



# Abraham Listens to God

Genesis 12, 13, 15



Abram (whose name God later changed to Abraham) was called out by God to be the father of a great nation - God's chosen people. God promised Abraham that his descendants would out number the stars in the sky. From this point on, all of Scripture relates back to Abraham and His descendants, and the provision God made for all people through Abraham's obedience.

## Day #1: Trust

Abram was chosen by God for a very special purpose. God gave Abram a command and a promise.

### The command:

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."*

### The promise:

*"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. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." - Genesis 12:1-4*

Look at the command section of the verse above. To what city did God tell Abram to go? Actually, God did not give Abram the name of a town to go to. It would take a lot of faith to do what God was asking. God wanted Abram to pack up everything he owned, leave everything he was used to, and simply go. Did Abram listen to God? Genesis 12:4 tells us, "So Abram left, as the Lord had told him."

Abram listened and obeyed. He had faith. He trusted that God would lead him to the right place. And he believed that God would bless him, because he knew God always keeps His promises. Galatians 3:6 says, "God accepted Abraham because he believed."

Are you willing to obey God as Abram did? We cannot always see the big picture of God's plan. Talk about the times it is hard to follow God (examples: being kind to someone who is not kind to us, giving up a hobby that takes time away from God). We can trust God who has great plans for our future (Jeremiah 29:11).

## Day #2: The Buck Starts Here

We might expect that Abram was brought up in a Godly home where his parents read Scripture and taught their children truth. Yet, the Bible tells us that Abraham's father was not a believer in God, but an idolater.

*Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the River and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants.'" - Joshua 24:2-3*

Abram's father, Terah, chose for his family to live in Ur, and later settled in Haran. Archeology shows these towns were centers of idol worship (also see 2 Kings 19:12). Massive buildings were built there to honor false gods. In fact, one such tower, called the Great Ziggurat of Ur, built to the "moon god" is still standing today in modern-day Iraq. Even though Abram was surrounded by false teaching, he had faith in the one true God, and God credited that to him as righteousness. And because he listened to God, God blessed him with an amazing legacy!

People who are not from a Christian home may feel they are disqualified from God's blessings because they do not come from a long line of believers. **A Godly family can start with anyone who has faith in God.**

Ask your parents to help you draw your family tree. Thank God for everyone in your family line. Pray for the members of your family this week.

## Day #3: Distrust

Today we see that Abram did have fear at times, and at those times he relied on his own wisdom. We should never depend on our own wisdom, but in God's.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways remember Him. Then He will make your paths smooth and straight. - Proverbs 3:5-6*

The Bible tells us that not long after Abram and Sarai moved to Canaan, a great famine came in the land. Abram took his wife and went to Egypt so they would have food to eat. Sarai was very beautiful and Abram feared that the men in Egypt might kill him so they could have Sarah to themselves. He told Sarai to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister. The leader of Egypt was Pharaoh. When his officials saw how beautiful Sarai was, they brought her to live in Pharaoh's palace.

Would this be the end of Abram and Sarai's marriage - and God's promise? Again we see that men cannot thwart God's

### Day #3 continued:

plan (Proverbs 21:30). God sent terrible diseases to Pharaoh and his household. Pharaoh realized Abram and Sarai were married and sent them away. **God was faithful even when Abram was not.** Abram should have known that God would have kept him and Sarai safe. When God makes a promise, it ALWAYS comes true!

\* Have you ever let fear cause you to disobey what you knew God wanted you to do? Maybe it was the fear of being laughed at if you were nice to a certain person at school, or maybe you feared being rejected if you let a friend know you believe in God. Whatever your fears, confess them to God, and ask Him for strength to obey Him even when you are fearful. Psalm 55:22 says, "Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall."

## Day #4: God's Promised One

It took only ten generations from the creation of the earth for people to become so wicked that God was sorry He had made them (Genesis 6:6). God illustrated the seriousness of man's sin by cleansing the earth with a catastrophic flood. Noah and his sons were saved from the flood because of Noah's faith and obedience. Just ten generations later, we see a familiar picture. Sin had once again corrupted the fresh, clean earth (Genesis 11:1-7; 13:13, Joshua 24:2). This was not a surprise to God. God knows everything (1 John 3:20)!

God had made an everlasting promise that He would never destroy the earth with a flood again. God always keeps His promises! He had a different plan - a far better plan - to cleanse us from our sin. This would be the final, permanent solution to man's corruption.

+ Long ago, Scripture knew that God would make non-Jews right with himself by believing in him. He announced the good news ahead of time to Abraham. He said, "All nations will be blessed because of you." - Galatians 3:8

All nations would be blessed through Abram because Jesus was going to be born to Abram's descendants. **Jesus was God's salvation plan.** Abram and his wife Sarai did not have children when God made this promise to him. They were very old, and it was hard for them to imagine having a child at their age. But God keeps His promises! God changed Abram's name to Abraham which means, "father of a multitude," and God changed Sarai's name to Sarah. When Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was age 90, they had a baby whom God instructed them to name Isaac. Matthew 1:1-17 records the family line from Abram to Jesus.

Salvation through Jesus was not an afterthought for God! Jesus was God's plan to save man from his sin since before the beginning of time (2 Timothy 1:9). God revealed this in His promise to Abraham. God's plan of grace existed long before He sent the law. (We will study this in the weeks ahead!)

\* God promised Abraham he would be a blessing to all people. Can you imagine hearing those words from God? God does not want any less for your life! Pray and ask God to make you a blessing to everyone He puts in your life.

## Day #5: The Call

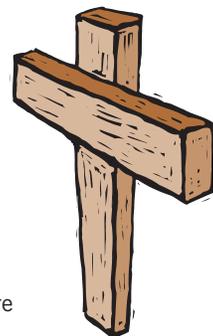
God called out to Abraham. God invited Abraham to be set apart - to be separate from those around him, to be God's own, and to live a new life. Abraham had the freedom to choose to obey or not to obey. In order to follow God's call, there were certain things that Abraham would have to give up.

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." - Genesis 12:1*

The things God told Abraham to give up were things that were not beneficial for him. These things were very little to let go of in order to gain the blessings God had in store for him (Genesis 12:2-3):

- 1.) I will make you into a great nation.
- 2.) I will bless you.
- 3.) I will make your name great.
- 4.) You will be a blessing.
- 5.) I will bless those who bless you.
- 6.) Whoever curses you I will curse.
- 7.) All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

God's call to Abraham is very much like the call God sends out to people today. God invites each one of us to take His free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. God wants us to be set apart - to be separate from the world around us (John 15:19), to be God's own people (1 Peter 2:9-10) and to live a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have the freedom to take this gift or reject it. Once we follow God's call, there will be some things we must give up.



We must repent of our sins (Acts 3:19). In other words, we must turn from the wrong things we used to do. 2 Timothy 2:19 tells us, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." (See also 1 Peter 3:10-11.) And we can no longer do things the way we want to do them, but must submit to the will of God (Hebrews 12:9).

Just as it was with Abraham, giving up these things is for our good. And we receive the incredible blessings God promises to all who follow Him.

+ *God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. - John 3:16*

*Don't you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God. - 1 Corinthians 6:19a*

*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. - John 10:10b*

\* God always keeps His promises. Hebrews 6:18 tells us God cannot lie! Scripture is filled with God's promises. His promises reveal His character. What are some more promises of God? (Some verses to start with: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Psalm 29:11, James 1:5)