



God Makes a Promise to Abram

Genesis 11:27–12:9



LESSON GOAL

Students will learn that God keeps His promises.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Distinguish between Abram's life before and after God called him.
- Identify what God promised Abram.
- Explain that through faith in Jesus, believers share in the blessing to Abram.

KEY VERSE

"Now the LORD had said to Abram... 'I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 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 12:1–3).

APPLICATION

- Trust God to keep His promises.
- 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



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

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.

How many languages did people speak at Babel?

One.

What did the men say that they wanted to do?

They wanted to build a city for themselves and make their name great.

What did the people mean when they said, “Let us make for ourselves a name”?

The people wanted to show how great they were.

What did the Lord think of what the people were doing?

He did not like that the people were being disobedient to His commands.

What did the Lord decide to do?

Confuse their language.

What happened after God confused their language?

The people were scattered.

Where were the people scattered?

All over the earth.



Fun Facts: Can You Count?

In Abram’s time, there were no telescopes, and no one dreamed of all the stars we can see now with these instruments. On a moonless night with no clouds, you can see about 2,000 stars. Throughout history, men have studied the stars, trying to count and to map them. In about 130 B.C., a mathematician named Hipparchus cataloged 1,000 stars.

Almost 1,600 years later, in 1433, an astronomer named Ulugh Beigh finished a new star catalog, but it had roughly the same number of stars as Hipparchus's. Then, in 1610, the telescope was invented. When a mathematician named Galileo turned this new invention toward the stars, he was excited and amazed at what he saw. In a short time he made several new lenses for his telescope—each one more powerful than the last. Each new lens revealed an innumerable number of stars. Imagine being the first human being to see them! It was Galileo who concluded once and for all that it was impossible to count the stars. It has been estimated that there could be 1,000 billion stars in the Milky Way. If you counted one every second for your whole lifetime (without any sleep), you wouldn't get past three billion! In today's lesson we will see that God promised Abram many descendants, as many as the stars he could count in the sky.



Future Foretold, Part One

This activity must be used with "Future Foretold, Part Two" (in the Practice section). Cut three slips of paper. On the first slip of paper, write, "God will make me very fruitful." On the second slip of paper write, "God will make many nations come from me." On the third slip of paper, write, "God will make kings come from me." As students come into the classroom, hand out the slips to three different students. Tell them not to look inside until instructed. Have the three students stand in front of the class when everyone is seated. Instruct them that the "futures" foretold on their slips of paper will come true within the hour. Have them read their slips out loud. Have students listen to the Bible lesson to hear how Abram's future held the same promises. How would those promises be fulfilled? How will the future promises to the three students be accomplished?

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.

Introduction

Have you ever made a promise to someone? It is important to keep your promises. Did you know that God has made promises? When He makes a promise, it is very important. His promises are special. Do you remember the promise God made to Noah? In Genesis 9:15, God said that He never again would destroy the entire earth with a flood. Isn't that wonderful? But this is not the only promise God has made in the Bible. Jesus promised His disciples that He would come back again. And do you know what else He promised? He said in John 14:3 that when He



comes back He would take them to heaven. Jesus has not yet returned. We are still waiting for Him to return. When He returns, He is going to take all who believe in Him to heaven. That's a wonderful promise, too, isn't it? In today's lesson, we are going to learn about a promise God made to one man. Does anyone remember this man's name? We just read about him in Genesis 11–12. His name is Abram.

Leadoff Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: Where did Abram live?

Answer: Genesis 11:31 says that Abram lived in the Ur of the Chaldeans and in Haram.

LOQ: What did God tell Abram to do?

Answer: Genesis 12:1 says that the Lord told Abram, "Get out of your country, away from your family and from your father's house." God was telling Abram to leave the place where people worshiped idols. God was telling Abram that his life was going to be different. He wanted to make sure that Abram would live a righteous life, not a rebellious life.

LOQ: How do you think Abram felt about what God told him to do?

Answer: The Bible doesn't say how he felt. It just tells us that he obeyed what God told him to do. Genesis 12:4 says that Abram went forth as the Lord had told him to. What was important was that he obeyed God. *Obedient* is the word that best describes Abram. God changed Abram's life. Abram was not going to worship idols anymore. Abram now would obey the true God—the God of the Bible.

LOQ: What did God promise Abram?

Answer: There are four things God promised Abram: (1) In verse 1 God told Abram to leave Ur and to go "to the land which I will show you." This would be a very special place where his family would live. God promised him this land. (2) In verse 2 God promised Abram, "I will make you a great nation." From Abram's children would come a special nation. (3) In verse 2 God also told Abram that he would have "a great name." What does it mean to have a great name? It means that your name is remembered as being very important. Abram would be the father of a nation—Israel. People would remember his name. He would never be forgotten. (4) Finally, in Genesis 12:3 God told Abram, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." This meant that every nation in the world would be blessed because of Abram. They would be blessed because the Savior of the world—Jesus Christ—would come through the descendants of Abram (Gal. 3:16). The nation of Israel has been used by God to give the world the Bible and the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

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



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces as you teach the Bible lesson.



