

TEXT Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE Psalm 1:1-6

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to list the benefits that came to Abraham through believing and following God. They will further be able to cite the benefits that come to Christians today when they follow the same course of action.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.
— Genesis 15:1

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. — Romans 5:1-2

ANSWER TITLE: **God’s Promise to Abraham**

SEARCH TITLE: **The First Hebrew**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The account in Genesis 12:1-3 takes place about four hundred years after the Flood, and already man had forgotten God. In verse 2, God promises Abram to “make thy name great.” *Abram* means “a high father.” *Abraham* means “the father of a multitude of nations.”

Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born, the beginning of the fulfillment of God’s promise of many descendants.

The first use of the word *Hebrew* is found in Genesis 14:13. There doesn’t seem to be a clear meaning for its origin. The first suggestion in Smith’s Bible Dictionary is that Abraham was called Hebrew because he had crossed the river. His original home, Ur, was near the Euphrates River. The name also may have referred to his ancestor Heber (“Eber” in Genesis 11:14), the great grandson of Shem.

YOUR OPENER

The First Hebrew

RESPONSES

1. The first three verses of our text establish the framework for this lesson and reveal the seven special promises that were given to Abram. God’s promises to Abram were conditioned on his leaving his country and kindred. Ask your students if Abram would have benefited from the promises if he had not followed God’s command. Sum up this question by bringing out that receiving the fulfillment of God’s promises is based on some prerequisites. Then move directly to the next question.

2. God has made many promises to the saved and unsaved. Starting with the universal call to repentance, God promises eternal life, the fruit of the Spirit, spiritual experiences, healing, etc. Added to these, He has promised that we can be joint heirs with Christ. But as Abram had to leave his country and kindred, so must we be willing to turn our backs on our former life, and become new creatures in Christ. Also, as Abram believed God, we, too, must exercise faith and look for that City “whose builder and maker is God.”

3. Discussion of this question should bring out that the promise, “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,” refers to the coming of a Savior—Jesus. What a wonderful promise! Ask the class if they think Abram knew just what this promise meant. Might it be possible that there are depths to some of the promises God has given us that are not fully understood yet?

4. In Genesis 17:8 we read that God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his children forever. He confirmed the covenant in many other Scriptures: Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:7,18; 26:3; 35:12; 50:24; Exodus 6:8; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 14:8; Deuteronomy 6:10; 31:20; Joshua 5:6; Judges 2:1. The students should understand that this land was given to Abraham’s descendants by the Lord and it should be theirs today.

5. God knew that a covenant between Himself and Abram required a close communion, and that required perfection. God is still looking for sinless perfection—not absolute perfection. Sin is the deliberate transgression of the known will of God, to do something one knows he shouldn’t, or failure to do what he knows he should do. Mistakes, errors, miscalculations, and oversights are not sin, but are human frailties that we should ask the Lord to help us overcome.

6. Some of the New Testament references on perfection: Matthew 19:21; Luke 6:40; John 17:23; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians

TEXT: Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Psalm 1:1-6

KEY VERSE: Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. — Romans 5:1-2

God is continually looking for one who will make up the hedge and stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30). Often He is disappointed, but the Bible tells us of some who did respond to the call of God. Among these was Abraham. Because of his implicit faith in God, he is known as “the Friend of God” (James 2:23). Isn’t it wonderful that Jesus said we, too, can be His friend (John 15:14-15)?

1. What were the promises that God made to Abram and on what were they conditioned?

2. List some promises God has made to you and reflect on what you have to do to receive them.

3. Of the seven promises God gave to Abram, which do you consider to be the most important to us? Why?

4. Genesis 12:1 tells us Abram was promised a land which God would show him. Where was that land? What other verse in our text brings out God’s promise that He would give this land to Abram’s descendants?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. When Abram was ninety-nine years old God told him to “walk before me and be thou perfect.” Explain in your own words what this means. Why did God require this of Abram? See Genesis 17:2.

6. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus tells us to be perfect (Matthew 5:48). How many other references to perfection can you find in the New Testament?

