

Bible Stories for Adults

God's Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 15, 17

Opening

- Gathering: Give an example of a time when you doubted God, but then He proved to be faithful.
- Today's Focus: To recognize that God calls us by His grace, just as He called Abram, and we are to respond obediently out of faith, just like Abram.
- Key Verses: *The Lord is faithful to all His promises.* Psalm 145:13
- Those who believe are children of Abraham. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.* Galatians 3:7, 14
- Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.* Hebrews 9:15

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Promises to Abram (*Genesis 12-13*)

- What promises did God make to Abram when He called him?
Genesis 12:2-3
- What was Abram's responsibility under this agreement, and did he fulfill it?
Genesis 12:1, 4
- What did God promise after Abram obeyed and arrived in Canaan?
Genesis 12:7
- What did God promise after Abram let Lot choose the choice land?
Genesis 13:14-16
- What was Abram's responsibility under this agreement, and did he fulfill it?
Genesis 13:17-18
- What did God promise Abram after he rescued Lot and gave a tithe? (*Genesis 14*)
Genesis 15:1

Blessed Abram (*Genesis 15:2-5*)

- Did Abram get to see God's promises to him fulfilled?
Hebrews 11:8-9, 13
- Did God fulfill any of His promises during Abram's life?
Genesis 13:2
- Did Abram feel fully blessed?
Genesis 15:2-3
- How did God respond to Abram's confusion and doubt?
Genesis 15:4-5

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Faith Credited as Righteousness (*Genesis 15:6*)

Did this help or did Abram continue to doubt?

Genesis 15:6

Was Abram considered righteous because he obeyed God's instructions?

Romans 3:10, 20

Then why was he considered righteous?

Romans 4:1-3

Did Abram's good works and obedience help earn this righteousness at least a little?

Romans 4:4-8

How does Paul explain this in a summary of the gospel?

Ephesians 2:8-9

Promise Guarantees (*Genesis 15:7-8*)

Did Abram have any further doubts after God restated His promise of descendants?

Genesis 15:7-8

How were pledges and promises formally guaranteed in the days of the patriarchs?

Genesis 31:44-46, 48-50

Blood Covenant - Used as an absolute and unbreakable guarantee of critical agreements

Bound two parties together as one

Very serious & solemn

3 large animals split down the spine, halves spread on ground opposite each other

"May this happen to me if I break this covenant" - see Jeremiah 34:18

Parties exchanged coats - exchange of authority, What I have is yours

Exchanged weapons - My strength is yours, Your enemies are mine

Walked twice through *The Way of Blood*

Met each other in the center

The Blessing of the Covenant - Stated pledges of agreement

Pronounced a curse for breaking the covenant

Parties swore by their god, making him a third party

The Cut of the Covenant - Cut hands & wrists, bound together to intermingle blood

Joined names together

Ate a covenant meal of bread & wine together (Bread for flesh, wine for blood)

Represented willingness to lay down lives for each other

God's Covenant with Abram (*Genesis 15:7-18*)

How did God show Abram how serious He was about His promises?

Genesis 15:9-10

How did God make this a one-sided covenant where all Abram had to do was accept it?

Genesis 15:11-12

What was *The Blessing of the Covenant*?

Genesis 15:13-16, 18

How did God handle the covenant ritual of walking twice through *The Way of Blood*?

Genesis 15:17

What was the meaning behind the smoke and fire?

Exodus 13:21

How did God guarantee His covenant with us?

Hebrews 7:22; 9:12

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God's Covenants with His People

- . Genesis 9:8-9, 11
- . Exodus 19:3-6
- . 2 Samuel 7:8, 11b-13
- . Jeremiah 31:31-34 (Hebrews 8)
- . 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- . John 14:2-3

God Confirms His Covenant (*Genesis 17:1-14*)

Did Abram fully trust in God's promise and covenant despite his lack of an heir?

Genesis 16:1-2, 16

What did God do 13 years later to show that He had not yet begun to fulfill His covenant promise?

Genesis 17:1-2

How did God point out that this really was the time?

Genesis 17:3-5

Abram ? Abraham

What promises did God confirm?

Genesis 17:6-8

Was this another one-sided covenant or did Abraham have a responsibility?

Genesis 17:9-11

Circumcise

Was this covenant sign only for Abraham and His descendants?

Genesis 17:12-14

God's Covenant Through Sarah (*Genesis 17:15-16*)

How did God point out that the life change was not only for Abraham?

Genesis 17:15-16

Sarai

Sarah

Abraham's Disbelief (*Genesis 17:17-19*)

How did this differ from Abraham's understanding of God's plan?

Genesis 17:17-18

How did God respond to Abraham's disbelief in God fulfilling His impossible promise?

Genesis 17:19

How had God introduced Himself to Abram, and why?

Genesis 17:1

Jeremiah 32:27 (Matthew 19:26)

Was Abraham able to trust God in faith despite his initial disbelief?

Hebrews 11:11-12

But what about Abraham's only son at the time, Ishmael?

Genesis 17:20-22

How long did it take Abraham to complete what God commanded?

Genesis 17:23-27

What is the significance of circumcision instituted before Isaac?

Colossians 2:11-13

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Justified by Circumcision? (*Romans 4*)

- Was Abraham justified (deemed righteous) & blessed because of circumcision?
Romans 4:9-11a
- Are God's promises to Abraham's descendants only to the Jews (circumcised)?
Romans 4:11b-12
- How did Abraham receive the promise? By obeying the law?
Romans 4:13-15
- How can we be heirs to the promises God made to Abraham?
Romans 4:16-17
- Why did Abraham believe God's promise of offspring when he was past age?
Romans 4:18-22
- How can righteousness be credited to us?
Romans 4:23-25

God Visits (*Genesis 18:1-15*)

- How did God make clear to Abraham the sincerity and certainty of His promise to bring Isaac?
Genesis 18:1
- Did Abraham recognize God?
Genesis 18:2-8
- What was God's message to Abraham?
Genesis 18:9-10
- How did Sarah respond to God's message?
Genesis 18:11-12
- Would Sarah's laughter or age (90) interfere with God's plan?
Genesis 18:13-14
- Did Sarah confess and repent of her unbelief?
Genesis 18:15

They Called Him Laughter (*Genesis 17:19*)

- Isaac* means *laughter*. Why did God pick such a name?
Genesis 17:17
- Genesis 18:10-15
- Genesis 21:6-7
- Genesis 17:19
- What other biblical births were received skeptically?
Luke 1:31, 34-37

Closing Prayer

Response

1. What promises has God made to me? (*John 14:1-4; Acts 1:4-5; 2:38-39; Romans 1:2-6; Galatians 3:14, 26-28; 4:28; Ephesians 3:6; Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25*)
2. How has He begun to fulfill these promises?
(*Joshua 21:43-45; 23:14; 1 Kings 8:56; Psalm 145:13b; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 2 Peter 1:3-4; 3:9*)
3. How do I respond to the promises God has made to me?
(*Joshua 23:9-16; Romans 4; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 11:13-16; 2 Peter 1:4-8*)
4. Do I recognize when my faith falters? How can I deal with my unbelief?
(*Deut 1:32; 9:23-24; Matthew 8:24-27; 14:29-31; 16:8; 17:19-21; Mark 9:23-24; 16:16; Luke 11:13*)
5. Do I live my life as one who is righteous in God's sight? How must I change? (*Ephesians 4:17-5:21*)