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.

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.

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."*

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.



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 each student a cutout person to represent Jesus Christ. Have them glue it over their pictures 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.



Future Foretold, Part Two

Have three baskets filled for the completion of “Future Foretold, Part One” (in the Point section.)

Fruitful: Fill with enough grapes or fruit slices for each student.

Nations: Fill with flags from the nation of Israel.

Kings: Fill with an assortment of objects signifying kings.

Call the three students whose futures were “foretold” up to the front of the classroom. Have them read their slip of paper again. Give these students their “fulfilled promises” by giving them the correct baskets and instructing them to distribute their contents to the class. We will see in future lessons how these promises to Abram do get fulfilled, even if our promises did not turn out exactly as we thought.



Seeing Stars

Use light-colored crayons or colored chalk to draw a landscape on black construction paper. Drawing the horizon about halfway up the paper. Above the horizon (in the sky area), poke many small holes in the paper. When you hold the paper up in front of a light, you will see stars! When Abram saw stars, what promise of God would he remember?

Variation: Cut one strip of green construction paper (3 x 11 inches), one strip of orange construction paper (1 1/2 x 11 inches), and a half circle of yellow construction paper for each student. On a piece of black construction paper, glue the yellow half-circle on the center of the page. Glue the strip of orange construction paper over the bottom of the half circle. Glue the green strip over the bottom of the orange strip of construction paper. With a black marker, write the words “Seeing the Stars” across the yellow half-circle. Poke small holes in the black construction paper, or give the students gold and silver star stickers to put on the paper.



God Is My Shield

Genesis 15:1 tells us that God comforted Abram by reminding him that He was his shield. Discuss why Abram would need God as a shield (possibly to protect him from his enemies after freeing Lot). Copy the shield at the back of this lesson onto cardstock for each student. Have students cut out the shield and color the cross red and the stars blue. Cut strips of cardstock (2 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches) for each student to attach to the back for a handle. Read Ephesians 6:10–18. Discuss what the shield of faith can do. How might the flaming arrows of Satan be put out by using our shield of faith?



“God’s Covenant with Abram”

Use this work sheet during small-group time, or give it to students to take home and use with their parents. This work sheet is located at the back of this lesson.



Journal Page: “Keeping My Promises”

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. Students can complete the page individually, in small groups, or at home.

Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. You can have students color the pages in class or at home. You may wish to have students tear out small pieces of brown paper to make “stones.” Glue these stones to the altar.



Don't Make Me Laugh

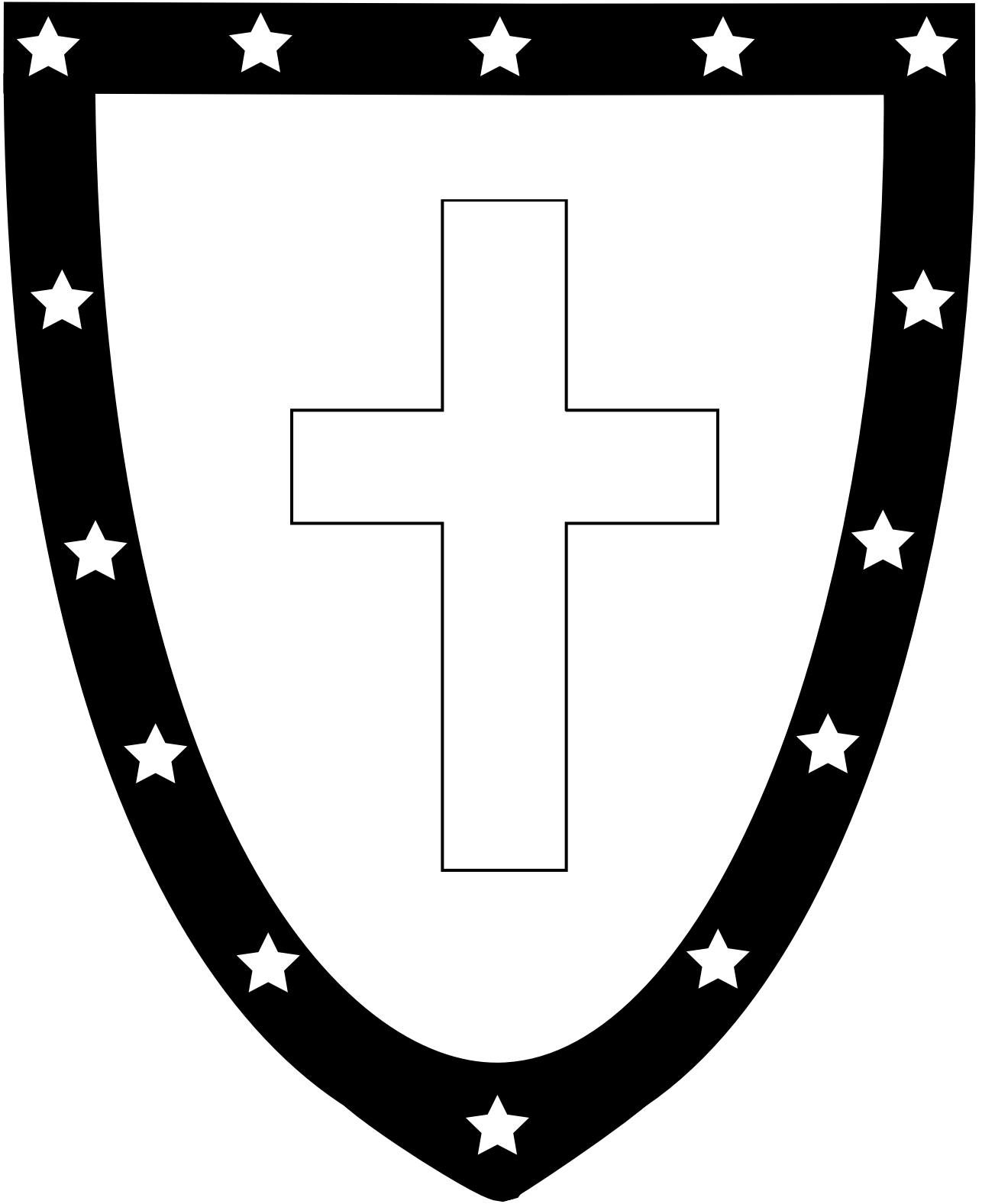
Practice the memory verse in a crazy way. Split into groups of fewer than 10 so there will be time for everyone to have a turn. Have each student try to make another student (of his choice) laugh. He can make faces or stare into the other person's eyes, but he must say only the memory verse (Gen. 12:1–3).



