

God Blesses Faithful Abraham

(Genesis 12 - 13)

Introduction

For the past 14 weeks we have been learning about the beginning of things:

- The beginning of the universe (how God created the world in seven days).
- The first sin (when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit).
- The first murder (when Cain let his jealousy towards his own brother cause him to kill Abel).
- The first time God wiped out all of mankind due to their wickedness (when He sent the great flood).
- The beginning of language (when God confused the people of Babel by giving them different languages).

Today we're going to start learning about Abraham, the first Jew, the father of the children of Israel. He's the next character that comes along in the book of Genesis after the people of Babel were scattered by the Lord.

Opening Prayer

Lord, life is a series of choices. Every day we have a chance to be others-centered or self-centered. Help us to learn from our lesson today to always want the other guy's best. Help us to hear Your voice this morning, so that we might learn the lessons You want to teach us today from the Scriptures. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. (Hebrews 10:23)

Lesson

Even though God had swiftly judged sin both with the Flood in Noah's time and the incident with the tower of Babel, people generally ignored Him and continued to sin. But, there was a handful of people that really tried to follow Him. One of these was Abraham.

God appeared to Abraham one day and promised to make his descendants into a great nation. Abraham's part of the agreement was to obey God. Through sharp testing, Abraham remained faithful to God.

Turn with me to Genesis 12:1-3. As we read in the Bible, you'll see that Abraham's name started out as Abram; later God changed it to Abraham. We'll learn more about that in the weeks to come.

Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

Abram loved God, but many of his neighbors who lived in his city did not. They worshiped the moon god and made sacrifices to this god in the temples. God told Abram to get out of that evil place and go to another land. Abram didn't know where he was supposed to go. God hadn't told him.

Abram didn't need to know where the Lord was leading him. God had promised to bless him and he trusted God so he obeyed Him without question. Abram chose to obey.

Genesis 12:4-5

So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan...

Both Abram and Lot were very wealthy. They had lots of sheep and cattle and many servants.

Genesis 12:7

Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

At this point Abram and his wife Sarai had not been able to have children. So to hear God's promise that this land was to go to their descendants must have been thrilling, especially at the age of 75!

Genesis 13:2 and 5

(Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.)

Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents.

Genesis 13:6-7

But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

There were too many animals and not enough pasture. So fights broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot.

Genesis 13:8

Finally Abram said to Lot, "Let's not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives!"

Abram didn't want to fight with his nephew.

Genesis 13:9

The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I'll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I'll go to the left."

Abram was very kind to let his nephew, Lot, choose first. God had helped Abram to not be selfish. Abram didn't have to give his nephew first choice. He was older and had every right to choose first. Abram was willing to take the risk that Lot would choose the best for himself just to solve the dispute between them. Do you ever let others have the first choice, even if that means not getting what you want? We need to put the desire for peace above personal desires. We need to be love-centered, not self-centered.

What land did Lot choose?

Genesis 13:10-11

Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram.

Lot took the best land for himself! He took the land on the east side that was beautiful countryside with lots of water and green grass for his sheep. But, Lot had made a mistake. He was greedy. He only wanted the best for himself without thinking about his uncle Abram's needs or what was fair.

Life is a series of choices. We, too, can choose the best while ignoring the needs and feelings of others. But this leads to problems for us, just as it did for Lot.

Genesis 13:12-13

So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

Later on in Chapter 19 we learn that God sent fire from heaven to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the people's extreme wickedness. Although Lot's life was spared, he lost

everything--his wife, his home, and all his possessions. But God blessed Abram for being faithful to Him...

Genesis 13:14-17

After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession. And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."

Abram was willing to leave his country and family and friends to go to a place he wasn't even sure where. But he trusted God. God blessed Abram's obedience and promised to give him a great nation and many descendants. If we trust and obey God we won't miss out on His great plan for our lives.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we don't want to miss out on Your great plan for our lives. Please help us to trust You and obey You always. And help us also not to be selfish, Lord. Help us to be peacemakers and to want to put other people first. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

The Promise Tree activity sheet or a craft with promises as the theme (i.e., create a Promise Box to put the memory verses in each week. Decorate with sequins and stickers, etc.).

GAME CENTER

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

Review Questions:

1. What did God promise Abraham? (That he would make his descendants into a great nation)
2. Where did God tell Abraham to go? (*He didn't know*)
3. Would you pack up and leave your home, your country, your family and friends to go someplace that you didn't know where it was? What if God told you to go?
4. Why did fights break out between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot? (*There were too many animals and not enough pasture.*)
5. How did Abraham settle the dispute between him and Lot? (He suggested that they split up and he let Lot choose where he wanted to settle first.)
6. Where did Lot choose to settle? (He took the best land for himself; near Sodom and Gomorrah.)
7. How would you describe Lot's attitude? (*He was selfish and greedy.*)
8. Why might it have been hard for Abram to let Lot choose first? (He wasn't sure where he'd end up. He didn't know when God's promises would come true.)
9. How should we handle it if you and somebody else are fighting over something? (*We need to be love-centered; not self-centered.*)
10. Why was it a big mistake for Lot to move into Sodom and Gomorrah? (God sent fire from heaven to destroy the cities because of the people's wickedness. He lost everything.)
11. What should we do to be sure we don't miss out on God's great plan for our lives? (*Trust and obey*)

12. What are some things Abram did that showed he trusted God to keep His promises? (Left his home and moved to a new land. Let Lot choose land first.)
13. What are some ways we can show that we trust God today?

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