

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 judged sin (when He wiped out all of mankind with a 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 the family of Abraham who is the next character that comes along in the book of Genesis after the people of Babel were scattered by the Lord.

In Genesis 3:15, right after Adam and Eve sinned, God made a promise to send the Messiah, who would be born of a human mother and be the Savior of the world by taking the punishment we all deserve for our sin. That meant God needed a human family. So, God looked down out of heaven and chose Abraham to fulfill this promise.

Note, 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.

Opening Prayer

Lord, I know that we have all been let down by people who have broken their promises to us. But we want to thank You that You never

break Your promises. We can believe and trust in You; You will never disappoint us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8 NLT)

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 at this time generally ignored Him and continued to sin. But Abraham knew God.

One day, God appeared to Abraham and made three promises to him: Land, Family, and Blessing. This was an unconditional covenant, which means that these promises would definitely be fulfilled, not because of Abram's faithfulness, but because of God's faithfulness.

Let's read about the promises God made to Abram.

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. ²I will make you into a great **nation**. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I 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. First, Abram left his home town of Ur and traveled to Haran with his father, his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot. He stayed in Haran until his father passed away and then the Lord prompted him move on to the land of the Canaan.

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

Genesis 12:4-6

So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.⁵He 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. When they arrived in Canaan,⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

When Abram got to the land, it wasn't empty. At that time the people of Canaan were living in the land. They worshipped false gods.

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.*

This is the 2nd time God promised to give the land to Abram's offspring. 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 offspring must have been thrilling, especially at the age of 75!

Genesis 12:10

*At that time a **severe famine struck the land** of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner.*

When a severe famine struck the land, Abram moved his family down to Egypt. But the Lord had not instructed Abram to go to Egypt. Things didn't work out well for him down there, so he chose to obey the Lord and came back to the land that God had promised him.

Genesis 13:1-2 and 5

¹So Abram **left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev**, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. ²(Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.)

⁵Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents.

Both Abram and Lot were very wealthy. They had lots of sheep and cattle and many servants. They had so many animals, there wasn't enough good pasture land for all the animals to graze together.

Genesis 13:6-7

*But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. ⁷So **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.

Ask: Do arguments ever break out at your house?

Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount, "**Blessed are the peacemakers.**" (Matthew 5:9) God promises to bless you when you make peace rather than war! Abram was a peacemaker.

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. He didn't have to give his nephew first choice. He was older, the head of the family, he had every right to choose first. But Abram was willing to let Lot choose first just to solve the dispute between them.

Ask: Do you ever let others have the first choice, even if that means not getting what you want?

We need to put our selfish desires aside and think of other people first. We need to be love-centered, not self-centered.

Let's see which land Lot chose:

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.) ¹¹**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 beautiful countryside on the east side that had lots of water and green grass for his sheep. But 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. ¹³But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.*

Lot had made a mistake. 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. ¹⁵**I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a***

***permanent possession.** ¹⁶And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."*

This is the 3rd time God promised to give land to Abram and his descendants. Because Abram believed God's promise, he was willing to leave his country and family and friends to go to a place he didn't even know existed. And God blessed Abram's obedience. [Review verse for today.]

If we trust and obey God, we won't miss out on His promise to bless us.

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

Blindfold challenge.

- Detail: We would set up teams of 2, blindfold one of them, and then the other would have to "lead" them to a location somewhere in the room. Depending on time, we will then switch and let the partner be blindfolded. The goal of this game would be to experience how Abraham trusted God, even

though he was "blind" to what God was doing, how we often are as well!

Packing for an unknown adventure!

- Detail: Bring a random assortment of items that would typically apply to an adventure, and then break the kids into groups to pack. Tell them they are going to place they've never been and they need to pack without knowing where they are going. Once they are packed reveal to them the mystery location of their adventure. Then have each team explain why they chose what they did and whether or not they chose well based on the location. The goal of this game is to show how we can plan for God to send us anywhere, but we should trust Him to provide if we miss something!

Or use the following questions in a game or discussion 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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