

A PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

BIBLE BASIS: Genesis 15:1–6, 12–18

BIBLE TRUTH: Even though Abram and Sarai were well beyond the age of childbearing, Abram believed God when he was told that he would have descendants more numerous than the stars.

MEMORY VERSE: “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6, KJV).

LESSON AIM: By the end of the lesson, we will: **REVIEW** God’s promise of a child to Abram and Sarai; **APPRECIATE** God’s ability to accomplish what seems impossible; and **EXERCISE** faith in God’s power to manifest present-day promises..

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Genesis 12:1- 9-Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

LESSON SCRIPTURE

GENESIS 15:1-6, 12-18, KJV

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

2 And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking

furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS

A. **Bowels (Genesis 15:4)** *me`ah* (Heb.)—Womb, intestines, the abdomen.

B. **Righteousness (v. 6)** *tsedaqah* (Heb.)—Rightness, rectitude, virtue, prosper-ity, piety.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON

AIM: Students will be willing to exercise faith in God's power to fulfill present-day promises.

INTRODUCTION

A Promise Reaffirmed

In Genesis 12, Abram was 75 years old and Sarai was already 65. We don't know how old Abram was when chapter 15 opens, but he clearly needed God to reaffirm the promise that He was going to make a nation from Abram's descendants. It wasn't until Abram was 100 years old and Sarai was 90 that God finally fulfilled the promise and they had baby Isaac. But God renews the promise to Abram in today's Scripture with some powerful object lessons.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Students will learn that God renewed His promises to Abram and gave him some of the details.

I. A PROMISE TO ABRAHAM (Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18)

Time was passing by and Abram and Sarai still did not have a son. God lovingly renewed the covenant with Abram by promising them many descendants

and giving Abram the greatest gift of all—the promise that He, Himself, would be Abram's greatest heritage.

God Reinforces His Promise to Abram (Genesis 15:1–3)

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. **2** And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? **3** And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

After protecting Abram from some foolish mistakes and defeating his enemies, God came to Abram in a vision with words of comfort: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1). The Lord reinforced that He would give Abram safety and security and that he would not want for anything, because everything he needed was to be found in the self-existent, eternal, and almighty God. Because Abram declared that God was his source of blessing, God Himself was all the reward and protection Abram would ever need.

In **verses 2 and 3**, Abram responded to God's declaration of blessing by acknowledging God's sovereign Lordship. Yet Abram expressed great concern, because due to his and Sarai's advanced age a slave born in his house would be the heir. In this era, it was a disgrace for a husband and wife not to produce children (especially sons) because children marked fruitfulness and continuation of the family lineage and property. This greatly disturbed Abram, and he expressed his concern to God, because this did not seem to be according to God's promises to him.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

QUESTION 1

What was the great reward that God promised to

Abram?

II. GOD ANSWERS (Genesis 15:4–6)

Abram could see no other way—his servant Eliezer was going to inherit his estate. Abram really valued Eliezer, and Eliezer trusted in God just as Abram did (See Genesis 24). But God had promised Abram that he and Sarai would give birth to children and so God had to encourage him that He would bring this about.

God Unveils Details of His Promise to Abram (verses 4–6)

4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

God assured Abram that Eliezer would not be his heir, but that Abram’s heir would come from his “own bowels” (Genesis 15:4), meaning through his own body. God brought Abram outside and by using the stars in the sky; He gave Abram another visual of how vast Abram’s descendants would be. The common eye cannot count the number of stars in the sky or the amount of dust of the earth. Yet, this is how innumerable Abram’s offspring would be, and God assured Abram that it would come from his own loins.

After receiving yet another visual of God’s promise and confirmation that a son would come through his blood, Abram believed God, which forever placed him in right standing with the Lord (verse 6) and in the Faith Hall of Fame (Hebrews 11:8,11).

QUESTION 2

What visual did the Lord give Abram to show him how many descendants he would have?

III. ABRAM’S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (Genesis 15:12-16)

Abram continued to move forward at God’s command and thus declared his own allegiance to serve God alone. In spite of the culture around him, which had a god for everything, Abram is the father of a monotheistic religion that is based on a relationship with the true and living God.

