

## Sharing Good Fortune

General Topic: God's Covenant

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### Lesson Text: Genesis 12:1-9

Background Scripture: Genesis 11 and 12

*Gen 12:1-9 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: (2) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: (3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (4) So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. (5) And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. (7) And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.*

*Genesis 15:1-7 (1) After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. (2) And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? (3) And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. (4) And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. (5) And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (6) And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (7) And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.*

### Lesson Objectives:

1. To help students to develop an attitude of willingness while anticipating the call of God;
2. To teach the students the conditions of the Abrahamic covenant.
3. To teach students to have assurance in the promises of God;

### Questions to Ponder:

1. How old was Abram when God called Him?
2. How might his age have affected his decision?
3. What are the six promises God made to Abram?
4. How does our willingness play into our response to God's calling?
5. Why did Abram erect altars to God?
6. What situations in your life have caused you to doubt that God will 'follow-thru'?
7. What is the difference between knowing and belief?

### Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com). Also, [www.dtlk.com](http://www.dtlk.com) has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as [www.kidssundayschool.com](http://www.kidssundayschool.com) which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are taught. Visit [www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps](http://www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps) to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

Movie Clips are a wonderful teaching tool to further explain or create topics of discussion for a variety of age groups; [www.wingclips.com](http://www.wingclips.com) provides clips divided by movie title, category, scripture, or theme. Clips may be accessed on any electronic device.

### The Lesson:

Promises, promises, promises...easily made, hard to keep. In this lesson, we'll review promises; however, these are not just any promise, but promises made by the Promise Keeper, who can do anything, but fail!

This week we begin our study from the book of beginnings, Genesis. Genesis, which means 'origin,' tells the story of the Creation that involves the making of man and woman, as well as the formation of the world and the destruction of man's relationship with God due to the original sin of Adam. The book then moves to the world being populated with people and their fall into sinfulness. They are destroyed by God with the flood, leaving Noah and his family (including three sons) to repopulate the earth.

Noah's family did populate earth and the people all spoke one language. Unfortunately, their ability to communicate with one another led them to make bad decisions, as they determined to build a city and a tower to the heavens (Genesis 11). They also sought to establish a name for themselves which indicates man's arrogance and desire to be recognized beyond God. Consider the fact that this is partly the same reason for Satan's dismissal from Heaven. Their decision disgusted God in that they planned to use the tower as an emblem to worship which would lead them further into idolatry. God is a jealous God and will have no other god before Him. He confused their language which kept them from being able to effectively communicate and thus destroyed the plan for the Tower of Babel. At this point, various languages came into play.

Also, in the eleventh chapter of Genesis we are introduced to Abraham and his family. His father, Terah, was seventy-five when Abram (Abraham) was born. They lived in Ur of Chaldees part of the Babylonian empire. The Chaldeans were a very learned people, specifically in literature and science. They were priests, magicians, and astronomers. Abram came from a culture of extremely intelligent people. They also practiced idolatry, worshipping gods of the sun, moon, stars, etc.

After a time, Terah moved his family to Haran where they settled. His family, like most of the people in the land, worshipped idols. Somehow, Abram came to know God and denounced the practices of his people.

He received his call from God while living in Haran. The Lord told him to leave his family, his country, and everything that was familiar to him to move a land that he had never lived in. Abram had no idea where God was sending him, but it was important for God to get him to an area where he would not be distracted by idolatrous practice and could focus, solely, on Him. Abram did not question God but immediately surrendered his will to the Lord's and responded to His request. There are several lessons for us at this juncture. God did not provide any details, He simply told Abram to go. He reserves the power and authority to give a directive, fully expecting us to honor His request. He knows the beginning and the end. Our relationship with Him is dependent on our ability to follow His lead. He only wants the very best for us. He does not promise that it will be achieved without effort on our part, but He does promise to be with us every step of the way.

