

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD TEACHER'S GUIDE: LESSON 3A

[Assigned Reading: Genesis 12-22]

[Themes to Teach: Walking by Faith, God's Faithfulness, the Lamb of God]

(Read Genesis 12:1-7)

The Old Testament is a layered revelation of God. After the flood, mankind was without a clear revelation of God. Most of the world was steeped in paganism, polytheism and the worship of ancestors. About 1900 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, God called a man by the name of Abram from Ur of the Chaldeans in modern-day Iraq. Starting with Abram, God slowly began re-introducing Himself to mankind.

I. GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAM:

1. To make of him a great nation – this was a promise about the nation of Israel.
2. To make his name great – he became the father of the faithful.
Abraham is the father of all monotheists (those who believe in one God).
3. To give a land to his descendants – the promised land.
4. To bless all families of the earth through Abraham's seed – this refers to Jesus.

Galatians 3:16 (NKJV)

16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

Abram was 75 years old when God called him, and he had no children. Yet, all of the promises of Abram were dependent upon him having children.

II. ABRAM RESPONDED TO GOD IN FAITH:

Hebrews 11:8 (NKJV)

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Romans 4:20–22 (NKJV)

20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

III. ABRAM & SARAH DECIDED THEY WOULD GET GOD'S PROMISE THEIR WAY:

Genesis 16:3–4 (NKJV)

3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.

4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

Hagar's son would be named Ishmael, and he would be a wild man:

Genesis 16:11–12 (NKJV)

11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction.

12 He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Ishmael became the father of the Muslim people.

Isaac became the father of the Israelites.

Paul would later use the births of Ishmael and Isaac to illustrate the natural birth and spiritual birth. (Read Galatians 4:28-31)

1. Ishmael is a foreshadow of our first birth.
2. Isaac is a foreshadow of our second birth.
3. Ishmael represents that which is born of the flesh.
4. Isaac represents that which is born of the Spirit.

IV. GOD RENEWS HIS COVENANT: (Read Genesis 17:1-10)

After Abraham's failure, God does not give up on him.

1. God changed Abram's name to Abraham:
 - a. Abram = "High father"
 - b. Abraham = "Father of multitudes"

2. God instituted the sign of circumcision.

We are no longer required to be physically circumcised because we are circumcised with the circumcision of the heart.

Colossians 2:11–12 (NKJV)

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Putting on Christ in water baptized now fulfills the Old Testament requirement of circumcision.

Galatians 3:26–29 (NKJV)

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

V. IN TIME, GOD KEPT HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM: (Read Genesis 21:1-7)

Genesis 21:2 (NKJV)

2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, *at the set time* of which God had spoken to him.

God's promises often have a set time. God is faithful and He will keep His word.

VI. GOD TESTED ABRAHAM'S FAITH: (Read Genesis 22:1-13)

1. God gave Abraham a chance to prove why he was living for God.
 - a. Was he doing it to get the promises of God?
 - b. Or was he doing it because he truly trusted God?
2. Abraham demonstrated supreme faith in God.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NKJV)

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"

19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

3. Abraham could build this altar because he had built many small altars.
 - a. His life was marked by altars (devotion) and tents (separation).

VII. THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC FORESHADOWED THE LAMB OF GOD:

Genesis 22:6-8 (NKJV)

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

John the Baptist would later identify Jesus as the Lamb provided by God.

John 1:29 (NKJV)

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"