



Abraham and Sarah Doubt God

Genesis 16:1–6; 17:15–21; 18:1–15



LESSON GOAL

Students will learn that nothing can stop God's plans.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- God promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son.
- Abraham and Sarah thought they were too old to have a baby.
- Sarah gave Abraham her servant, Hagar, for another wife. Hagar had a son named Ishmael.
- God fulfilled His promise through Sarah, not Hagar.

KEY VERSE

“And I will bless her, and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her” (Genesis 17:16).

APPLICATION

- Trust God's promises even if they seem impossible.
- Be patient for God to fulfill His promises.

NEXT WEEK

God Judges Sodom and Gomorrah
Read Genesis 18–19.

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

This week’s lesson focuses on God’s promise to Abram. Biblical promises include elements of a covenantal relationship. This relationship involves blessings to the beneficiary (in this case, Abram). God made promises that related to the future. If God made a promise, then it would occur. The important thing to remember about biblical promises is that they are binding on the part of the one who makes them.

Abram knew the promises of God but had not seen them fulfilled. He questioned God, wondering how God was going to accomplish them when the only heir in Abram’s household was Eliezer, one of his servants. God showed Abram the extent of His promise of a great nation by comparing the number of stars with Abram’s future descendants through an heir. This heir would be born to Abram and Sarai. “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). After further assurances by God of the land he was to possess, Abram asked for confirmation of that pledge.

God revealed the sequence of events that would occur before Abram obtained that possession. He also revealed the magnitude of it. He then initiated a contract procedure, peculiar to us but familiar to Abram. When making a covenant, two parties would walk through the pieces of animals that had been cut in two. When nightfall arrived, God alone passed through the animal parts, unilaterally establishing His covenant with Abram.

Later, Abram succumbed to Sarai’s scheme of producing an heir through her maidservant, Hagar. Sarai’s scheme partially backfired when her maidservant became pregnant and then treated her with contempt. Forced to leave because of Sarai’s harsh treatment, Hagar was told to return and submit to Sarai by “the Angel of the Lord,” who promised Hagar a great nation through the son she had conceived.

When Abraham was 99—13 years after the birth of Ishmael by Hagar—the Lord appeared to Abram. He affirmed His covenant with him and his heir through Sarai. He called for a symbol of that covenant through circumcision of all the males of Abram’s household and of future generations. God then changed his name from Abram, meaning “exalted father,” to Abraham, “father of a great multitude.” He also changed Sarai’s name, “my princess,” to Sarah, “a princess.” Falling down and laughing, Abraham could scarcely believe the thought of having a son through Sarah at their ages. Assuring them that it would happen within one year, God named their future son Isaac, meaning “laughter.” Taking seriously the Lord’s command, Abraham proceeded to carry out the circumcision of his son Ishmael and all the males of his household, all in one day. The Lord again appeared to Abraham shortly thereafter, along with two angels in the form of men, saying again that within one year he would indeed have a son by Sarah. When Sarah laughed to herself at the thought, she was asked, “Is anything

Additional Reference Materials

*Keil and Delitzch
Commentary on the Old
Testament* by C.F. Keil
and F. Delitzch

*The MacArthur Study
Bible* by John MacArthur.

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

too hard for the Lord?"

Remember that Abraham and Sarah did not believe that God would provide an heir for them. They thought Abraham should have a baby another way. But they were wrong to do that. Abraham should have trusted in God's promise, but he doubted what God had said.

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.

Why did Noah's children and grandchildren 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 over 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 spoke to Abram and gave him the promise that this land of Canaan would belong to his children.

What did Abram do when 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.



Making Lunch

Let the students make different food items from Play-Doh. Pretend to prepare lunch for three guests. Make a small loaf of bread and pretend to put it in the oven. Wait for it to bake. Ask the students whether they wait patiently at home when their mothers prepare lunch. Make long tubes of Play-Doh by rolling it with your hands. Make a round face and add eyes and a mouth. Talk about waiting with a happy face or a sad face. Knowing that God keeps His promises gives us a happy face.



