

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 15: GOD MAKES A PROMISE TO ABRAM
GENESIS 15:1-17:19; 18:1-16

After all these things happened, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. God said, "Abram, don't be afraid. I will defend you and give you a great reward." But Abram said, "Lord GOD, there is nothing you can give me that will make me happy, because I have no son. My slave Eliezer from Damascus will get everything I own after I die." Abram said, "You have given me no son, so a slave born in my house will get everything I have." Then the LORD spoke to Abram and said, "That slave will not be the one to get what you have. You will have your own son who will get everything you own." Then God led Abram outside and said, "Look up to heaven and see how many stars there are - so many that you cannot count them. Your descendants will be like that." Abram believed the LORD, and because of this faith the Lord accepted him as one who has done right in His eyes. He said to Abram, "I am the LORD who led you from Ur of Babylonia. I did this so that I could give you this land. I will give this land to you and your descendants." But Abram said, "Lord GOD, how can I be sure that I will get this land?" God said to Abram, "We will make a covenant, which is an agreement. Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a dove, and a young pigeon." Abram brought all these to God. Abram killed these animals and cut each of them into two pieces. Then he laid each half across from the other half. He did not cut the birds into two pieces. Later, large birds flew down to eat the animals, but Abram chased them away. The sun began to go down and Abram got very sleepy. While he was asleep, a very terrible darkness came over him. Then the Lord said to Abram, "You should know this: Your descendants will live in a country that is not their own. They will be strangers there. The people there will make them slaves and be cruel to them for 400 years. But then I will punish the nation that made them slaves. Your people will leave that land, and they will take many good things with them. "You yourself will live to be very old. You will die in peace and will be buried with your family. After four generations your people will come to this land again and defeat the Amorites. That will happen in the future because the Amorites are not yet guilty enough to lose their land." After the sun went down, it got very dark. The dead animals were still on the ground, each animal cut into two pieces. Then a smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed between the halves of the dead animals.

So on that day the LORD made a promise and an agreement with Abram. He said, "I will give this land to your descendants. I will give them the land between the River of Egypt and the great river Euphrates.

Sarai was Abram's wife, but she did not have any children. She had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. Sarai told Abram, "The LORD has not allowed me to have children, so sleep with my slave. Maybe she can have a son, and I will accept him as my own." Abram did what Sarai said. So after living ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai gave her Egyptian slave to Abram as a second wife. Abram slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar realized this, she became very proud and began to feel that she was better than Sarai her owner. Then Sarai said to Abram, "My slave girl now hates me, and I blame you for this. I gave her to you, and she became pregnant. Then she began to feel that she is better than I am. I want the LORD to judge which of us is right." But Abram said to Sarai, "She is your slave. You can do anything you want to her." So Sarai was cruel to Hagar, and Hagar ran away. The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert. The spring was by the road to Shur. The angel said, "Hagar, Sarai's slave girl, why are you here? Where are you going?" Hagar said, "I am running away from Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Sarai is your owner. Go home to her and obey her." The angel of the LORD also said, "From you will come many people--too many people to count." Then the angel of the LORD said, "Hagar, you are now pregnant, and you will have a son. You will name him Ishmael, because the LORD has heard that you were treated badly. Ishmael will be wild and free like a wild donkey. He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. He will move from place to place and camp near his brothers." The LORD talked to Hagar. She began to use a new name for God. She said to him, "You are 'God Who Sees Me.'" She said this because she thought, "I see that even in this place God sees me and cares for me!" So the well there was called Beer Lahai Roi. It is between Kadesh and Bered. Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named the son Ishmael. Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born from Hagar.

When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said, "I am God All-Powerful. Obey me and live the right way. If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation." Then Abram bowed down before God. God said to him, "This is my part of our agreement: I will make you the father of many nations. I will change your name from Abram to Abraham, because I am making you the father of many nations. I

will give you many descendants. New nations and kings will come from you. And I will prepare an agreement between me and you. This agreement will also be for all your descendants. It will continue forever. I will be your God and the God of all your descendants. And I will give this land to you and to all your descendants. I will give you the land you are traveling through--the land of Canaan. I will give you this land forever, and I will be your God." Then God said to Abraham, "Now, this is your part of the agreement: You and all your descendants will obey my agreement. This is my agreement that all of you must obey. This is the agreement between me and you and all your descendants. Every male must be circumcised. You will cut the skin to show that you follow the agreement between me and you. When the baby boy is eight days old, you will circumcise him. Every boy born among your people and every boy who is a slave of your people must be circumcised. So every baby boy in your nation will be circumcised. Every boy who is born from your family or bought as a slave will be circumcised. Abraham, this is the agreement between you and me: Any male who is not circumcised will be cut off from his people because he has broken my agreement." God said to Abraham, "I will give Sarai, your wife, a new name. Her new name will be Sarah. I will bless her. I will give her a son, and you will be the father. She will be the mother of many new nations. Kings of nations will come from her." Abraham bowed his face to the ground to show he respected God. But he laughed and said to himself, "I am 100 years old. I cannot have a son, and Sarah is 90 years old. She cannot have a child." Then Abraham said to God, "I hope Ishmael will live and serve you." God said, "No, I said that your wife Sarah will have a son. You will name him Isaac. I will make my agreement with him that will continue forever with all his descendants.