God Foretells Abram and His Seed’s Future (15:12–16)

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

Then God caused Abram to go into a deep sleep (verse 12). In this state, the Lord gave Abram a preview of events in his descendants’ futures, including the migration to Egypt—first in peace, then as slaves. God even specified the amount of time (400 years) for their captivity (verse 13). Although Abram’s seed would be afflicted, God assured him that his descendants would benefit from God’s promise to him. Most notably, they would walk away from slavery with great substance. God then gave Abram the personal prophecy that Abram would live in peace, the rest of his days because God would provide divine protection for him, and all connected to him in his lifetime. He would live a rich and fruitful life and would die at “a good old age” (verse 15) because of his faithfulness.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

QUESTION 3

What did God say would happen to Abram's descendants for 400 years (verses 13-16)?

IV. A SOLEMN PROMISE FROM GOD

Genesis 15:17-18

Abraham had a tremendous responsibility. Very few people of his time understood that there is only one true God and believed in Him. But from Abraham would come a nation that was to be entrusted with recording God's Word and preserving it; being a witness to the world of the one true God; and giving birth to the Savior of the world. This was such an awesome promise that it could only come clothed in the majesty of God.

God Ratifies His Covenant with Abram (verses 17–18)

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. 18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

God ratified His covenant with Abram through this sacrifice, thus giving Abram the confirmation he desired. God further guaranteed the demarcation of the Promised Land where Abram's seed would dwell and take ownership (verse 18). Although God had given His promise before concerning the land, this time He reinforced the covenant with specific details. The Lord does not forget what He says He will do.

QUESTION 4

What two things did Abraham see when the sun went down?

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: Students will begin to understand that waiting on God may not be easy.

Waiting on God

There are single adults who are so discouraged during their season of singleness that they either make wrong choices—thus disobeying God—or they live with discontentment and bitterness, which displeases God. They neglect to be fruitful for the kingdom. No matter what you are waiting on God to do in your life, you must remain faithful to God's Word and trust that His promises are true. Isaiah 1:19 (NKJV) says, "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land."

STUDENTS' RESPONSES

AIM: Students will wait on God to fulfill His promises to them.

Whatever you are waiting on God to do for you, whatever the breakthrough you seek, don't give up for He who has promised is faithful. Decide today that you are going to believe God in spite of the circumstances.

PRAYER

Dear Father, we thank You that You always keep Your promises to us, even though we may have to go through some hard times first. Help us to wait patiently, in faith believing. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER

Faith in God is Accounted as Righteousness!

Abraham and Sara were well beyond human childbearing age, but they were not beyond spiritual childbearing age. They would have both physical and spiritual descendants more numerous than the stars because they believed God and acted in faith according to what God promised.

God created humans in the image of God so humans can participate in God's dominion, being fruitful and bringing forth not only physical but spiritual

children. Imago Dei is a gift given to us by God so that we might manifest God’s personal presence in creation. This gift, plus the covenantal narrative in (**Genesis 1:26-28**), is prologue to a much larger narrative. In (**Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18**), Faith in God, seeing the invisible and believing the impossible no matter the conditions or circumstances. “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” Only faith in God through righteousness brings us back into the image of God.

We live in a world of distractions and devourers of our faith. “And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses,” Abram drove the distractions and devourers away. God made a covenant with him. The lie of Satan in Eden’s garden is that God cannot be trusted and believed. But Abraham believed God and God made a covenant with him. God created us for a covenantal relationship. God only has covenantal relationships.

God’s image in humans is described in (**Genesis 5:1-4**). Adam was made in the image of God but when Adam’s son, Seth, was born, he was born sinful, defiled and mortal, like Adam. Not only a man like Adam, consisting of body and soul, but a sinner like Adam. This was the reverse of that Divine likeness in which Adam was made; having lost it, he could not pass the divine image on to his seed without faith in God that is accounted as righteousness.

HOW TO SAY IT

Mahazeh.	Makh-az-eh.
Masheq.	M e h ’ - s h e k .
Zara.	Zah’-rah.
Tardemah.	Tar-day-maw.
Amorites.	Am-uh-rahyt.

DAILY HOME BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY

The Faith of Abraham
(Hebrews 11:8–16)

TUESDAY

Abraham’s Faith Tested
(Hebrews 11:17–22)

WEDNESDAY

Righteousness by Faith
(Romans 4:9–15)

THURSDAY

Strong in Faith
(Romans 4:16–25)

FRIDAY

An Everlasting Covenant
(Psalm 105:4–11)

SATURDAY

The Eternal Covenant
Hebrews 13:17–21)

SUNDAY

A Covenant with God
(Genesis 15:1–6, 12–18)

PREPARE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Read **Genesis 22:1-2, 6-14** and next week’s lesson, “The Lord Provides,”

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