

# Lesson Three: God's Promise to Abraham

## Introduction

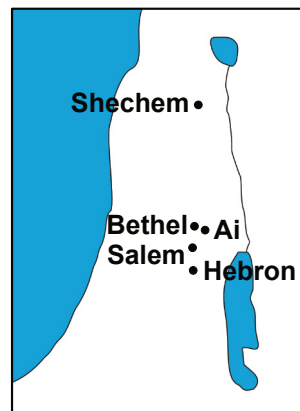
In the previous lesson, we looked at the beginning of man and sin in the second building block in our spiritual foundation, *The Everlasting Word of God*. In that lesson, we saw how Adam brought sin into the world when he disobeyed God. We saw the growth and the prevalence of sin within the world. We ended the lesson by showing how sin has separated man from God.

In this lesson, *God's Promise to Abraham*, we will see the beginning stages of man's redemption by looking at God's wonderful promise to Abraham. This promise contains four spiritual elements which would one day result in man's reconciliation to God.

## NOTES

### God Call's Abraham

- A. The story of Abraham begins when he moves with his father Terah from Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran in the land of Canaan. (Genesis 11:27-30)
- B. The Lord told Abraham to leave his father's house and go to a land He would show Abraham. Abraham obeyed the Lord. (Genesis 12:1-9)
  - 1. Abraham built an altar to the Lord in Shechem. (vs 7)
  - 2. Abraham built an altar to the Lord between Bethel and Ai. Abraham called on the name of the Lord. (vs 8)
- C. After traveling to Egypt, Abraham returned to where he had built the altar between Bethel and Ai. From there Abraham moved to Hebron, where he built another altar there to the Lord. (Genesis 13:1-4, 14-18)



Man and Sin

God's Promise to Abram

God's Everlasting Word

World Filled with Sin

# Lesson Three: God's Promise to Abraham

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## NOTES

- D. After returning from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, Abraham met Melchizedek, king of Salem at the Valley of Shaveh (the King's Valley). (Genesis 14:16-20)
- E. Sometime later, the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision. God makes His covenant with Abraham. (Genesis 15:1-21)
- F. When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God established circumcision as a sign of His covenant with Abraham. (Genesis 17:1-27)
- G. The Lord says to Abraham, *"I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son."* (Genesis 18:1-15)
- H. After twenty-five years, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah. Isaac, the promised son, was born. (Genesis 21:1-7)
- I. The Lord tested Abraham, telling Abraham to offer his son Isaac. Abraham was obedient to the Lord, confirming his faith in the Lord. (Genesis 22:1-19)

### God's Promise to Abraham

- A. God's promise to Abraham was composed of four elements:
  - 1. First Element: God would make Abraham a great nation. God would multiply Abraham's descendants. (Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:3-5; 17:2,4,16)
  - 2. Second Element: God would be God to Abraham and his descendants. (Genesis 17:7-11)
  - 3. Third Element: God would give Abraham's descendants a great inheritance. (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:18-21; 17:8)
  - 4. Fourth Element: God would bless those who blessed Abraham and would curse those who cursed Abraham. Through Abraham (through his seed) all nations would be blessed. (Genesis 12:3; 22:18)
- B. God fulfilled His promise to Abraham in physical ways.
  - 1. First Element: The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob became a great nation.
  - 2. Second Element: God made a covenant Abraham and his descendants.
    - a. The sign of this covenant was circumcision. (Genesis 17:7-14; cf. Galatians 4:11)
    - b. God continued this covenant with the nation of Israel 430 years after His promise to Abraham (cf. Galatians 3:17). This covenant is referred to as the law of Moses. (Exodus 6:4-8; 19:1-6; 20:1 - 24:8)

# Lesson Three: God's Promise to Abraham

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3. Third Element: God delivered the land of Canaan to the Israelite nation as an inheritance to the heirs of Abraham. (Exodus 6:4; Joshua 5)
4. Fourth Element: The first part of this element is seen in God blessing those who blessed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (cf. Numbers 24:9)
- C. God fulfilled His promise to Abraham in spiritual ways. The physical fulfillment hid the spiritual side of the promise for 2000 years. However, *"when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son"* as the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham. (For this section, we will consider the four elements of the promise in reverse order.) (Galatians 4:4-5)
  1. Fourth Element: Through Abraham's seed all nations of the earth would be blessed.
    - a. Jesus was descended from Abraham. (Luke 3:23-34)
    - b. The apostles revealed the connection between God's promise to Abraham and Jesus Christ.
      - Consider Peter's connection in Acts 3:17-26.
      - While speaking in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, the apostle Paul said, *"...He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—"*. (Acts 13:22-23, see also verses 32-33)
      - In his letter to the churches in Galatia, Paul said the *"seed"* referred to Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:15-18)
      - The fulfillment of this promise involved both Jew and Gentile. (Romans 3:27 - 4:4)
  2. Third Element: God's people have an eternal inheritance.
    - a. We have a rest that is remaining. (Hebrews 4:1-10)
    - b. An incorruptible inheritance. (1 Peter 1:3-4)
    - c. Like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we are on a journey to *"a heavenly country."* (Heb 11:8-16)
  3. Second Element: All who are under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ are God's people.
    - a. The prophecy of this promise being fulfilled. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
    - b. This promise was fulfilled when the New Covenant of Jesus Christ took effect. (Hebrews 8:6-13)
    - c. Peter calls Christians God's *"own special people."* (1 Peter 2:9-10)

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# Lesson Three: God's Promise to Abraham

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- d. The sign of this covenant involves the circumcision of the heart. (Romans 2:25-29)
- 4. First Element: Abraham had many, many spiritual descendants, being "*the father of all those who believe.*" (Romans 4:11-12, 16-18)
  - a. Those who were circumcised (the Jewish people).
  - b. Those who were uncircumcised (the gentiles).

### Conclusion

God's promise to Abraham began the path toward the hope of salvation. God would guide the development of man's salvation through His word, His will, His covenants, His mercy, His wrath and His love. He would send prophets to announce the coming salvation. He would shape the flow of nations and governments to set the stage for the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham.

In the next lesson, *God's Covenant with Israel*, we will take a closer look at God's covenant with the nation of Israel. ◀