



Mustard Seed Sunday School Lesson for September 10, 2006
Released on September 6, 2006

"God's Covenant with Abram" Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22.

NOTES ON THE LESSON

The Flood was the end of a sinful civilization, but the destruction of the Flood brought no improvement. The covenant with Noah did not make any-one righteous. People still would not obey God. Everyone was infected with the disease of sin.

All mankind fell short of the purpose for which God created them-to believe and obey Him. This is shown by the proud builders of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). All nations sinned and deserved God's punishment.

Genesis 12 brings a ray of hope, for God made a covenant with Abram. God chose him to be the seed bearer of Jesus Christ, who would provide salvation from sin and an indwelling Spirit to help people believe and obey God.

Abram was not perfect, but he faithfully believed what God said. He believed and obeyed God, as is shown in his willingness to leave his hometown and later to take steps to sacrifice the promised son, Isaac. His obedience was controlled by his belief in God. He believed God would keep His promise, even though he did not understand (Gen. 22:1-19).

When God called Abram, a new nation was born. This nation was the bearer of God's promise to all nations. God promised Abram a descendant who would bless the world. The promised Seed of Abraham was Jesus (Gen. 17:7; Gal. 3:16; Neb. 2:16).

The law God gave on Mount Sinai did not nullify this promise (Gal. 3:17). The law provided that mankind was sinful and could not be righteous. It kept people dependent on God's promises (vs. 19-26). The law was temporary and provisional, designed to bring mankind to Christ (vs. 24-29).

Believers in Christ are free from the law. They are not condemned by it. Paul contrasted the law with salvation (Gal. 3:14-16 and 4:31).

Abraham did not see the fulfilled promise of Jesus. He did not understand it, but he believed (Rom. 4:3).

Help the children believe God's promises. Belief in Christ is central to salvation. Obedience to Him will follow this decision.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

"The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey" (Josh. 24:24).

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach the children that God keeps His promises.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. Abraham believed God and obeyed Him.
2. Believers must obey.
3. Children should ask God to help them obey daily.

For **Beginning the Lesson**, you will need Bibles and a small piece of luggage with lesson materials inside.

For **Telling How to Live**, you will need 3-by-5-inch cards, one per child. Label the cards "Believe" and "Obey" so that half the class will have "Believe" and the other half will have "Obey." You will need to know the chorus of "Standing on the Promises" that you can find in most hymnals.

For **Helping to Remember**, Each child will need colored paper, crayons, scissors, glue, and a small, empty cake mix-sized box. The children will use the "Believe" and "Obey" cards from Telling How to Live.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

(Show the luggage.) What is this? What is it used for? Did anyone go on a trip this summer? Did you know where you were going? (Allow time for answers.)

Today we are learning about a man who took a long trip. His name is in the first book of the Bible. What is the first book of the Bible? The first five books of the Bible are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Let us say these books together. (Repeat books.)

TELLING THE LESSON

One day God told Abram to take a trip. He did not tell Abram where to go. God just said, "Leave your father's house. I will show you where to go."

Abram had a choice to make. He could say, "No, I do not want to leave my home here." Or he could say, "Yes, I will go."

Why would it be hard for Abram to say he would go? (Allow time for answers.)

God said, "If you go, I promise to make your people a great nation. I promise to make you an important person. I promise that you will be a blessing to many people." God promised

Abram a family, land, power, and many animals.

Abram wondered how the promise would come true. He did not understand, but he believed God. What did Abram need to do to receive God's promise? (He had to obey God by leaving his home.)

About twenty years later, God renewed His promise. God told Abram the promise again. This time God gave Abram a new name. Find his new name in Genesis 17:5. (Help the children find the verse.) "Abraham" means "the father of many." This was part of the promise—many descendants, relatives, grandsons, and granddaughters.

God added something to His promise. God promised Abraham that Sarah, his wife, would have a son. Abraham could not understand how this could be. Abraham and Sarah were old. Babies are not born to old people. But Abraham needed to believe. He did not understand it all, but he believed. He obeyed God because he believed.

In the Bible a promise is called a covenant. Find the word "covenant" in Genesis 17:2. (Give time for finding the word. Read the verse to the children. Then read it in unison.) Can you find "covenant" in two more verses? What kind of covenant is in verse 7? What does "everlasting" mean?

