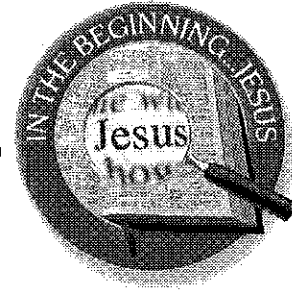


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 8

God's Covenant with Abram

Themes:

- God chose Abram (Abraham) to make one great nation to bless the world.
- God made a binding covenant with Abraham.
- By faith, Abraham obeyed God's call and depended on God's faithfulness.
- Man's actions cannot thwart God's plans.
- God will accomplish all His plans.

Note: Although the actual covenantal ceremony is not found until Genesis 15 and will not be used in this lesson, the framework for the covenant is found in chapter 12 and is presented in this lesson. The next lesson will further develop the covenant.

Scripture:

Portions of Genesis 12; Hebrews 11:1, 8; Isaiah 46:10b, 11b

Memory Verse:

Isaiah 53:7a (and review verses 3-6)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - GO FROM, TO, AND I WILL, SO THAT—Use construction paper attached with paper clips to cover up the words under each visual's heading.
 - ROAD BLOCK 1-4 and VERSE PORTION 1-4—Glue each of the VERSE PORTIONS to the back of the corresponding ROAD BLOCK.
 - Bible Clue Card #9.
- Magnifying glass (for use in reading the clue card).
- Paperclips.
- Tape.
- Small treat or prize.
- Paper bag (e.g., lunch bag)—Place a better treat or prize into this bag than the treat mentioned above.
- Small toy for a baby (from Lesson 5, or you could use a different toy for a baby).

Optional Visual for Application (Small Group Leaders):

- Pictures from a fun out-of-town vacation. You also may want to include a road map of this location.

Lesson

Using the *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster, quickly review the clues revealed so far. Do these eight clues give us the complete answer to the mystery of why Jesus died and who did it? Review these three key points:

- We need the WHOLE Bible to understand the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross.
- We need to put the clues from the Bible in the CORRECT ORDER—beginning in Genesis.
- JESUS IS THE KEY to understanding the clues.

Point out that we are still in the very first book of the Bible—Genesis. We have a long way to go. We need to search the Bible for more important clues.

Ask: *What was the clue from our last lesson? [ABRAHAM—ONE MAN BLESSING THE WORLD.] What had God done to the peoples of the earth before He chose this one man? [Scattered them at Babel.] Who chose this one man? [God did.]*

Have the children turn to **Genesis 12:1-3** in their Bibles. **Display** the **GO FROM** visual and ask:

In verse 1, God called Abram (who was later named Abraham) to go away from three things. What were they? [His country, kindred, and father's house.] Uncover these on the visual.

Display the **TO** visual and ask: *At the end of verse 1, God tells Abram to go to a new place. Where is it? [The land that I will show you.] Uncover this on the visual. Does God tell Abram what it will look like? Will it be good land? Will it be filled with other people? [God doesn't say!]*

Display the **AND I WILL** visual and have the children look carefully at verses 2-3. Ask: *According to verses 2 and 3, God says that He will do four things for Abram when he obeys God's command to leave. What are they? Reveal these on the visual and read each: I will make you a great nation; I will bless you; I will make your name great; I will protect you. Do these sound like good things? Yes! God is promising to do good things in Abram's life.*

Display the **SO THAT** visual and ask: *Why is God doing these things for Abram? What does God want to do? Look carefully at verse 2. What words come after the last "and" in the sentence? [You will be a blessing.] To whom is Abram supposed to be a blessing? Look carefully at the end of verse 3 for the answer. [All the families of the earth.]* Reveal this on the visual.

Was all of this Abram's idea and plan? Was he like the people of Shinar who wanted to make themselves great? How is this situation different? [Allow the children to respond.]

Tape the visuals on a wall from top to bottom so that the visual now reads: **GOD'S PLAN** vertically. Point out that this plan was not Abram's idea. It was God's. God called Abram out of all the peoples of the earth so that through this one man all the families of the earth would be blessed. But the first thing that must happen for this plan to work is what? (Point to the **GO FROM** portion of the visual.)

Would it be a hard thing for Abram to leave his country, his relatives, and even his home? Did he know exactly where he was going? How he would live? Would there be food and water? Would he have a house in which to live? Would there be enemies there?