The other lesson that I think important about Abram's call was his willingness to follow. He had no idea where he was going, but had come to know and trust God in a very special way. His faith is recorded among that of the

great examples of faith in Hebrews 11. Abram was seventy-five when God called him to duty and he correctly responded in the affirmative. He did not complain about his age, nor did he give any back talk about not having a clear plan. He just knew to follow God. We have to trust God enough to know that even when we are in the valley of the shadow of death, we have nothing to fear because God is right there. He will make the path palatable for our journey.

In the first three verses of this text, we see the Abrahamic covenant. A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties. In this case, the two parties entering into covenant were God and Abram. In my studies, I read that a covenant is an agreement made in trust. Hence, God and Abram established a trust relationship, however, the terms of the relationship were not dependent on Abram, but on God to follow thru on His promises. Man had proven Himself a failure in his relationship with God. He had absolutely nothing to offer.

In this covenant God made six promises:

1. I will make of thee a great nation – Abraham is the father of many children, not only physically because he fathered the Jews, but spiritually, for he is the father of all believers that walk his walk of faith.
2. I will bless thee – Abram became a man of great wealth. He had livestock, manservants, and maidservants. These were his temporal blessings. He would also receive spiritual blessings, the main one being to live in eternity because of his faith.
3. I will make thy name great – Abraham, as his name came to be, is known all over the world and throughout the centuries of time.
4. I will bless them that bless thee – nations would be blessed by the descendants of Abram, via Christ.
5. And curse him that curseth thee – an example of this promise can be found in Genesis 12:10 when Abram left Canaan to go to Egypt because of the famine. He lied to the Pharaoh, telling him that Sarai was his sister when they were in fact married. The Pharaoh added Sarai to his harem. After having done so, he had nothing but problems in his household. When he realized Abram's deception, he chastised him for it and gladly sent Sarai back to her husband.
6. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed – Certainly the entire world has been blessed because of Christ and His sacrificial offering on the Cross. John Gill writes that all who believe receive the spiritual blessing of

redemption, justification, remission of sin, sanctification, adoption, and eternal life.

God established a relationship with His people thru Abram. He would be sufficiently rewarded for his obedience. Note that he was not required to do anything to secure these promises. At the time, Abram had not yet been circumcised or consecrated to God, but God's grace awarded him the benefits associated with obedience. God will do the same for us when we are willing to go along with His plan without dispute. He is not interested in our opinion where He is concerned. There is a saying "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it." I am of the opinion that God said it and it is settled whether we believe or not. His Word is true and He will not lie.

Verse 4 of the text tells us that Abram left Haran, taking Lot, his nephew, and all of their family and possessions with him. He even took with him other converts that he'd won for God. Abram effectively evangelized during his time. We should be about our Father's business, as well. Salvation is much too important for us to keep bottled to ourselves. When we encounter a great sale, we run to share our fortune with others, urging them to get in on the savings. The same should hold true for salvation. We have to take advantage of every evangelistic opportunity and share Jesus Christ. "Oh the world is hungry for the Living Bread!" Many desire to know Christ; they have not been properly introduced; it is our job to do so.

They journeyed into the land of Canaan. The Lord appeared to Abram and made an additional promise – He would give the land to his seed (descendants). This promise was prophetic as Abram would never settle in Canaan. As a matter of fact, he would pass through this land. His children, however, would eventually become the occupants of this territory. God has the power to promise the blessing long before it comes to pass. Abram did not become belligerent and angry with God because he would not settle in Canaan but demonstrated his appreciation of God's blessing by erecting an altar to honor Him. He built the altar as soon as he arrived in Sichem. It is noteworthy that Abram built an altar to his God among the heathen, for Canaanites occupied the land. He didn't seem to care what they thought for he was concentrating on honoring God. Christ states in Matthew that He will be ashamed to own those in Heaven who are ashamed to honor Him on earth. I look at other religious persuasions and they are committed to display their god at every opportunity. They do not care about being politically correct. Christians on the other hand often shy away from demonstrating their love for Christ, afraid of what people might think. We have to exhibit spiritual boldness and serve as lifestyle witnesses for the Master. People should be able to look at us and

tell that we are saved. I teach that we are Christ representatives on earth. What do others know about Him after they have experienced you?

