

The First Family

Date: 03.01.26 | God Made a Covenant with Abraham

Scripture: Genesis 11:27-32; 12:1-9; 13:14-18; 15:1-6; 17

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God makes big promises, and He always keeps them.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God promised Abraham a big family, and Abraham believed God, and God kept His promise..

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

God made a special promise to Abraham about a great family and a land, and Abraham trusted God, who always keeps His promises.

STUDENTS:

God made a covenant with Abraham, promising descendants, land, and blessing, and Abraham was counted righteous because he trusted God's promises, which God fulfilled in His perfect timing.

ADULTS:

God established a covenant with Abraham, promising descendants, land, and blessing, and He alone guaranteed its fulfillment by His sovereign power. Abraham was justified by faith, and this covenant ultimately finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, through whom all who believe become part of God's family and heirs of His promises.

MEMORY VERSE

*And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
Genesis 12:2-3*



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Abrahamic Covenant - Contributes to the restoration of God's purposes for mankind by singling out Abraham and his seed to be the means by which redemption and its blessings are brought to all the nations. - Lexham Survey of Theology

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS



Up to this point, Genesis has covered many generations of people and God's dealings with all of humanity. Genesis chapters 1–11 describe creation, the fall, the spread of sin, the flood, and the scattering of the nations at Babel. Beginning in **Genesis 12**, the focus narrows. In the final 39 chapters of Genesis, we follow four generations of one family—beginning with Abraham, continuing through his son Isaac, then Isaac's sons Jacob and Esau, and finally Jacob's sons, especially Joseph. Through this chosen family, God will preserve His promises and bring blessings to the entire world.

Until now, God's dealings applied broadly to all people. With Abraham, God begins developing a special relationship with a specific family, a people through whom salvation would come.

Genesis 11:27–32 introduces Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran died, leaving behind his son Lot. We also learn that Abram's wife, Sarai, was barren and had no children—a major obstacle to the continuation of Abram's family line. Sarai was around 65 years old at this time, well past the age when having children seemed possible.

Barrenness becomes a recurring theme in Genesis. Later, Rebekah (**Genesis 25:21**) and Rachel (**Genesis 29:31**) will also face infertility. From the very beginning, God's promises will clearly depend on His power rather than human ability.

Terah set out with Abram, Sarai, and Lot from Ur of the Chaldeans toward the land of Canaan. However, they did not complete the journey and instead settled in Haran, a major trade and commercial center in the ancient Near East (modern-day Turkey). Terah died there at the age of 205.

Joshua 24:2 gives further insight into Abram's background. Abram did not come from a family of faith. His family worshiped other gods. Abram was a nomadic shepherd from a line of idolaters—not a nobleman or religious leader. From the start, Scripture shows that God often uses unlikely people and unlikely paths to accomplish His purposes.

In *Genesis 12:1*, God calls Abram to leave his country, his relatives, and his father's house. This command challenges Abram to abandon his familiar sources of identity, security, and stability. Obedience would require faith.

In *Genesis 12:2–3*, God makes astonishing promises. He promises to make Abram into a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and to bless all the families of the earth through him. These blessings are tied to Abram's obedience. There is clear tension in God's promises. Abram is promised a great nation, yet his wife is barren. He is promised land, yet he is told to leave his homeland. Abram is called to be a blessing, but the way others treat him will determine whether they receive a blessing or a curse. God declares that those who bless Abram will be blessed, and those who dishonor him will be cursed. These promises will later be reaffirmed to Isaac and Jacob (*Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14*).

Abram responds immediately. *Genesis 12:4* tells us that he went as the Lord commanded. *Hebrews 11:8* explains this moment: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going."

Abram did not travel alone or empty-handed. *Genesis 12:5* shows that he had many people under his authority. Later passages reveal more details: *Genesis 14:14* mentions 318 trained men born in his household, and *Genesis 17:12* refers to servants Abram purchased with money. Many of these people were likely herdsmen (*Genesis 13:7*).

In *Genesis 12:7*, the Lord appears to Abram for the first time. This is the first of several divine appearances to the patriarchs. God promises that the land of Canaan will belong to Abram's offspring—even though Abram still has no children. Abram responds by building an altar to the Lord. Altars become important places of worship and encounter throughout the patriarchal narratives (*Genesis 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20; 35:7*).

Genesis 13:14–18 expands on God’s earlier promise. God instructs Abram to look north, south, east, and west, promising that all the land he sees will belong to his descendants forever. God also emphasizes how numerous Abram’s offspring will be. In **Genesis 13:16**, God compares Abram’s future descendants to “the dust of the earth.”

This imagery continues throughout Genesis. In **Genesis 15:5**, God compares Abram’s descendants to the stars in the sky. In **Genesis 22:17**, they are compared to the sand on the seashore. God is reinforcing that His promise will result in a people beyond human counting.

In **Genesis 15**, the word of the Lord comes to Abram in a vision. God reassures Abram that he will have a son of his own who will be his heir. God again promises that Abram’s descendants will be as numerous as the stars.

Genesis 15:6 becomes one of the most important verses in all of Scripture: “And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” This verse is quoted four times in the New Testament (**Romans 4:3, 22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23**).

Faith in the Bible is trust—confident reliance on God’s promises. Abram had not yet done great works or proven his obedience over time, yet God counted him righteous because he believed. Righteousness, a core Old Testament concept, describes a life aligned with God’s will and enjoying His favor. This moment shows that righteousness comes through faith, not works—a truth fulfilled fully in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

On that same day, God made an unconditional covenant with Abram, promising land to his offspring. Unlike conditional agreements, this covenant depended entirely on God’s faithfulness.