Illustration: Choose a child to come to the front and hand him the treat or prize. Next, show him the paper bag. Ask him if he knows what's in the bag. Why not? Tell him that he can choose to keep the treat or prize in his hand, or he can trade it for a better surprise—something in the bag. What does he choose to do? Why has he made this choice? If he chooses to keep what he has, open up the bag to show him what he could have had.

Point out that Abram was faced with an even more important choice—to keep what he already had: a place to live, friends, family, a job—or go to a place that was unknown to him. How would he be able to make such a hard choice?

Have a **Sword Drill** with **Hebrews 11:8**:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Ask: *How was Abram able to make such a hard choice and obey God's call? [By faith.] What does that mean? What is faith?*

Read **Hebrews 11:1**:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Display the paper bag from the previous illustration. Remind the children of the child who had to choose between keeping what he could see or trading it for what he could not see. Whether or not he traded was based on whether or not he was confident that the teacher had indeed put a better surprise in the bag. In the case of Abram, he was confident that God did indeed have something better for him. He said something like, *I believe that You are God and that You know best. I trust You to take care of me and keep all of Your promises.* What happened next?

Choose children to read **Genesis 12:4a-5a**:

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to the land of Canaan.

So now Abram is on his way, and God's plan is put in action. Does Abram just walk in, take over the land, and set up a new house?

Read **Genesis 12:6**:

Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem...At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

Explain that the Canaanites were a wicked people. They worshiped idols. Abram would not be welcomed in the land by these people.

Display ROAD BLOCK 1 and comment: *It seems as if things are not going to be as easy as just moving into a new land. The Canaanites seem to be a roadblock to God's plan for Abram. Can God remove the Canaanites and scatter them just like He did to the people of Shinar? Is that what God did?*

Choose a child to read **Genesis 12:7a**:

Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."

Ask: *Did God remove the Canaanites while Abram looked on? No. Paperclip ROAD BLOCK 1 over the letter "P" of GOD'S PLAN. God didn't remove the Canaanites. This land was to be for Abram's offspring in the future. So there stayed the Canaanites, and Abram kept traveling.*

Explain that soon after this Abram came upon another problem. Choose a child to read **Genesis 12:10**:

Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

What is a famine? [There is no food.] So Abram had to travel from the land of Canaan down into Egypt. (Show where this is on the map.) **Display ROADBLOCK 2** and paperclip it over the letter "L" on **GOD'S PLAN**.

And, to add to his problems, the Bible says that because Sarai, his wife, was very beautiful, Abram was afraid the Egyptians would kill him so that Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, could take her as his wife. What about God's promise to bless Abram and protect him? Display **ROAD BLOCK 3** and paperclip it over the letter "A" on **GOD'S PLAN**.

Point out that it doesn't seem as if God's plan is working out so well. Do the children think that Abram sometimes had some doubts as to whether God would keep His promises?

Abram thought that maybe he needed to take some action and try to solve one of these problems his own way—not by depending on God to act. When he went down to Egypt, he decided the best way to protect himself and Sarai was to lie. He told the Egyptians that Sarai was actually his sister. By lying this way, he thought he would be kept safe.

Explain that this did not solve his problem. Pharaoh took Sarai into his house anyway and wanted her to become his wife.

Will Abram's lie put an end to God's plan? Will Pharaoh put an end to God's plan?

Choose a child to read **Genesis 12:17**:

But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

Explain that God would not let Abram's or Pharaoh's actions ruin His plan. God knew exactly what was happening and protected both Sarai and Abram from the Egyptians. (Remove **ROAD BLOCK 3** from the letter "A.") Not only were they protected, but because of God's goodness, Abram became a very wealthy man, and he and Sarai were able to leave Egypt. But...there was another problem. A huge problem.

Display the toy for a baby. Tell the children that this is a clue to Abram's huge problem. What is the problem? Instruct the children to look at **Genesis 11:30** for the answer. [Sarai had no children.]

Why is it important for Abram to have a child? Without a child, Abram would not become a great nation. Without a child, there would be no

offspring to inherit the land. Without a child, God's plan to bless the whole world would not work. And by this time, Sarai was too old to have a child.

Display ROAD BLOCK 3 and 4. Paperclip one over the letter "A" in **PLAN** and the other over the letter "N."

