

Abram, Hagar & Ishmael

Genesis 15 - 16

PPT Title

Abram, Hagar & Ishmael

Main Point: When we trust God, we will depend on Him and do things His way.

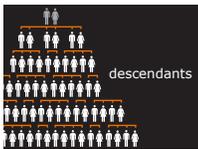
PPT Verse

Key Verse: *If anyone remains joined to Me, and I to him, he will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without Me.* - John 15:5b

Props: Bible, withered bunch of grapes (leave grapes out for several weeks, pull some grapes off of the stem and discard, add brown withered leaves)

REVIEW

Say: Today we will be focusing on a certain word, and I want to make sure we all understand the meaning of the word. **Call for a volunteer. Bring him or her in front of the group.** **Ask the volunteer:** What is your father's name? What is your mother's name? Do you know the name of your father's parents? What about your mother's parents? **Say:** Good. When a couple has children, and then those children have children, they are the couple's grandchildren. Then, when they have children, they are the couples great-grandchildren. Then come great-great-grandchildren, and so on. All these grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on, are called the couple's **descendants**.



Hold up your Bible, showing the section that is Genesis 1 - 10, as you teach the following paragraph. **Say:** The first ten chapters of the Bible tell us about how our world, and mankind in general, came to exist. These chapters explain that God always existed, and in great power He created the earth. This Scripture tells how God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. It tells that Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan rather than God. They disobeyed God and it was sin. Adam and Eve had children and their children had children. Every person who has ever been is a descendant of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve's sin was passed down to all their descendants.



Then, in Genesis 11, we are introduced to a man named Abram. Abram was a descendant of Adam and Eve. Abram was about twenty generations away from Adam and Eve. **Hold up your Bible and show the section that is from Genesis 11 to the end of Revelation.** From this point on, the Bible talks specifically about Abram and his descendants. Everything in the Bible from here on, is focused on Abram's descendants because God was going to do something AMAZING through this family line. God was going to use Abram's descendants to affect every person ever born.

THE PROMISE (Genesis 15)

Say: God chose Abram and made some incredible promises to him.

PPT Verse

*"I will make you into a great nation.
I will bless you.
I will make your name great.
You will be a blessing to others.
I will bless those who bless you.
I will put a curse on anyone who calls down a curse on you.
All nations on earth
will be blessed because of you."* - Genesis 12:2-3

Let's look at the seven promises that God spoke to Abram. (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 to others. (5) I will bless those who bless you. (6) I will curse anyone who curses you. (7) All nations, or people, on earth will be blessed through you. Wow! Those are some wonderful promises! With this promise, God also gave Abram a command:

PPT Verse

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

Say: Look at God's command. **Ask:** Who can tell me the name of the country that God told Abram to go to? *He didn't say!* **Say:** This is a trick question. God did not tell Abram where to go. Imagine that one day your parents told you that you were going to move. Your first question would be, "Where are we going?" You would want to know if you were moving to another neighborhood, another state, or another country! Let's see how Abram reacted to God's command.

PPT Verse

So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him." - Genesis 12:4

Abram left. He trusted God enough to follow Him wherever He would lead. Abram did not need to know the details before he decided whether or not he would obey. Abram knew that God is ALWAYS right. God ALWAYS knows what is best for us. The Bible calls trusting God in this way "faith." Many hundreds of years later, this was written about Abram:

*It was by **faith** that [Abram] obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. **He went without knowing where he was going.** - Hebrews 11:8 NLT*



Abram took his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, and all of his servants when he started on his journey. Abram and Sarai had never been able to have any children. Abram was 75 years old when he set out toward the land called **Canaan**. Other people lived there, but God promised to give the entire land to Abram's descendants (Genesis 12:7).

Some time later, God appeared to Abram again. Abram was discouraged because he still had no children.



"You will have a son of your own, and everything you have will be his." Then the Lord took Abram outside and said, "Look at the sky and see if you can count the stars. That's how many descendants you will have." - Genesis 15:4b-5 CEV

The next verse is KEY to our understanding of faith.