A b r a m h a s a vision with the Lord. Actually, he is visited by the pre-incarnate Christ who says "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Christ tells Abram that He is his protection and gives him a guarantee that he does not have to worry about his life.

Christ also promises Abram an exceeding great reward which encompasses the promises God made at the beginning of this lesson, that he would have descendants as numerous as the sand on the sea.

Abram heard this message, loud and clear, but he was troubled as to how God was going to bless him so abundantly when he was childless. Abram questioned God, not in doubt, but he began to wonder if this promise would come to pass because he had gotten older. If you study Genesis, Abram received the initial promise of an heir when he was seventy-five; he was now eighty-six and it had not come to pass, so his curiosity was increased. Abram was only doing what any of us would do when we know God has favored a particular area in our lives and it has not reached fruition. Many of us have been taught that questioning God shows a lack of respect for His holiness, but I beg to differ. I think we should ask God questions; however, our attitude must be one of humility. God knows what is best for us and only wants the best for us. He is not offended when we ask Him questions for it is wise to seek to understand His calling and seek approval before launching out into tasks and places that He has not sanctioned for us. You want to be sure that you are hearing from God.

Abram was concerned that Eliezer, the man who managed his household, would become his heir because he had no children. Being able to bear children was extremely important to the Israelites, especially males. It ensured that someone in the family would receive their inheritance, the family name would carry into perpetuity establishing them for many generations, and the wife would have someone to provide for her should the husband pass away. Abram knew the obvious that he was an old man, Sarai an old woman, and she was barren. He also figured Eliezer would receive his inheritance for he had managed the household expenses well and proved himself faithful and trustworthy. Quite naturally, Abram would bless him for his diligence for there was no heir.

In verse four, the Lord told him that Eliezer would not be his seed; his seed would be borne of his own bowels, meaning he would father his own child. This promise

will help you to understand why Ishmael was not the child of promise. Sarai panicked and took matters into her own hands by sending Hagar in to Abram. They did conceive but God did not promise Him that his heir would be the result of his intercourse with a woman that was not his wife. Abram's failure to adhere to the promise of God caused him much strife with this unholy alliance he'd entered into with Hagar. We have to learn to wait on Him and follow His commands. We will always have trouble, often more than we imagine when we decide that God is moving too slow and determine to do things ourselves. My best decisions can only cause me trouble in the long run which is why if we pray and ask God to work it out, He will.

In order to reinforce the message already provided to Abram, God told him to look toward heaven and count the stars. Keep in mind that Abram came from a group of well-learned people who were astrologers, astronomers, and scientists. He probably knew about reading the stars, but his knowledge was based on the area that he could see. He could not see all the stars in the heavens to count; no man has, ever. Again, God promised that his seed would be just as innumerable.

Abram believed God! He did not question His judgment or perception. He simply believed and the Bible says that he was counted righteous for his belief. It is impossible for us to know what motivates God. There are complexities in life that we've yet to understand. For instance, how and why does He allow plenty in one area and famine in another? Why has there been no rain in the Sudan for more than thirty years? How can people survive without water and why is it such a commodity in areas like India where they fight, literally, for water? Why does poverty exist in one of the wealthiest nations in the world – America? How can evil be allowed to run rampant in all parts of society? ...and the list of questions is endless. We will never fully understand His reasoning and He does not ask us to. What He does want from us is our total devotion, commitment, and trust. Abram had to believe that God was going to grant him these promises; otherwise, he never would have left Haran to go to a land he did not know in the first place. Because of his belief, he was blessed with righteousness. He received salvation and would live in eternity.

God has a plan for your life and it's all good! I think the hardest thing to do is to follow Him because our flesh continually tells us that we have to see the way. However, the faithful can easily avoid this trap of disobedience by submitting themselves to Christ and learning how to trust Him more, over and over.

We must experience God to have firsthand knowledge of His faithfulness. Thanks be to God that He is reliable and trustworthy for the just shall walk by faith!

***Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!  
We love us some y'all!***