Had Abram been foolish to trust God? Had Abram been foolish to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house? It seems as if God's plan is impossible—it just won't work, especially now that Sarai is too old to have any children.

Display Bible Clue Card #9. Choose a child to come to the front and insert the card behind the red paper in the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual. Can the child see any writing? It's blank. Why would it be blank? [Allow the children to give a few responses.]

*Just as we cannot see any clue written on the card, Abram could not "see" how God would complete His plan. Abram and Sarai couldn't "see" how God could give them a child. But what is faith? **"The assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."** (See **Hebrews 11:1.**)*

Point to **GOD'S PLAN** again and emphasize that this was not Abram's plan. It was God's plan. Abram couldn't always see how God would accomplish His plan, but he could be sure and certain that somehow God would do it—even when it seemed impossible. Why could Abram be confident of this?

Turn over each **ROAD BLOCK** and paperclip them back over **GOD'S PLAN** in the same order to reveal the following words from **Isaiah 46:10b, 11b**:

- 1) My counsel shall stand,**
- 2) and I will accomplish all My purpose...**
- 3) I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass;**
- 4) I have purposed, and I will do it.**

Application

- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 8 in their workbooks. Using **Genesis 12:1-3** as a guide, have the children fill in the missing words on the blank lines. Ask them: *Can you imagine being called away from your country, your family, and your home? Do you think that it would be hard to leave and go to somewhere unknown? What kinds of questions might you have? What doubts might you have? Why was Abram able to go? Review **Hebrews 11:1, 8.** Ask: Have you ever made a decision by faith? What was it? For example, did you SEE God create the whole world? Are you still sure that He did it? If you are, that's faith! Did you SEE*

Jesus die on the cross? Are you convinced that He is real and really died and rose again in order to save you? If you are, that's faith! Have you SEEN heaven? Are you convinced that heaven is a real place where Christians will live with Jesus forever?

- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children look in the place where they usually write in the new clue. Why isn't there a clue today? What couldn't Abram yet SEE? What must he depend on? Have you had to wait for a promise from God? Can you depend on Him to keep every promise? If possible, share a personal example of your own, and then have the children share from their own personal experiences. See if they can recall some Bible promises. Talk about what these promises mean, whom they are for, and how Christians can have confidence that God will keep His promises.
- If available, show the children a map and pictures of a beautiful and fun vacation destination you have visited. Would the pictures and your description of the place help the children to decide if they also wanted to visit this place someday? Why? Could their parents use the map in order to find the exact location? Did God give Abram a map to follow? Did God give Abram pictures to look at? Did God give Abram a description of what the land would be like? Why not? Read **Hebrews 11:6a**. What must Abram have believed to be true about God in order to follow His command? Read **Hebrews 11:6b**. For example: *What if your dad said, "If you help me clean the garage, I'll take you out for a special treat." Would you believe him? Why? Would you believe that the treat is going to be something good and not something like a rotten, wormy apple. What had God promised Abram if he obeyed? Did Abram take God's word for it?*
- Point out that in our lesson we learned about some "roadblocks" that seemed to be in the way of God keeping His promise to Abram. What were they? Review **Genesis 12:6**. What was God's response? Read verse 7. Ask: *Have you ever had to wait a long time for a promise? For example, have your parents ever said something like, "When spring comes, we will get you a (puppy, new bike, etc.)"? Did you feel discouraged while you waited? Did you complain? Did it sometimes seem like you would never receive the thing that they had promised? How did Abram respond to God when Abram realized he would have to wait a little longer for his land? (See verse 6b.)* Point out that building an altar was an act of worship. Abram didn't whine or complain to God. He believed God was being good to him—even while he had to wait. He trusted that God was in control and knew what was best for his life.
- Explain that sometimes when people read the Bible, they like to talk about people like Abram as "heroes." While this is true to some extent, the Bible also wants us to see people as they really are. Ask the children if they remember an event from today's lesson that shows that Abram was a

sinner, just like Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, and Noah. [When he lied about Sarai being his wife.] Why did he lie? [Because he was afraid he would be killed.] Have the children look at the words AND I WILL on their workbook page. What promises of God was Abram not trusting in when he lied? Emphasize that not trusting God was his sin, which resulted in Abram lying. Did Abram's sin ruin God's plan? Why not? Discuss **Isaiah 46:10-11**.

Send Home

- Parent Resource Page