PPT Verse

*Abram believed the Lord. The Lord accepted Abram because he believed. So **his faith made him right with the Lord.** - Genesis 15:6*

God gave Abram very specific instructions about an animal sacrifice he was to make. God told Abram that his descendants would live in a foreign land and become slaves for 400 years. God said He would punish the nation who held them as slaves and then He would bring Abram's descendants to Canaan to live. Fire passed through the sacrifice and God made a covenant, or an unbreakable promise, to give the land of Canaan to Abram's descendants. We call that land the Promised Land because God promised to give it to Abram's family.

Application: Notice that it was not anything that Abram **did** that made him right with God. It was not the sacrifice he made, or even his going when God told him to go, that made him right with God. His obedience to God was *proof* that he had faith (James

2:20-23). It was Abram's faith - his trust in Almighty God - that God accepted. Likewise, there is nothing we can **do** to take away our sin, or to please God, without faith (Isaiah 64:6). Only our faith in Him makes us right with Him. The Bible says, "If people trust in Him, their faith is accepted even though they do not work. Their faith makes them right with God." (Romans 4:5b) And Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Note to Teacher: For further understanding about Abraham's faith and how it relates to our faith, read Hebrews 4, paying special attention to verses 23-25.

HAGAR & ISHMAEL (Genesis 16)

Say: In the next chapter of the Bible, Genesis 16, we see Abram make a tragic decision. At that time, Abram was 85 years old, and his wife, Sarai, was 75 years old. It had been ten years since God made His promises to Abram and they moved to the land of Canaan. Abram and Sarai still did not have any children. Ten years is a long time to wait for something. **Ask students:** How old are you? (According to the age of your students, respond with, "Ten years is longer than you have been alive," or "Ten years is almost as long as you have been alive.") **Say:** Sarai knew she was way too old to have a baby. She went to Abram and told him that since she could not give him a child, he should marry her servant girl, Hagar, so that Hagar could give him a child. Sarai said, "Maybe I can have a family through her." (Genesis 16:1b) Now, a man being married to two women seems SO strange to us, but in their day and in their culture, people did this often. However, it was NOT God's perfect standard. In the beginning, God created one man and one woman. God's perfect plan was that one man and one woman would marry and become united as one (Genesis 2:24).



Abram agreed to what Sarai had said. - Genesis 16:2b

Note to teacher: Compare Genesis 16:2 to Genesis 3:6. We must be very aware of those whom we have influence over and never use our influence to lead them into sin (Mark 9:42). Vise versa, we must also be aware of those who influence us, making sure we do not follow ungodly advice (Psalm 1:1).

Say: Abram did what Sarai suggested. Abram had faith that God would give him descendants, **but then he took the work on himself.** He did not wait for God to do something miraculous. He used "common sense." Abram knew they were both very old, and if they waited any longer, he thought they would never have children. Abram did things the world's way. He thought if God wanted him to have children, he should do whatever it takes to have children. Abram did not ask God if marrying Hagar was the right thing to do. If he had asked, God would have given him the wisdom he needed (James 1:5). Abram sinned by doing things his own way and this sin caused trouble for everyone.

After Abram married Hagar, Hagar became pregnant. Even though Hagar was still Sarai's servant, she began to think that she was better than Sarai. This upset Sarai very much, so Sarai began to treat Hagar badly. Then, Hagar ran away. She ran into the desert. But no one can run away from God. The Bible says no matter where we go, God sees us (Psalm 139:1-12). In His kindness, God went after Hagar.



The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert. The spring was beside the road to Shur. He said, "Hagar, you are the servant of Sarai. Where have you come from? Where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my owner Sarai," she answered.

Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to the woman who owns you. Obey her." 3

The angel continued, "I will greatly increase the number of your children after you. You will have more of them than anyone can count." - Genesis 16:7-10

The angel of the Lord also said to her, "You are now pregnant. You will have a son. You will name him Ishmael. That is because the Lord has heard about your suffering. He will be like a wild donkey. He will use his power against everyone. And everyone will be against him. He will not be friendly toward any of his relatives." - Genesis 16:7-12

The Bible tells us many different names of God. He is called, "Most High", "I AM", "Provider", and "Shepherd", just to name a few. That day, Hagar gave the Lord another name. She called Him, "**You are the God who sees me.**" We know that Hagar had faith in the Lord because she listened to Him and obeyed Him. When the child was born, Abram named him Ishmael. We will see that Ishmael was NOT the son that God intended to bless the whole world through. God came to Abram and promised to give him another son (Genesis 17:16). This son would be born miraculously through Abram's first wife, Sarai. We will learn about him next week.



Application: Sarai thought she was being generous to give Abram another wife. She thought she was helping the Lord to accomplish His goal of giving Abram a child. **Ask:** Did God need Sarai's help? *No!* **Ask:** Why didn't God need Sarai's help? *God is all-mighty and all-powerful. He can do ANYTHING!* **Say:** Abram agreed to Sarai's plan because he wanted all of God's promises to come true. Abram knew that in order to become a great nation and bless all the world with his descendants, he would first need to have a child. When Sarai didn't have a child as quickly as Abram thought she would, Abram wrongly took another wife.

The Bible calls having children "being fruitful." Abram wanted to "bear fruit" to accomplish God's plan. But Abram made a big mistake when he tried to bear fruit **without God**. Even though Abram wanted to stay in God's plan, he tried to do it **his own way**. God is not only concerned about *what* we do, but *how* we do it. Did you know that even Jesus did not do things His own way? Jesus did exactly what His Father wanted Him to do (John 8:28-29). Jesus said, "I can do nothing on My own...I carry out the will of the One who sent me, not My own will." (John 5:30 NLT) And just hours before He willingly died on the cross, Jesus prayed to His Father, "Do what You want, not what I want." (Luke 22:42b)

Spiritual Fruit

love · joy · peace · truth
patience · kindness
goodness · faithfulness
gentleness · self-control
justice · righteousness

The Bible talks about another type of fruit, other than having children. It is spiritual fruit. The Bible lists this fruit as love, joy, and peace. It is also being patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and having self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). More spiritual fruit is justice, righteousness, and truth (Isaiah 5:7, Ephesians 5:8). In other words, we bear spiritual fruit when we become more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). Does this sound like a difficult task? Well, it is impossible...without God! **Ask:** Can anyone remember what Abram's BIG mistake was? *He tried to bear fruit without God.* **Say:** Just like Abram, we make a terrible mistake if we try to bear spiritual fruit **without God**. Listen to the word Jesus spoke to His disciples:

"You can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to Me. I am the vine. You are the branches. If anyone remains joined to Me, and I to him, he will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without Me." - John 15:4b-5



Say: Look this picture of a grapevine. The water and nutrients travel through the vine, out to the branches and then the fruit can grow. **Ask:** What would happen to the branch if we cut it off from the healthy life-giving vine? *The branch would die. It could no longer make fruit.* **Say:** Jesus said He is just like the vine. All that we need to produce spiritual fruit **comes through Him**. If we remain with Him, like the branch that is attached to the vine, then we will produce a lot of spiritual fruit. We will be loving

and kind, patient and fair. Others will be drawn to God when they see our lives. Remaining with Jesus, believing in Him, resting in Him, and depending on Him, is called **abiding**. Jesus said that this spiritual fruit will last (John 15:16).

But if we decide we can do things on our own, and we do not spend time with Jesus in prayer and reading our Bible, depending on Him every day, then any fruit we may produce will look like this. **Hold up withered grapes and withered leaves**. It will not be real spiritual fruit. Fruit that we try to make on our own will not last. It will not attract others to God.

Next week we will see the fruit that **God produced** through Abram. It was miraculous, lasting, and it impacted the entire world. Jesus wants each of us to abide in Him so He can produce miraculous, lasting, world-impacting fruit in each one of us.

PPT Main Point

Main Point: When we trust God, we will depend on Him and do things His way.