Later, the LORD again appeared to Abraham near the oak trees of Mamre. It was the hottest part of the day, and Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent. He looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When he saw the men, he ran to them and bowed before them. Abraham said, "Sirs, please stay a while with me, your servant. I will bring some water to wash your feet. You can rest under the trees. I will get some food for you, and you can eat as much as you want. Then you can continue your journey." The three men said, "Do as you wish." Abraham hurried to the tent. He said to Sarah, "Quickly, prepare enough flour for three loaves of bread." Then Abraham ran to his cattle. He took his best young calf and gave it to the servant there. He told the servant to quickly kill the calf and prepare it for food. Abraham brought the meat and some milk

and cheese and set them down in front of the three men. Then he stood near the men, ready to serve them while they sat under the tree and ate. Then the men said to Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" Abraham said, "She is there, in the tent." Then one of them said, "I will come again in the spring. At that time your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah was listening in the tent and heard these things. Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children. So she laughed to herself and said, "I am old, and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby." Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Sarah laughed and said she was too old to have a baby. But is anything too hard for the LORD? I will come again in the spring, just as I said I would, and your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah said, "I didn't laugh!" (She said this because she was afraid.) Then the Lord said, "No, I know that is not true. You did laugh!" Then the men got up to leave. They looked toward Sodom and began walking in that direction. Abraham walked with them to send them on their way.

15. GOD MAKES A PROMISE TO ABRAM

GENESIS 15:1-17:19; 18:1-16



"The LORD took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and try to count the stars;
that is how many descendants you will have."

GENESIS 15:5

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MEMORY VERSE:

"For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith." **ROMANS 4:13**

Review Questions

True or False

1. Abram told God, "There is nothing you can give me to make me happy, because I already have a son named Eliezer of Damascus."
2. God told Abram, "You will have your own son that will inherit everything you own."
3. God took him outside and said, "Look up toward heaven at all the stars; there are so many that you cannot count them. Your descendants will be like that."
4. And Abram did not believe the Lord, because he was so old.
5. That same day the LORD made a covenant (agreement) with Abram and said, "I will give this river to you and your descendants."
6. When Abram was ninety nine years old the LORD appeared to him and changed his name to Abraham.
7. God told Abraham that He was going to make him the father of many nations.

Questions

1. Could Abraham's wife Sarai have any children?
2. Who was Hagar?
3. What was Hagar's son's name?
4. When the three men came to visit Abraham and Sarah, what did one of the men say would happen by the time he came back the next spring?
5. When Sarah heard the man say that she was going to have a son, what did she do?
6. How old was Abraham and how old was Sarah when the three men came and told them they would have a son?
7. What name did the man say that Abraham would give to his son?

Lesson 15 Activity and Craft

No Let Down

Ask for two or three volunteers in the class who are very strong. Now ask each volunteer if they would make a promise to you that they would not let their hands down at all if you asked them to hold their hands straight out to the side – after they all promise, give them each two books (or bibles, or small objects that aren't too heavy) to hold in their hands as they stretch their arms straight out level with their shoulders. They won't be able to stand there very long, but let them try as best as they can – when time runs out or all the children let their arms down ask the following questions:

Were you able to keep your promise?

Who do we let down when we don't keep a promise? (the person you make the promise to)

How do we sometimes let people down?

Is it sometimes hard to keep promises?

Can we always depend on God?

Does God keep His promises, even when it seems like it would be hard to do?

Of course! God always keeps His promises! God wants us to trust Him!

Promised Surprise

Enclose cardboard shaped stars in as many envelopes as the number of children in your class. Explain that there is something special in each envelope. Hand out crayons to your class and have them gently rub the crayon over the hidden shape in the envelope. The shape should appear where the crayon is rubbed. Show your class how to shake the envelope and move the star around, allowing for additional star shapes to be drawn with different colors.

Ask your class if they could see what was in the envelope before coloring over it.

They could not, but because you told them they believed you. Explain that God makes promises, too. We cannot always see them, but we can trust Him to be true.

God wants us to trust Him.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust the Lord in all things--first to believe in Him for salvation and then to trust Him to show us how to live our lives for Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity to do so.