Variation One: Let the students play with a toy stove and table. Pretend to bake bread and other lunch items. Talk about what you are preparing for lunch. Pretend that you are serving lunch to three guests.

Variation Two: Older students can find pictures of food in magazines. Cut them out and help the students glue them onto a paper plate. Tell the students that in today's Bible lesson, they will learn about Sarah, Abraham's wife, who baked some bread for three special visitors who were really angels. Say the names Abraham, Sarah, and Lot often as you play.

The Waiting Game

Have the students stand in a circle an arm's length apart from one another. Tell them that you will be playing some music. When the music starts playing, they should start dancing. When the music stops, they must freeze and wait until the music starts again before they dance. Explain to them that in today's lesson, they will learn the importance of being patient.



Sign Language for "Wait"

Learn how to say the word *wait* in sign language. Teach this sign to the students and talk to them about waiting. Abraham and Sarah waited almost 25 years to have a baby. Ask students how old they think their parents were when they were born. Tell them that Abraham and Sarah were very, very old. In today's lesson, we will learn that God said Abraham and Sarah would have only a little longer to wait.

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 16:1–6 and 17:15–21.

One night when Abram was at home in Hebron, he was standing outside in the dark by himself. God spoke to Abram in a vision and said, "Abram, don't be afraid. I am your shield and your reward. I will take care of you and keep My promises to you."

Abram knew about God's promises to him, but there was a problem. Abram did not have a son. Abram said to God, "You have promised me land and a big family, but how can that happen when I don't even have a son yet?"

God said to Abram, "Look up at the sky and count the stars. [Point to the sky and begin to count.] There are so many that you can't count them all, but I promise to give you a family with as many people as there are stars in the sky." Wow! That's

a lot of great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren and great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren! Abram believed God's promise. He knew that God was powerful and would keep His promise.

Abram waited and waited for a son, but Sarai did not have a baby. Sarai knew that she was getting too old to have a baby. She had an idea about how to help God with His promise. It was not a good idea. God did not need Sarai's help. Sarai said to Abram, "God has not given me a baby. You should take another wife so that God's promise of many descendants will come true."

Abram listened to his wife's bad advice and married Sarai's servant girl, Hagar. When Hagar found out that she was going to have a baby, she became rude to Sarai. Sarai was jealous and became unkind to Hagar. Life was not happy for Abram and his family. God had promised to bless Abram and give him many descendants, but things were going all wrong. Things were going wrong because Abram had doubted God's promise.

When Abram was 86 years old, Hagar's baby was born, and they named him Ishmael. When Ishmael was 13 years old, God appeared to Abram and said, "Abram, I am God Almighty. I am changing your name from Abram to Abraham because you will be the father of many nations. I am changing your wife's name from Sarai to Sarah because she will be the mother of nations." Abraham was shocked. Sarah was too old to be a mother. Abraham did not tell Sarah what God had told him about her.

One hot day, while Abraham was sitting in the doorway to his tent by the trees at Hebron, three men came and stood near him. Abraham didn't know it, but these three men were angels sent from God. They had a very special message from God for Abraham and Sarah. Abraham said to the men, "Please stay for lunch. Come sit in the shade while we fix your lunch." The three angels of the Lord were glad to sit under the trees as a servant washed their dusty feet. Abraham ran to Sarah and said, "Quick, bake some bread! We have three guests for lunch!" Then Abraham ran to his servant and said, "Quick, cook some delicious meat! We have three guests for lunch!"

When the bread was fresh out of the oven and the meat was cooked just right, Abraham served his guests. While the angels were eating their lunch, one of them said to Abraham, "God is going to keep His promise to you. I will come back to you at this time next year, and your wife Sarah will have a son."

Sarah was listening to the angels talking. When she heard what the angel said about a baby, she laughed to herself. She thought, "I am too old to have a baby; I am 90 years old. It is too late for me to have a baby now!" The angel said, "Why did Sarah laugh? Nothing is too hard for God. God will keep His promise. Sarah will have a baby within the year."

