it. Encourage the students to color the person completely (or clothe the person with glued-on tissue paper). Explain that this is a picture of a sinner covered with sin. You can read Ecclesiastes 7:20 out loud. Then give the students a cutout person to represent Jesus Christ. Have them glue it over their picture so that it covers all the coloring. Explain that Christ lived a perfectly righteous life and that He imputes (credits) that righteousness to those who believe in Him and confess Him as Lord and Savior. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



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Shield of Abram

Using the shield from the presentation activity as an example, have the students create their own shields to take home.



Paper-Bag Stones

Let students tear stones out of brown paper bags and glue them over the stones on the coloring page. Add mountains, trees, water, and sky. Pray together as a group, and thank God for knowing what is best for us. Let each student pray, “Dear God, You always know what is best for me.”

Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. Students can color the pictures in class or at home.

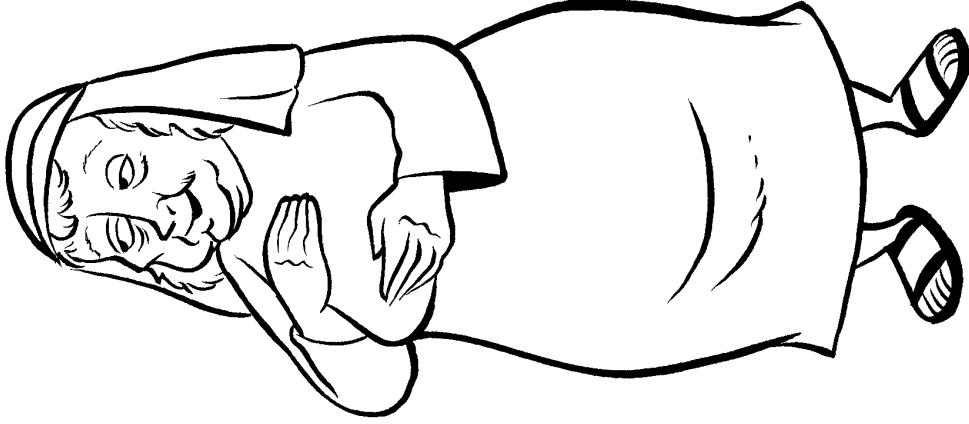


MEMORY VERSE

“I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3).



Abram



Sarai



**“So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him,
and Lot went with him” (Genesis 12:4).**



Abram built an altar to the Lord in the land God had given him (Gen. 12:7).

