

## Lesson 2: “God Promises Abraham a Son”      Genesis 15:1-6; 17:1-18:15

### Background/Context

- Abram left Egypt and settled in Hebron (Southeastern Israel)
- Abram parted ways with his nephew Lot who settled in the plain of the Jordan to the East and settled near Sodom
- God reassured Abraham of two of his promises (13:14-17)
  - Abram would be given the whole land of Canaan
  - “I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.”
- Abram rallied 318 men from his household to rescue his nephew Lot taken captive by kings of the north (14:1-17)
- The King of Salem, Melchizidek, blessed Abraham by the name of God Most High (14:18-20)
- The King of Sodom offered Abram gifts for rescuing Lot, him, and the men of Sodom but Abraham refused

### Read 15:1-6

1) The previous chapter documents Abraham’s rescue of his nephew Lot. God enabled Abraham and only 318 servants to defeat four very powerful kings. Yet Abraham needed God’s continuing promises like the one in Genesis 15:1. Why?

2) Although Abraham had great wealth, what was his real treasure? Can we say the same?

3) It had been ten years since God first gave Abraham the promise of a son, how did he show doubt in that promise? (V 2, 3) What possible misunderstanding of God’s promise does Abraham’s suggestion show?

4) What was the better plan that God had in mind for Abraham?

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5) What picture did God use to describe that plan? How might that have strengthened/nurtured Abraham’s faith? How do Sunday school teachers and pastors strive to do that very thing?

6) Genesis 15:6 is one of the Bible’s most important verses because it clearly teaches salvation by grace alone. The Apostle Paul even provides “commentary” for this passage in Romans 4:1-8 (a good section for personal Bible study/reflection for this week). How does the word *credited* teach salvation apart from works?

### Overview of 15:7-16:16

- God reaffirms his promise that Abraham and his descendants will inherit Canaan
- God tells Abraham his descendants will be enslaved four hundred years in a foreign country (15:13)
- Sarah doubts God’s promise because she is unable to conceive and suggests Abraham have a child through her Egyptian maidservant Hagar
- Abraham sinfully agrees and has a child through Hagar named Ishmael at age 86
  - Note: The Savior would *not* come through the line of Ishmael. Sadly, this fact further attests to Abraham’s doubt.
- Thirteen years of “silence” in the story of Abraham between the last verse of chapter 16 and the first verse of chapter 17 (age 86-99)

### Read 17:1-14

1) In this section we find the name change—“Abram” to “Abraham.” Abram means “exalted father” while Abraham means “father of many.” Why was this name change appropriate?

2) Describe God’s blessings to Abraham in regard to . . .

Abraham’s descendants (verses 3-6)—

The land of Canaan (verses 7,8)—

Abraham’s descendants’ relationship with God (verse 8)—

3) In comparison to the promises God already made with Abraham, how does this promise differ in its conditions?

4) Colossians 2:11,12 gives us insight on the significance of circumcision for Old Testament believers as well as New Testament believers. It reads:

“In him [Christ] you were also circumcised, in the putting of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Significance for believers in the OT—

Significance for believers in the NT—

**Read 17:15-27**

1) God changed Abraham’s name to reassure his promise and even add to it. What remarkable promise did God make to Sarah by changing her name from Sarai to Sarah?

2) The LORD wanted to bless Abraham with more than Abraham could ask or imagine. What did the Lord promise concerning. . .

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Ishmael?

Isaac?

3) How old were Abraham and Ishmael when they were circumcised?

4) Whom else did Abraham circumcise?

### **Read 18:1-15**

1) How did Abraham show his faith by the way he treated the three strangers? What encouragement does that give us?

Hebrews 13:2 – “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”

2) When the Lord promised them a son, Sarah reacted as Abraham did. How? Take a guess at what the name “Isaac” means?

3) Sarah tried to cover her sin of doubt with a lie. Do we ever act as she did when God makes us a promise? How does the Lord’s reaction emphasize his grace?