



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:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: God chose Abraham and made him a special promise.

1. God told Abraham to leave the place where he was living and go to the land God would show him.
2. God promised to bless Abraham and to bless all people on earth through him.
3. Abraham left his home and did what God told him to do. He built altars to honor God and show he believed God.

- ★ **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.

★ **Activity Page:** Blessed to be a blessing.

Discuss what it means to be blessed to be a blessing.

What are the blessings that come through God to us? Physical life, salvation, provision, generosity, truth, understanding, love, forgiveness, friendship, etc.

What are the blessings that come through us to others? Except for salvation and physical life, the blessings that we can give to others are the ones God gives to us. The more blessings pour out of us, the more room they make for God.

Unscramble each of the clue words to find things that God blesses us with (life, salvation, provision, generosity, truth, understanding, love, forgiveness, friendship). Copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number to find an important truth.

Truth: We are blessed to be a blessing.

★ **Further Understanding:** Investigation/Reasoning Skills

Christ Our Redeemer

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 redeem mankind.

What does it mean to redeem something? When you redeem something, you pay off a debt or exchange or convert one thing into something else. If you buy a raffle ticket and become the winner, you have to turn in the ticket to redeem the prize. God sent his Son Jesus to redeem us from the punishment of our sins.

How did Jesus redeem us? Jesus lived a perfect life so he could pay off the debt of our sin. In God's eyes, he exchanged our sinful lives for his sinless one. That means that God looks at those who believe in Jesus as being holy and perfect because Jesus is holy and perfect.

In terms of salvation (how a person enters a relationship with God), what is the difference between Christianity and all other religions? In other religions, it is through one's own good work that a person reaches God. Other religions believe that if you do good deeds then you will go to heaven. In their view, eternity with God is based on what a person can do by himself. People are always building towers, pyramids, monuments, etc., to try to please a god.

What are questions one needs to ask people who believe they can get into heaven by good works? The questions one has to ask are "How good is good enough?" "Can God tolerate any sin?" "Can our good deeds cancel out our bad ones?" "Because God is perfect can he allow anyone who has sinned into heaven?"

What did Jesus do for us when he died on the cross? Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, he paid the penalty for all our sin. His payment redeems us and allows God to extend his hand of mercy to all people. Those who believe in Christ are lifted out of the condemned state of their own sin by him. It is Christ's work that ushers us into heaven, not our own. Hebrews 10:14 says, by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

What does it mean that we have been “made perfect forever”? God sees us for all eternity as perfect like Jesus because he died to cover our sin. Jesus has made us holy in the eyes of God by paying the penalty for our sin.

What does “being made holy” refer to? We know that we aren’t really holy now, but we are in the process of being changed if we believe in Jesus. God sees us as holy through the work of Jesus as God works in us to make us holy by delivering us from the power of sin.

Why do people reject Jesus as their Savior? People reject Jesus because they are deceived and believe the lies of Satan or have a problem with pride. Either they don’t think they need a savior or they want to come to God in their own way. They want to think they can be good enough on their own to enter heaven. There are others who reject the idea of God altogether.

Discuss the “Three Views of Salvation” chart. **(picture 35-4)**

- 1st View: Denial (Either there is no God or there is no need for salvation. No one is held accountable for his or her actions by God.)
- 2nd View: Good Works (People get to God through their own efforts. If a person is good enough he will be saved.)
- 3rd View: Faith in Jesus (People cannot get to God on their own. Their sin separates them from God and they will never be holy. Christ made a way for people to come to God.)

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: Genesis, chapters 12-14

Reading 1: Genesis 12:1-9 God makes a promise to Abram, What did God tell Abram to do? How did Abram respond to God’s command? What did God promise to do for Abram? How did Abram demonstrate he believed God?

Reading 2: Genesis 12:10-20 Abram is deceptive. What does it mean to be deceptive? What did Abram do that was deceptive? What was the result of what Abram did?

Reading 3: Genesis 13 Abram and Lot separate. Lot was Abram’s nephew. What were their herdsmen quarreling over? What was Abram’s solution? What does that show about Abram? What land did Lot pick? Why? What did God promise Abram?

Reading 4: Genesis 14:1-16 Abram rescues Lot. What happened to Lot? Why? What did Abram do? What does that show about Abram?

Reading 5: Genesis 14:17-24 Abram gives a tenth to Melchizedek.

What did Melchizedek say to Abram? What did Abram give to Melchizedek? Why do you think he did that? Why wouldn't Abram keep the goods he had recovered? What does that show about Abram?

Reading 6:Romans 4:1-12 Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.

Why did God credit Abraham with righteousness? What is the difference between the idea of working for salvation and that of believing God for salvation? Through which was Abraham declared righteous? Who are the children of Abraham?