

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 2



GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Scripture Texts: Genesis 17:1-10; Galatians 3:7-10, 14

God called out Abraham for a purpose. We see something of that purpose today as we study of the covenant He made with Abraham. God intends these accounts of Abraham and others to be examples to us. If we study them rightfully for the purpose of avoiding the errors and gaining the virtues, we can profit much spiritually.

God established an everlasting covenant with Abraham. God was to be a God to Abraham and his seed. By faith, Abraham received the promise from God to him and his family. By faith, we are receivers of the promise made to

Abraham to send the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: *So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

—*Galatians 3:9*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**Genesis 15** God's covenant with Abraham.

Tue.—**Genesis 17:9-27** The covenant of circumcision.

Wed.—**Romans 2:17-29** The Jews guilty before God.

Thu.—**Acts 7:1-8** Stephen recounts the covenant.

Fri.—**Luke 1:68-80** Zacharias sings of the fulfilling of the covenant.

Devotional Reading: **Galatians 3:6-29** Faith in Christ is entrance to covenant.

Be Thou Perfect

Genesis 17:1 Abram was ninety years old and nine. All his long life, God had been bringing him to a place where He could have him to Himself. **Walk before me, and be thou perfect.** This is God's eternal standard for all of us. Over nineteen hundred years later Jesus said, **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48).**

There is much opposition in the thinking of our day to the possibility of any man being perfect. It is true that we cannot be perfect in knowledge, strength or ability, or as other men see us. Yet in purity of heart, God requires perfection—perfect in His eyes because He sees in our hearts. Since He requires it, it is possible, possible because He furnishes all that is needed for heart perfection. Jesus Christ cleanses the heart from sin and provides the power through the Holy Spirit.

Fell on His Face

Genesis 17:2-3 I will make my covenant between me and thee. It is a marvelous thing that God will stoop to covenant with man. It raises man to a much higher plain. **Will multiply thee**—many descendants for Abraham. **Abraham fell on his face**—in submission, respect and honor, humility, worship—and **God talked with him.**

Abraham here displayed the attitude necessary for entering into fellowship with God and for receiving His best gifts. We must yield; give up ourselves and our will to Him. We must take the lowest place before Him Who has the highest place.

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A New Name

Genesis 17:4-6 God repeats His promise of a covenant and descendants. **Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name . . . Abraham**—a name with much greater meaning because of a changed status. **I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.** The greatest of these kings is Jesus, humanly descended from Abraham.

This Covenant Was Everlasting

Genesis 17:7-10 **An everlasting covenant**—not for a short time or a few people only. It was to hold throughout all time. God would be a God, not only to Abraham, but to his seed. **I will give unto thee and to thy seed . . . all the land of Canaan.** It was not God Who broke this promise. Israel later did not obey the conditions. See **Deuteronomy 28:58-64; 1 Kings 9:6-7.**

Let us give careful attention to this promise. The same blessing promised to Abraham is for us today. Christ died that we might receive it—the promise of the Spirit. God promised three things: (1) many nations as descendants, (2) to be a God to Abraham and his seed, and (3) to give Canaan to Abraham and his seed. All that is provided for us in this Gospel dispensation. This is God's part. **Thou shalt keep my covenant . . . thou, and thy seed.** This is man's part. That covenant was not limited to what was covered by the Law. The Law covenant was given later because of man's weakness, because men needed to learn that they cannot become righteous by their own efforts, that they must have the cleansing and the power of God. God's promise to Abraham was given before the Law, and it reaches beyond the Law (**Romans 4:13-16**). The Spirit was sent to abide forever on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-21**).

All May Be Children of Abraham

Galatians 3:7-10 **They which are of faith**—those who believe God—the same are the children of Abraham. Here this covenant is carried over into the New Testament dispensation. **To thy seed after thee.** Who are the seed? Not those related in the flesh, but those related in spirit. **The children of Abraham** now are those saved from sin by faith in Jesus Christ. This salvation through Christ, this **gospel**, was **preached before . . . unto Abraham.** God referred to the Gospel of Christ when He said; **In thee shall all nations be blessed. The just shall live by faith,** not by the Law.

Galatians 3:14 **That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles**—God provides that we all—no one left out—may have the same blessing promised to Abraham. This is to be obtained **through Jesus Christ.** He purchased it for us by His death, by taking upon Himself the curse (**verse 13**). **That we might receive the promise.** What promise? The **promise of the Spirit** received **through faith.** The Spirit was sent to abide forever (**John 14:16**).

Abraham believed the promise but died without receiving its fulfillment (**Hebrews 11:13**). The fulfillment came with the death of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is ours today, but many people are missing all or part of it because of not exercising faith in it. Let us all believe and receive it. Then spread the good news.

JUST A THOUGHT

**To be lied about when one is innocent
is preferable to having the truth told when one is guilty.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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