In **Genesis 17**, God appears to Abram again—this time when Abram is 99 years old. God gives Abram two ongoing commands: to walk before Him and be blameless. These instructions describe a life of faithful relationship and obedience.

In **Genesis 17:5**, God changes Abram’s name to Abraham, meaning “father of a multitude of nations.” This new name reflects God’s promise, even though Abraham and Sarah still have no children. In **Genesis 17:6**, God promises fruitfulness, echoing the blessings given to Adam (**Genesis 1:28**) and Noah (**Genesis 9:1**). This covenant

is everlasting, extending from generation to generation. In *Genesis 17:15*, God changes Sarai's name to Sarah, meaning "princess." God promises to overcome her barrenness and give Abraham a son—Isaac. God declares that His covenant will continue through Isaac and his descendants.

From the beginning, God's promises to Abraham were never only about land or descendants. *Genesis 12:3* declares that through Abraham, "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." The New Testament makes clear that this promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (*Galatians 3:16*).

Jesus is the true offspring of Abraham, the one through whom blessing comes to the entire world. Just as Abraham was counted righteous by faith, all who place their faith in Christ are counted righteous before God. God's covenant with Abraham was not only about forming a nation—it was about forming a people redeemed by grace.

The God who called an unlikely idol-worshiper, made promises to a barren couple, and sustained hope through faith is the same God who sent His Son to fulfill every promise. In Christ, God's plan reaches its completion, and the blessing promised to Abraham is offered to all nations.

TELL THE STORY

Genesis 12-17

Read directly from scripture, use the simple summary below, The Jesus Storybook Bible, or The Biggest Story Bible.

- Jesus Story Book Bible - Sons of Laughter (Genesis 12-21)
- The Biggest Story Bible - The Father of Nations (Genesis 11-13)
- The Biggest Story Bible - Let's Make a Deal (Genesis 15; 17)
- Hey-O! Stories of the Bible - God's Promises for Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 13:14-18; 15:1-6; 17:1-22; 18:1-15; 21:1-16)

The first time God spoke to Abram, He made a promise: "I will bless you and make you into a great nation, and the whole world will be blessed through you."



Abram knew that for his descendants to become a great nation, he would need at least one child. But he and his wife, Sarai, had no children! God knew Abram was worried, so he took Abram outside one night and said, “Look at the sky and count the stars, if you can.”

There were too many stars to count! God said, “Your family will have as many people as there are stars in the sky.” This was an amazing promise! Abram believed God’s promises, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Then God reminded Abram of another promise, the one He had made many years earlier: “I will give this land to your children.” Abram wanted to be sure. “How will I know this is true?” he asked.

To help Abram know that He would keep His word, God made a covenant, or a special promise, to Abram. God asked Abram to bring a cow, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. Abram cut the animals in half and laid them across from each other. The sun was setting, and Abram fell into a deep sleep.

As Abram slept, God told him about the future: Abram’s family would be slaves to another people for many years, but God would rescue them and bring them to the land. Suddenly, a smoking pot and a flaming rod appeared and passed between the animal pieces. These items represented God, and God used them to show Abram that He alone would keep His promises no matter what.

Then, God changed Abram’s name. Instead of Abram, he would be Abraham, which means “father of many.” God promised to make Abraham the father of many nations.

God kept His promises to Abraham. Abraham became the father of the nation of Israel. Jesus came into the world as a descendant of Abraham to fulfill God’s promise. All who place their faith in Jesus are part of God’s family forever.

REBUILD THE STORY

1. Who was Abram, what problems existed in his family, and where did his family live and eventually settle before God called him?

Genesis 11:27–32



2. What command did God give Abram when He first spoke to him?
Genesis 12:1
3. What promises did God make to Abram about blessing, land, and the nations of the world? *Genesis 12:2–3*
4. How did Abram respond to God’s call, and what did he take with him? *Genesis 12:4–5*
5. What did God promise Abram when He appeared to him in the land of Canaan? *Genesis 12:7*
6. How did Abram respond to God’s promises as he traveled through the land? *Genesis 12:7–9*
7. How did God describe the size of the land and the number of Abram’s descendants? *Genesis 13:14–18*
8. What did God show Abram in the vision about his future heir and descendants? *Genesis 15:4–5*
10. How did Abram respond to God’s promise, and how did God count that response? *Genesis 15:6*
11. What changes did God make to Abram and Sarai, and what everlasting promises did He give them?
Genesis 17:5–8; 17:15–19
12. What does Abram’s obedience teach us about trusting God even when we don’t know what will happen next?
13. Why do you think God chose Abram—a man from a family of idol worshipers—to carry out His plan?

14. How does *Genesis 15:6* help us understand what it means to be made right with God?
15. What do God's repeated promises to Abram show us about His patience and faithfulness?
16. How does knowing that God's promise to Abram is fulfilled in Jesus encourage you to trust God with your life today?

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

Even though people kept turning away from God—through the rebellion of Adam and Eve, the violence of Cain and Abel, the corruption that led to the flood, and the pride of the Tower of Babel—God never lost control or gave up on His plan. Through the Abrahamic Covenant, God chose Abraham and his family to be part of something bigger than themselves. God set apart this family not because of their strength or faithfulness, but because of His grace and purpose. Through Abraham's descendants, blessing and salvation would come to people from every nation. This promise is fulfilled in Jesus, showing that God is always at work to rescue and restore, and that He remains sovereign over history and our lives.



WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

Use your Attributes of God poster as a guide.

PRAYER PROMPTS

God, thank You for always keeping Your promises to us. Thank You for using sinful people like us to do good things for Your kingdom. Please help us to trust You and put our faith in You even when things don't make sense.



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Genesis 18-21