



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#35 - The Call of Abram

Genesis 11:27-12:9

PICTURES NEEDED

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| 35-1 Abraham and Sarah | 35-3 Map of the Promise Land |
| 35-2 Map of Abraham's Journey | 35-4 The Three Views of Salvation |

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review)
What were the people trying to do after the flood on the plain of Shinar?
Why would that displease God? Why did God confuse their language?
What else did God do? What was the impact of God confusing their language and scattering them across the earth?
- **The Big Question Review:** What is the problem with pride?
Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** Psalm 10:4 Proud people don't seek after God

In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

LESSON CONTENT

Note: The Bible verses included in the lesson are from the NIV 1984 edition. The wording of the questions is derived from that version. If another version of the Bible is used, questions may need to be adapted.

What were the people doing after the flood? In the last lesson, we saw that after the flood the people were all gathered together on the plain of Shinar building a tower to reach to heaven. What they were doing displeased God.

What did God do to the people while they were doing this? God didn't want the people to continue to be united in their rebellion against him so he confused their language and scattered the family groups over the face of the earth. This is the reason we have different language and ethnic groups of people.

What has been the problem with people ever since the Garden of Eden? People want to go their own way rather than submit to the authority and lordship of the one, true God.

What do you think this meant for the family groups that spread out after God confused their languages? The different family groups each started worshipping the god they wanted, rather than the one, true God. Each group developed their own religion that became associated with them and the place they lived.

To combat this and maintain a testimony of who he really is, God chose one man, Abram, from the land of Ur to leave the land and gods of his birth and to move to the land God had picked as the place to establish a heritage as his chosen people in a chosen land.

What did God later call this man? God later called this man Abraham.

At this point in Genesis the focus of the accounts shifts from the history of all of mankind to the one family group that God called out to be his own people. This is the family of Abram (Abraham). Out of all the people on earth God chose Abraham to be the father of his people Israel through whom he would reveal himself more fully to the world and send his Son to be the Messiah (Savior) who would redeem mankind.

There will be chapters of the book of Genesis we will study at church and the other chapters you will read as part of your journal readings each week.

Genesis 11:10-26 traces the lineage of Noah's son Shem all the way to Terah, Abraham's father. This lesson begins with the account of Terah in Genesis 11:27.

Genesis 11:27-12:9 (picture 35-1)

²⁷This is the account of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Now Sarai was barren; she had no children.

(picture 35-2) (Follow Abraham's journey on the map)

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. ³²Terah lived 205 years, and

he died in Haran.

12¹The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. ²"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

⁴So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. ⁵He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

⁸From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

Where did Abraham live originally? Abraham originally lived in the land of Ur. Ur of the Chaldeans was a highly developed society, a splendid place to live and where the god Nannar was worshipped. He then moved with his father to Haran which was an important trading city.

Where did God tell Abraham to go? God had told Abraham to go to the land of Canaan, which had been settled by the descendants of Ham. Abraham was to leave all that he knew and trust God to take him to a better place.

In verses 12:2-3 God made seven promises to Abraham when he called him to leave his country and go to a new land. What were God's promises to Abraham? (Write these on the board as the students reread the verses and promises. Have them explain the meaning of each promise.)

1. Make him into a great nation. (God would give him a heritage. The Jews are all descendants of Abraham as are the Arabs.)
2. Bless him. (God provided for him what was needed and more.)
3. Make his name great. (Abraham is the father of the Jews, God's chosen people Israel, the Hebrew descendants of Abraham.)
4. Make him a blessing to others. (God's revelation of truth has come through the Jews/Israel. The Ten Commandments came through Moses.)
5. Bless those who blessed him. (God blesses those who are good to Israel.)
6. Curse those who cursed him. (God is against those who are against Israel.)
7. Bless all people on earth through him. (Salvation from Jesus came through the line of Abraham. There is no greater blessing to all the earth than what Jesus has given man kind.)

How did Abraham respond to God's command? Abraham left his home just as God told him to. He believed and trusted God.