What is the everlasting promise? God promised Abraham that He would be his God. God said He would also be the God of Abraham's seed, that is, his children and grandchildren, and their children and grandchildren, and on and on. The most important descendant of Abraham was Jesus. It is hard to understand, but we must believe that Jesus is not simply a person descended from Abraham. He is also God. Jesus said that both He and His Father are God (cf. John 10:30). God's covenant, or promise, was also with us. God promised to send Jesus. When we believe that Jesus died for our sins, we are saved from sin. We obey God because we believe in God's promises.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE

God gave Abram a wonderful promise. To receive the promise, Abram had to believe it. When he believed, he obeyed. God wants us to believe and obey too.

What would have happened if Abram had not believed and obeyed God? (He would not be a great man. He would not have many descendants.)

Sometimes it is hard to obey. We do not always obey. We do not understand the importance of obeying. We ask why things happen. We get discouraged. We do not believe God.

What does it mean to believe? (Allow time for answers. To believe means to accept, to have faith in, to know it will happen, and to trust God and His promises.)

(Play the game "Believe and Obey.") Divide the class into two groups in opposite areas of the room. Give one group "Believe" cards. Give the other group "Obey" cards.

Have everyone sit. As you read the following verses, the group who has on their cards the correct thing that Abraham had to do, as described in each verse, should stand: Genesis 12:1 (obey); verse 2 (believe); verse 3 (believe); verse 4 (obey); verse 7 (believe); 17:1 (obey); verse 2 (believe); verse 4 (believe); verse 15 (obey); verse 16 (believe).

God will always keep His promises. God wants you to keep your promises to believe Him and then obey. God will never forget you. Think of the rainbow. It still appears at times. It tells us that God keeps His promises.

(Teach the chorus of the hymn "Standing on the Promises." Sing the chorus at different times during the lesson. It will remind the children of God's promises to Noah and Abram.) The word "standing" means believing the promises. Believe that God will do what He promised.

HELPING TO REMEMBER

Distribute the boxes, colored paper, crayons, scissors, and glue. Have the children cover their boxes with colored paper, leaving an opening at the top. Print "Promise Box" on the chalkboard for them to copy on the front of their boxes. Have them decorate the boxes and print their names on one end. Print "Believe" and "Obey" on the chalkboard, and have the children print the word that is not on their card on the other side. They should put their card in their box. Keep the boxes in the classroom until the end of the quarter.

EXPLAINING THE GOLDEN TEXT

"Thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee" (Genesis 17:5).

God changed Abram's name to "Abraham," which means "father of many." Abraham believed God. He did not understand, but he believed and obeyed God.

TRUE OR FALSE

1.. "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.' " **GENESIS 17:1**

TRUE OR FALSE

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORDS:

2. "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a (**FATHER, BROTHER**) of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be called (**ABE, ABRAHAM**); for I have made you a father of (**FEW, MANY**) nations.' " **GENESIS 17:4-5**

3. "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the (**OCEAN, LAND**) in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
GENESIS 17:8
"THEN THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM BY THE TEREBINTH TREES OF MAMRE, AS HE WAS SITTING IN THE TENT DOOR IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY." GENESIS 18:1

4. "And He said, 'I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a (**HEADACHE, SON**).' " **GENESIS 18:10**

5. "And the LORD said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah (**LAUGH, CRY**), saying, "Shall I surely bear a child, since I am (**YOUNG, OLD**)' Is there anything too (**HARD, EASY**)for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.' " **GENESIS 18:13-14**

GOD MAKES A PROMISE TO ABRAM (GENESIS 15:1-17:19; 18:1-16) -ADDED TEXT

C O V E N A N T S T A R S H D
T Y M H Z K W H B N I E E E F
O M S J W G A L O B V A S L P
Y S S E L D L I H C V C B F T
T R S L W P S A W E E S U W D
T A M X V I M O N N G G R U R
R U O B V E R Z D T U Y N U A
E V K K H D I A E D K M I Y W
B W I N W I N Y W P J A N O E
M A N P S T H E P T W R G L R
U T G F S N E H E I R B T P S
N Z O L R A R K E C S A O Z A
G V V H O V I G L P F M R P W
F K E J V R T Z S N Z X C Z I
I B N K B I D S G B Z O H X L

ABRAM HEIR SLEEP BURNING TORCH

INHERIT SMOKING OVEN CHILDLESS LORD

STARS COVENANT NUMBER VISION

DESCENDANTS REWARD WORD HEAVEN

LESSON SUMMARIZED BY

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