

Lesson 2

God Gives Faith

Bible Lesson: Genesis 12:1-7, 15:1-6, 17:1-6

Memory Verse: Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. *1 Thessalonians 5:24*

Enrichment Memory Verse: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. *Hebrews 11:1*

Catechism Memory Work: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach:

- ✠ That everyone has a creed but a creed is only true if it is based on God's Word
- ✠ That faith is a gift from God.
- ✠ That God always keeps His promises and that they can trust, or place their faith, in Him.
- ✠ That from the Bible we learn about God.

Prepare Materials:

Along with the regular materials needed for class, you will need the following items for this lesson:

1. A 9"x22" piece of tag board for each student
2. A large envelope for each student
3. A marker for each student
4. A modern-day road map
5. A map of ancient Mesopotamia. Be able to locate Ur of the Chaldeans, Haran, Shechem, and Canaan.
6. Flannel graph figures or some other pictures that would assist in the telling of the story of Abram/Abraham.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Prayer Preparation

1. Ask God to work through His Word to create and strengthen faith and trust in Him.
2. Thank God for your students. Thank Him for those in whose hearts the faith given by God through the means of grace, baptism and His Word, is living and active; pray that God will continue to work in their hearts through His Word, that they may live in daily repentance and faith.
3. Pray for any students who may not be living in faith and in the grace of God; pray that God's Word may reach them through this study of The Apostles' Creed.

B. Bible Study

The Bible teaches that faith is a gift from God. The account of Abraham's call shows us, as does all of Scripture, that man, since Adam's fall, does not have within himself either the will or the power to move toward God. Jesus is very clear, when He says in John 6:44, "No one comes to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." And in John 6:65 Jesus also says, "...no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Abram's Roots

The people in Abram's home city of Ur did not know the one true God. In fact, Abram's own father was an idol worshipper (Joshua 24:2) and probably worshipped the moon god which was worshipped at both Ur and Haran. However, the one true God kept appearing to Abram in numerous locations.

Abram's Call

While Abram lived with his father at Ur (on the Euphrates River about 70 miles upstream from where the river is joined by the Tigris), God spoke to Abram (Acts 7:2). God told Abram to leave his country and people and go to a land which God would show him. And Abram left Ur and settled briefly in Haran, where his father died. When Abram was 75 years old, he set off again. God wanted him to leave his home along with its false worship and to follow God to a new place which would be of God's making. Abram was obedient and "he went out, not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8).

God's promises to Abram (Genesis 12:2-3) included two important features: God would make of Abram a great nation, and through Abram God would bless all the people on the earth. God's promises to Abram had far-reaching effects. God appeared to Abram on many occasions and renewed His promises:

Genesis 12:7	"To your descendants I will give this land."
Genesis 13:15	"for all the land which you see, I will give it to your descendants forever."
Genesis 15:4	"but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."
Genesis 15:5	Your descendants will be as numerous as the stars.
Genesis 15:18	"To your descendants I have given this land,..."
Genesis 17:16	"And I will bless her [Sarai], and indeed I will give you a son by her."
Genesis 18:10	"...at this time next year...Sarah your wife shall have a son."

Abram's Faith

It is important to keep in mind the fact that Abram did not come to know God on his own. It was not until God revealed Himself and spoke to Abram that Abram set out on his journey. It was not Abram's intuition or will that brought about his move. He had no reason to set out for the unknown land until God spoke to him. It was God's Word that moved him. Abram's faith was not self-generated. Neither was it gained from his father. It was a gift from God.

Abram's Obedience

Because Abram has faith from God, he could obey God. Philippians 2:13 tells of this work of God when it says, "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure". God led Abram from Haran (which is NE of Israel on the Euphrates River) down to the land of Canaan. With him were his wife, Sarai; his nephew, Lot; and all the servants Abram had acquired in Haran. Abram was a wealthy man. But, his greatest treasure was God (Genesis 15:1).

Abram's first stop in Canaan was at Shechem. A famous temple was located at Shechem and the people there worshipped false gods. However, God appeared to Abram while he was at Shechem and Abram worshipped the one true God rather than the false gods of Shechem.

Abram's Weaknesses

Abram was not sure how God intended to keep His promises. At one time he thought that his servant, Eliezer of Damascus, was the one God intended to be his heir. (It was not uncommon for a man with no children to appoint one of his servants to be his heir.) At the time God told Abram that a child who was his natural descendant would be the promised heir, Sarai was beyond the age of child-bearing. Abram and Sarai consented that Sarai's maid, Hagar, would be the mother of Abram's child. Thus Ishmael was born, but he was not the intended heir. God had promised Abram and Sarai a child and God would fulfill the promise His own way without the help of man. Thirteen years after Ishmael was born, God told Abram that a son would be given him through Sarai. As a seal of this promise, God changed Abram's and Sarai's names to Abraham (father of a multitude) and Sarah (princess). From that day, their names would remind them of God's promise and would encourage their faith.

