

LESSON 5 January 29

The God Who Made a Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12 is one of the most monumental chapters in all of the Bible.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 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." (Gen 12:1-3)

•!• What is God doing in Genesis 12:2-3, especially as it relates to our overall study?

•!• In your own words, what was the promise the LORD was making to Abram?

•!• Note also Genesis 12:4-9, especially 12:7. To whom was God's promise made? To whom did it apply? Perhaps Stephen's words in Acts 7:2-5 will also be helpful.

•!• What should we make of Abram building altars in various places? What was he doing?

After rescuing his nephew Lot in Genesis 14, Genesis 15 tells us that "the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:"

"Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "'O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.'" And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness."

•!• What is the LORD doing, and why is our attention specifically drawn to the fact that Abram "believed the LORD"?

Take the time to carefully read Genesis 15:7-21. It's a scene that may be hard for us to understand

•!• What is the LORD revealing to Abram in Genesis 15:12-16?

•!• What should we make of the smoking fire pot and the flaming torch in Genesis 15:17?

•!• Genesis 15:18 is the first time the LORD uses the word "covenant" with Abram. How does the introduction of this covenant relate to the smoking fire pot and the flaming torch?"

Let's spend time in one more scene of Abram's life from Genesis 17:1-14.

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make

my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojourning's, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you, throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."