7. What significance is there in the fact that God changed Abram’s name to Abraham?

8. List some ways that Psalm 1 might apply to Abraham.

9. It is obvious that Abraham received some wonderful benefits by following the Lord. In reading Psalm 1, we find some benefits to which we, too, have access if we follow the Lord. The first verse of this Psalm lists three contingencies. For each, give an example or illustration applicable to our day.

10. Psalm 1:3 promises the godly man that “whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” How can we explain this verse in light of the fact that, obviously, all Christians are not materially prosperous?

4:13; Philippians 3:15; Colossians 1:28; 2 Timothy 3:17; Hebrews 13:20-21; James 1:4; 1 Peter 5:10.

7. Genesis 17:5 indicates that his name was changed as a confirmation of God’s promise that he would be the father of many nations. This was the first recorded instance in the Bible where God changed a person’s name. Ask your students some of the ways God confirms His promises to people today. For example: His Spirit bears witness with our spirit, He brings to our minds portions of Scripture which confirm a promise, or He allows another person to receive the same assurance.

8. Allow time for your students to discuss each verse. For example, verse 1 of this Psalm might remind them that Abram followed God’s leading rather than seek the advice of the ungodly (Genesis 12:1,5). Verse 2: Abraham’s delight was in his communion with God, and he often built altars unto the Lord (Genesis 12:7; 13:18). Verse 3: He was very prosperous (Genesis 12:2). Verse 4: When four ungodly kings fought against Sodom and Gomorrah and took Lot captive, Abraham overcame them with 318 men (Genesis 14:14,15). Verse 5: He recovered all the spoil, and the four kings fled before him (Genesis 14:16). Verse 6: The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and He knew Abraham’s heart and ways (Genesis 18:19).

9. Your students’ examples of the phrases, “walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” should reinforce the necessity of being separate from the world if they are to receive the blessing of God. Just as Abram left Haran and the things with which he was familiar, so must they disassociate themselves from things which might interfere with whatever God calls them to do.

10. As your students talk this over, they should conclude that prosperity does not mean only financial plenty. Direct them to Matthew 6:33 which promises that if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness then all these things will be added unto us. God knows what is best for us, and if we are living according to His Word and His will, then we can be sure that whatever happens to us is for our good. Conclude your class session by considering Abraham once more. As he stepped out in faith to obey God’s command, did he see prosperity every step of the way? Did he immediately see the blessings that had been promised him? Christians today may, like Abraham, have to walk by faith for a time. But consider the eternal reward for doing so!

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Part of Abram's reward concerned the identity of one of his descendants. Who was He?

Did God tell Abram where he was going when He told him to leave? How do you think Abram felt?

Imagine you are told unexpectedly to move to a totally new area. How would you feel about leaving friends, school, etc.?

Which verse of our text tells us the meaning of the name *Abraham*?

What does the word *covenant* mean to you. What covenant did God make with Abraham? How was it fulfilled?

Give a New Testament Scripture that shows we must be separate.

Our text lists some promises God gave to Abram if he would believe and obey. What promises does God give us if we believe and obey?

Of what significance are the ages of Abraham and Sarah in showing God's power and ability to keep promises?

Genesis 17:8 lists a promise of the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. How important is this statement in looking at current Middle East developments?

What position should our nation and all other nations take toward Israel?

What are some of the blessings believers receive while here on earth?

THINGS TO DO

Figure how many times you would have to walk around your own church building to cover the distance Abraham journeyed. (It was over one thousand miles!)

Bring a jar of sand to class and let the students try counting the grains.

Make a covenant with your students. Example: "If you

will read your lesson and memorize the key verse, I will bring you a prize next week."

Prepare a question-answer matching chart. Down one side write a list of questions about the lesson such as, "Did God tell Abram where he was going?" "How old was Abram when he left Haran?" "Who went with Abram?" On the other side of the chart list the answers but not in the correct order. Draw a line between the questions and the correct answers the students give.

Bring a dozen plastic eggs (or as many as you need for your class). In each egg put a slip of paper on which you have written a question about the lesson. Tell the students to choose an egg, and if they can answer the question they may have a prize.

Answers for ANSWER

Believe and Be Blessed

Abraham was blessed because he believed and followed God. Find the words listed below in the wordfind. Remember that if we believe and follow God we, too, will be blessed.

What does kindred mean?

It means people who are related to you.