MEMORY VERSE

"Now the LORD had said to Abram... 'I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 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 12:1–3).

God Is My Shield



God's Covenant with Abram



Genesis 11:27–12:9

Name _____

1. Who was Abram's father? _____

2. What was Abram's wife's name? _____

3. Did Sarai have any children? _____

4. Circle the four things God promised Abram.

a great name

a big house

many animals

land

blessing

a great nation

5. Did Abram believe God's promise? _____

6. Who went with Abram? _____

7. How old was Abram when he left Haran?

20

75

50

8. What did Abraham build to the Lord? _____

Keeping My Promises

Have your parents ever made a deal with you? Maybe your mother has said, "If you clean your room, you can go play with your friends," or, "If you finish your homework, you can have some cookies." These promises are conditional, but God's promise to Abram was without conditions. It depended only on God's faithfulness to keep His word. God wants you to be faithful to keep your promises, too.

Once I made and kept this promise: _____

Once I made but did not keep this promise: _____

I can make this broken promise right by _____

Prayer: Ask Christ to help you be like Him and keep promises when you make them. You can also ask Him to help you not to make promises that you cannot keep.

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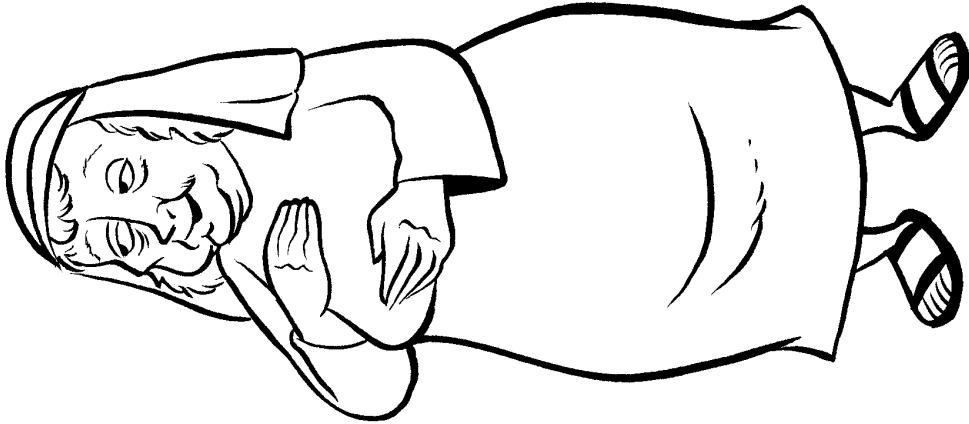
Prayer: Ask Christ to help you be like Him and keep promises when you make them. You can also ask Him to help you not to make promises that you cannot keep.

What are some promises you can keep this week? Write them down on a separate piece of paper. Glue a small envelope in the space below, and then cut out and fold your promises. Place them in the envelope, and this week pull a promise out and fulfill it. Do this each day until all your promises are fulfilled.

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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).