



The Beginning

Lesson 10: God's Covenant With Abram

(Genesis 15:1-17:27)

After rescuing Lot, God told Abram in a vision not to be afraid. God said that He was Abram's shield and his "your exceedingly great reward" (Genesis 15:1). God had been with Abram and protected him. But, Abram had a question that troubled him.

Abram asked God what reward God would give to him since he had no children. The one who was in the position to have Abram's possessions when he died was someone who had been born in Abram's house (named Eliezer). Abram did not understand how God would keep all of His promises that had been made to him while he had no children of his own.

So, God promised Abram that he would have a child of his own. And, God took Abram outside and told him to look up at the sky and count the stars. God knew that there were so many stars that it would not be easy for Abram to count them. Then, God promised Abram that he would have so many children and grandchildren that it would be difficult to count all of them.

Abram believed God. Even though he still did not have any children of his own, Abram believed that God would keep His promises. So, Abram did whatever God told him to do. And, Abram's trust in God (faith) made him pleasing to God!

God promised that He would give Abram the land of Canaan to inherit it. Still, Abram asked God how he could know that God would keep His promise. So, God and Abram entered an agreement (a covenant). God told Abram to bring Him certain kinds of animals. And, God told Abram that his descendants would be strangers in a land and serve the people of that land for 400 years. But, they would come out of that land in the fourth generation with great possessions and live in the land of

Canaan. We will see God keep this promise in the book of Exodus. As for Abram, he would die at a good old age in peace.

When it was dark, God used the animals Abram had laid out and caused a smoking oven and a burning torch to pass between the pieces. This was the same day the Lord made the promises to Abram about giving the land of Canaan to his descendants. Now, the agreement was complete.

Still, Abram and his wife, Sarai, had not been able to have any children of their own. So, Sarai's servant, Hagar, had a child for Abram. His name would be Ishmael. This made Sarai very angry and Hagar ran away from her and went into the desert.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar in the desert and told her to return to Sarai and listen to her. He promised her that she would have many descendants. He told her to name her son Ishmael, because God had heard her misery. Ishmael would be a wild man and would not get along with others. Hagar praised God and said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" (Genesis 16:13). Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

Several years later, when Abram was 99 years old, God appeared to Abram. He told Abram that He was the God who is so powerful that He can do anything He wants, and that Abram should do what He says. And, God said that He would make an agreement (covenant) with Abram.

God said that Abram would be a father of many nations. Many nations and kings would come from him. Therefore, God changed his name to Abraham. Sarai's name was changed to Sarah. And, God promised that Abraham's descendants would be given the land of Canaan. He would be the God of his children and grandchildren. Then, as a sign of this promise, God commanded Abraham to circumcise all baby boys when they were eight days old. Abraham was obedient to God's instructions – and God would keep His promises to Abraham!

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Study Questions:

- 1) Who was Abram's heir?

- 2) What did God promise Abram about having children?

- 3) How many descendants would come from Abram?

- 4) Did Abram believe God?

- 5) What did God say would happen to Abram's descendants for 400 years?

- 6) What was the name of Abram and Hagar's son?

- 7) What did God change Abram's name to? What did God change Sarai's name to?

- 8) What promise did God make to Abraham when he was 99 years old?

Memory Verse:

“And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”
(Genesis 15:6).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: