

LESSON 9

God Makes a Covenant with Abram

GENESIS 15



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD'S GRACE TO US IS REVEALED IN THE CALLING OF ABRAM

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN**
Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN**
Read Genesis 15:1–6 from the Scriptures or read story 9, “God Makes a Covenant with Abram,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN**
A Covenant
SUPPLIES:
✓ a large card with the word “covenant” on one side and “promise” on the other
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN**
Number the Stars
SUPPLIES:
✓ library book or telescopic photos of stars from the Internet (Web sites: <http://www.stsci.edu/outreach> or <http://hubblesite.org/>). Note: Pick out an image with a mass of stars that illustrates the impossibility of counting them.
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME 20 MIN**
I'm a Star
SUPPLIES:
✓ crayons, colored pencils, and paper
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN**
Act It Out

TOTAL 85 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

God took initiative with Abram—After rescuing Lot, Abram was visited by a king named Melchizedek. The Bible calls Melchizedek both the king and the priest of Salem, which was an ancient name for Jerusalem. Melchizedek praised God and brought out bread and wine for a dinner.

In Melchizedek, we see a dramatic foreshadowing (a picture) of Jesus, who was also a king and priest in Jerusalem. One day, Jesus would himself bring out bread and wine and provide a supper we would all remember—the Last Supper.

After the visit with Melchizedek, God again spoke to Abram. So in this passage we see God continuing to take initiative with sinful man as he unfolds the plan of salvation. God was continually faithful to keep watch over Abram.

God made a covenant with Abram—God promised to give Abram a son and told him his descendants would be as numerous as the stars—more than he could count! He also promised that his descendants would possess the entire land of Canaan. Abram believed God, and God counted Abram's faith as righteousness (without guilt or sin).

To show how important this promise was, God made a covenant with Abram, just as he had earlier made a covenant with Noah. In those days, the tradition for making a covenant was to sacrifice animals and have both people in the covenant walk between the separated halves of the animals (see Jeremiah 34:18). In effect, the parties in the covenant were promising to keep the terms of the covenant or suffer the same fate as the animals. In God's covenant with Abram, God alone went between the animal parts. This showed that God was taking all the responsibility of fulfilling the promise of the covenant. God's promise to Abram was based on grace alone.

Abram's (Abraham's) faith was credited to him as righteousness—In his letter to the Romans, Paul helps us understand the faith that was counted to Abram as righteousness. (Paul uses the name Abraham because later God changes Abram's name.) Paul says, "No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised" (Romans 4:20–21).

Faith that is counted as righteousness is a gift of God, not a work of man. In Ephesians 2:8 we read, "by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read John 15:15–17.

This passage in John's Gospel tells us that we were chosen by God, just as Abram was. God took initiative in calling Abram, and then in making a covenant with him. In the same way, God took initiative in calling us and making a covenant with us in Jesus.

God's covenant with Abram was about the future. It pointed forward to the new covenant of salvation in Jesus. Our covenant with Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abram. We are part of the many nations God would bless through Jesus, the offspring of Abram.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Genesis 15:1–6 from the Scriptures or read story 9, "God Makes a Covenant with Abram," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

A Covenant

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a large card with the word "covenant" on one side and "promise" on the other

After reading the Bible passage or story for today, hold up the card with the word "covenant." Ask the class to repeat it and point out that the word covenant begins with the letter C. See if the children can connect that word to your story today. Read Genesis 15:18 to see if it helps the children guess what a covenant is. If they guess the word "promise" at any point, turn the

card over. If not, then turn the card over and explain that the word covenant means “promise.” Point out that the word promise begins with the letter P. Then ask the children the following question:

Has anyone ever made you a promise? (If yes, ask what it was and help the class understand how the promise was actually a covenant or contract. Use the words interchangeably and each time you say the word covenant, show that side of the card. Each time you say the word promise, show that side.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Number the Stars

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ library book or telescopic photos of stars from the Internet (Web sites: <http://www.stsci.edu/outreach> or <http://hubblesite.org/>). Note: Pick out an image with a mass of stars that illustrates the impossibility of counting them.

Write the number four followed by eleven zeroes on the board. Ask the children what they think the number represents. The answer is that this number, four hundred billion, is the number of stars some estimate to be in our galaxy—the Milky Way. Estimates on how many galaxies there are range from 80 billion to five hundred billion. NASA claims there are zillions of uncountable stars.

Ask the children why God would have shown Abram the stars and asked him to count them. Psalm 19:1 tells us, “the heavens declare the glory of God.” The majesty of God is seen in the beauty and awesome nature of the night sky. To see the stars and know that God created them points to his power and the fact that he can do what he says he will do.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 20 MIN

I'm a Star

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ crayons, colored pencils, and paper

Have each child draw a picture of themselves in the middle of their paper. Then instruct them to draw a star over their head. Explain that the star represents one of the stars God told Abraham about when he said his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. Each person that places their trust in Jesus and believes in him becomes a child of Abram—one of the stars God spoke to him about.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Act It Out

Choose one child to play the part of Abram. The rest of the class will perform as stars in the sky. Have the class stand up and pretend to be twinkling stars by holding out their hands and wiggling their fingers. Read Genesis 15:5. Then lead Abram over to your night sky and point to the stars who, you can explain to all, represent the millions of people God planned to bring into his family.

LESSON 9 - GOD MAKES A COVENANT WITH ABRAM