Faith Today

Just as God kept appearing to Abraham, giving him an ever-increasing knowledge of God and a stronger faith, so God appears to us today in His Word. We come to know Him and to know Him better through the Bible (Romans 10:17). The Word of Christ shows us who God is (John 17:26). By the power of God's Word we are brought to faith in Him (James 1:18). God's Word is what brings us out of sin and into fellowship with God (I Peter 1:23).

What is needed today for faith to begin and for faith to grow is the Word of God. God has promised to grant faith and to nurture faith by means of His Word. We have no promise that such faith will be accomplished by any other means.

It was the Word of God that brought faith to Abram and nourished that faith once it was given. The same is true today.

C. Creed Study

During the Reformation there were a number of teachings that came to be clearly promoted in contrast to the false teaching that had been so prevalent. One of those teachings is summarized by the phrase “Faith Alone.” This teaching is tied together closely with the Creed. In the lesson a quick review of the lives of Abraham and Sarah is given. Genesis records for us a number of their amazing acts of faith. When we consider these individuals, or any other individuals in the Scriptures, we are to look at their faith. This is why Hebrews 11 gives us the individuals introduced by the phrase, “by faith.” (Note Heb. 11:4, 5, 7, etc)

This teaching is pertinent to the discussion of the 1st Article because we state, “I believe.” Faith is the means through which God has determined to convey His grace to us. This was true in the Old Testament as we see mentioned in the life of Abraham. Genesis 15:6 tells us, “Then he believed in the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.” This is also clearly true in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

What we are able to do in the Apostles’ Creed is to confess that we believe to be true that which God has first revealed to us in His Word. In the 1st Article this focuses on the person of God the Father. Among other things, God the Father has revealed Himself to be Almighty and the Maker of all things. This is a teaching revealed to us not just in Genesis 1-2 but also in Hebrews 11:3 which says, “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” This truth of God being the Creator is not just mentioned at the beginning of the Bible but throughout and even in the last book of the Bible it is recorded for us. Revelation 4:11 states, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” Of the three articles of the Creed this is the shortest one, but it is a foundational one. This article sets us on solid theological ground just as the book of Genesis does for us in the whole Bible.

This confession describes in a clear and simple way that which is obviously vast beyond our comprehension. The article reminds us that we can only shape and form that which God has first brought into existence. When the faith that has been handed down to us speaks of God in terms like “Almighty,” that reminds us that God is so different than us. But the Creed also speaks of God in terms like “Father” which portrays to us the close and caring relationship that God has with those who believe in Him. When we confess that God the Father Almighty created, we are bringing to our minds the nature and character of God; a character that is unchanging.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome students as they enter the classroom. Get to know your students better by asking about their interests, good things that have happened during the week, or if they have any problems they would want to pray about.

Open with Prayer

1. Thank God by name for each student.
2. Pray for any children who may be absent.
3. Thank God that He has come into our lives, first through baptism, and that He continues to bring us His grace through His Word, the Bible.
4. Ask God to help students listen with open hearts and ears. Ask Him to give them a desire to read, study, and learn from the Bible.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite II Timothy 3:14 from memory.

Review

Using the Wall Words, give definitions of the new words or phrases from Lesson 1 and ask the students to identify the word or phrase that is described. Especially review: *creed, faith, triune, confessing faith, confessing sin.*

Introduce Wall Words

Blessings—Blessings are good things that God gives us. God gives us many kinds of blessings like food, family, friends, and good health. The greatest blessings are eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and having Jesus as our Savior.

Childless—If a man and wife do not have children, we say they are childless.

Descendants—Descendants are a person’s children and grandchildren, and all other people in their family that are born after them.

Descended—In this lesson, descended means to come into the family at a later date. Jesus descended from Abraham. Jesus' family tree can be traced back to Abraham.

Multitude—A multitude is a very large group. When you see a large group of people at a fair, a parade, or a big stadium, you could call that group a multitude.

Nation—A nation is made up of all the people of a country. All Americans make up the nation of The United States. The people of the Jewish nation are all from the family of Abraham.

Reminding—Reminding is to repeat or say again something that has already been said. Though God had told Abraham that he would have a son, and God always keeps His promises, for Abraham's sake God spoke to Abraham again, reminding him of the promise.

Introduce the Lesson

Show the road map.