Sarah was embarrassed and afraid because the angel knew that she had laughed at God's promise. She lied and said to the angel, "I did not laugh." The angel said to her, "Yes, you did laugh, but God will keep His promise. God always keeps His promises." Abraham and Sarah believed that God was powerful and would keep His promise. Isn't God good to make Abraham's family into a great nation?



Lesson Questions

What was the promise that God gave to Abram?

God promised Abram many descendants. They would number more than the stars in the sky.

How did Abram and Sarai try to help God with His promise?

Sarai suggested that Abram marry Hagar and have a son with her.

What happened in Abram's family when Hagar became his wife and found out that she was going to have a baby?

Hagar was rude to Sarai, and Sarai was mean to Hagar.

Why did Sarah laugh when the angel promised her a son?

Sarah thought that she and Abraham were too old to have a baby.

Does God always keep His promises?

Yes. We can trust our powerful God to keep His promises.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Learning to Wait

Set a kitchen timer or an alarm clock for two minutes. Tell the students they are to sit in their seats and wait quietly and patiently while you prepare for the lesson. After the timer or alarm goes off, ask the students what it was like to wait. Did they feel impatient? Explain that in today's lesson they will learn how hard it was for Abraham and Sarah to wait for a baby, and how they made mistakes when they became impatient.



Baby Boy

Have someone bring his baby son to class. Have this person tell the students that this is his baby son. Ask the students whether any of them are sons. All the boys in the class once were baby sons who grew to be bigger boys. We are all children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. In our Bible lesson today, Abram is going to hear about a promise of a baby son and many great-grandchildren.

Praise and Worship

Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down

*Father Abraham**

In His Time

Mighty Is Our God

Seek Ye First

The B-I-B-L-E

Trust and Obey

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



Promised Son

Abraham and Sarah wanted a son.

(Hold up right finger and then left finger.)

God promised them a special one.

(Point up.)

They waited days and weeks and years,
(Point forward and move finger in a clockwise spiral.)

But then gave in to all their fears.
(Hunch shoulders, hold arms close to body, fists up, and make scared face.)

They did not believe that God would do
(Point up and shake head back and forth.)

All that He had promised to.
(Hold up right hand, palm facing out.)

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.



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Trusting

Set an empty chair before the students. Ask whether they believe that the chair will hold them if they sit in it. (The expected answer is yes.) Ask for a volunteer to come sit in the chair. While the student is sitting, talk about how we can know God and believe in Him, but we must act on that belief by putting our trust and faith in Him. Remind them that in the story they just heard, God had promised Abraham and Sarah a son. They should have trusted God to provide them with a child. Their action should have been to remain dedicated to each other in their marriage and wait for God to produce the child. (Reminder: Sometimes waiting is the action we are to do.)



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Abraham and Sarah Puppets

Give each student two brown paper lunch bags and four wiggly eyes. Have the students draw a face, hair, and clothes on the bag. (For younger students, it may help to draw the mouth beforehand.) The students should make one male puppet and one female puppet to represent Abraham and Sarah.

Variation: Give students yarn; wiggly eyes; and cutouts of noses, mouths, and ears to decorate their puppets.



Envelope Surprise

Before class, cut a piece of poster board into envelope-sized pieces. On each piece, use glue to draw a simple outline of a star or a child. Let the glue dry. Put each piece in an envelope, and give one envelope to every student.



Patient Baking

Immediately after the Bible lesson, bring out a snack and show it to the students. Tell them, "I promise that you will get to eat this wonderful snack this morning, but we will have to wait patiently until the end of _____ [whatever activity you choose]. We will have to wait for the snack just as Abraham had to wait for God's promise of a son." Ask the students whether they will wait patiently or will be impatient like Abraham and Sarah.

Coloring Sheet

Give each child a copy of the coloring sheet at the back of this lesson. Have them color the picture in class or take it home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness”
(Genesis 15:6).



God had not given Sarai and Abram a baby (Gen. 16:1–4).