What did God say to Abraham once he got to Canaan? Once he got to Canaan God promised to give his offspring that land.

Why did that seem like an unlikely promise? It seemed like an unlikely promise because Abraham's wife Sarah was barren; she wasn't able to have children. The land was also already occupied by the Canaanites. That didn't stop Abraham from believing God's promise.

What did Abraham do to show that he believed God? Abraham made an altar to the Lord at the great tree at Shechem. He later made another altar near Bethel and called on the name of God.

Why is Abraham called the father of the Jews? Because he believed God he became the father of many nations just like God promised. Both the Jewish people and the Arabs are descendants of Abraham. God fulfilled his promise that all people on earth would be blessed through him because Jesus came through the line of Abraham. Because of Jesus, all people are blessed. Abraham himself was blessed to be a blessing to all people.

What does God blessing Abraham so that he would be a blessing mean for us? When we seek after God, he blesses us. Blessing isn't to be something we grab hold of for ourselves; it is something we are to take and share with others. In blessing others, we receive the fullness of God's blessing.

Illustration: (picture 35-3) Two important seas in Israel lying along the Jordan River are a good illustration of the idea of blessed to be a blessing. In the north, the Jordan River first flows into the Sea of Galilee and then flows out of it. The Sea of Galilee is thriving with fish because the water is always fresh because the river water both flows in and then out. In contrast, nothing can live in the Dead Sea as it is full of salt and minerals. In the south, the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea but there is no outlet for the water to flow out. The water just stays there and evaporates into the air, making the water salty and unlivable.

What does this illustration mean for us? If we want to experience the abundant life God has for us in Christ, then his love and blessings need to flow both into us and out of us like in the Sea of Galilee. If we don't share his love and blessings with other people, we will become dead and stagnant like the Dead Sea.

Abraham and his family were not perfect people, as you will learn when you do the journal readings. God picked Abraham, not because he was perfect, but because he trusted God. Trust in God is the foundation of salvation. It is the means by which we share God's goodness with others.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** Where did Abraham live originally? What did God call him to do? What promises did God make to Abraham? How did Abraham show that he believed and trusted God?
- **Thought Questions:** Why would God choose one family group to bless to be a blessing? Why do you think God chose Abraham as his special servant?
- **Prayer:** Thank God that he loves all people. Pray that you would love and trust him wholeheartedly and that other people would be blessed by your love and faithfulness. Pray that Jesus would be revealed to others through the way you live your life.
- **The Big Question: What was God's promise to Abraham?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse: Genesis 12:2-3** Abraham was blessed by God to be a blessing to all people.

("I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.)³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Question: What were God's promises to Abraham?

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

- ★ **Lesson Notes:** Have the children answer the two questions individually or as a group. What did you learn from this lesson? How can you put into practice what you learned?
- ★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.
- ★ **This Week's Big Question:** Have the students fill in the blanks for the way the memory verse answers the big question.
Abraham was blessed by God to be a blessing to all people.
- ★ **Coloring Page:** Color the lesson picture.
- **Craft:** Make an Altar
As a reminder that Abraham believed and trusted God, make an altar either following the instructions below or out of small stones held together with clay.
Materials: Cover stock paper, gray construction paper, glue sticks, crayons
Preparation: Run off craft 35 on cover stock paper. Cut gray construction paper into four pieces so each student will have his own piece to work with.
Instructions: Color the tree and background. Tear up pieces of gray paper to make "stones". Use them to build an altar in front of the tree.

- Game: Moving Day Relay

As a reminder that Abraham moved to a new land and took all his possessions with him, engage in a moving day relay.

Instructions: Divide into two teams. Establish a starting line and a drop off line. Gather an equal number of objects for each team to move (books, light chairs, clothes, pans, etc.) and place them in a pile in front of each team at the starting line. The first person on a team picks up an object and runs over to the drop-off line where he leaves it. He then runs back to this team and the next person does the same. The first team to move every thing in their pile wins.

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six poetic readings and related Bible verses. It would be beneficial for the teacher to read through and be familiar with its content.