ASK What is a road map used for? How would you feel about starting out on a trip if you had no idea where you were going? Usually your parents know where they are going, but what if they didn't know either?

SAY Suppose your parents sent you off on your bicycle to go somewhere in your town, but you had no idea where you were going or how you would get there. Would you even start out? Or what if you were blindfolded and told to go to the store for a carton of milk. Could you do it? How about if I held your hand and led you, would you trust me? Would you trust your parents if they held your hand and led you? Of course you would because you know they would take care of you.

SAY In today's Bible lesson we will read about a man God sent on a trip. But when he started out, he did not know where he was going or how to get there. He didn't even have a road map to guide him.

Teach the Lesson

SAY Open your books to Lesson 2. What is the title of this lesson? (*God Gives Faith*) We see that it is a lesson about faith. We learned in the last lesson that faith is believing that what God has said is true.

ASK What does this title teach us about how we get faith? (*God gives the gift of faith.*)

READ the first paragraph. **ASK** what is a creed? (*a statement of what you believe and trust*) How many people have creeds? (*Everyone in the world has a creed.*)

SAY Let's read paragraph two to learn where we can find what is really true. **ASK** How do you know if something is really true? (*Something is true if God said it in His Word, the Bible.*)

TELL the story of Abraham as written in paragraphs 3-8. Further background is found in this lesson's Bible Background. Use flannel graph figures or pictures to hold the students' attention.

TRACE the journey of Abram on a map which shows Ur of the Chaldees. Trace his journey from Ur, along the Euphrates River to Haran.

SAY It was when Abram was in Haran that God spoke to him and told him to leave his country and go to a new country that God would show him. He did not know where he was to go or how to get there, but God promised to show him the way. God also promised to make a great nation from Abram's family and to bring blessings to the whole world through Abram.

READ paragraph 4 to find out how Abram was able to believe God's promises and obey God when all the people in his home country believed in other gods. (*God spoke to Abram and gave him faith to believe. Romans 10:17—Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*). You and I, too, can believe in the true God, even if many of the people around us don't trust in Jesus. You can read God's Word and ask Him to use His Word to give you faith or strengthen the faith He has already given you. When He speaks to your heart about your sins, you can confess them to Him and ask Him to forgive you (I John 1:9).

TRACE Abram's journey from Haran to Canaan on the map.

READ paragraph 5. **ASK** the students to find the new names God gave Abram and Sarai. What does Abram's new name, Abraham, mean? (*Father of a multitude;*, or *father of many, many people*) What does Sarai's new name, Sarah, mean? (*princess*) These new names reminded Abraham and Sarah of God's promise that He would give them a child and that through their many descendants, the nations of the world would be blessed.

READ paragraphs 6-7 to discover how God fulfilled His promise.

ASK Did Abraham and Sarah have the son God promised them? (*Yes*) What was the son's name? (*Isaac*) **ASK** How did God use Abraham's descendant to bless the nations of the world? (*Jesus was a descendant of Abraham. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, everyone can have their sins forgiven and live forever with Him in heaven.*)

READ paragraph 8. Then **ASK**. How do we learn about God? (*We learn about Him when we observe His creation and how He keeps it going (Romans 1:20). But we learn most clearly about God in the Bible.*)

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

The Memory Verse

INTRODUCE this week's memory verse by reading the last paragraph in the lesson.

BIBLE VERSE—I Thessalonians 5:24

SAY Remember at the beginning of our lesson we read that God sent Abram on a trip. Remember, too, that Abram didn't have a road map to guide him.

SHOW the students your Bible and **TELL** them that God has given us His Word to guide us as we travel through life.

HELP students find I Thessalonians 5:24 in their Bibles and read it together as a class. Use a memorizing technique found at the front of this Teacher Manual to help students memorize the verse

CATECHISM

First Article of the Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Have each student create his or her own puzzle to help with memorizing the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and its meaning. As the quarter progresses, the puzzle will become larger and can be used for reviewing and for learning each new segment of meaning. When finished, the puzzle will have 10 pieces—the First Article and nine segments of meaning.

Give each student a piece of 9"x22" tag board. The student should write the words to the First Article at the top of the tag board. Then the student may draw whatever kind of line he wishes to make an edge for the first puzzle piece. Then cut it off along that line.

Have each student write his or her name on an envelope and place the puzzle piece in the envelope.

Each time a new segment of the meaning is introduced, the student writes that and makes a new puzzle piece.

See sample puzzle at the front of this Teacher Manual.

Activity Pages

Use the Lesson 2 Activity Pages as a review of the lesson.

Activity 1

1. *Students are to trace Abram and Sarai's journey by following the red line on the map and filling in locations listed. (Teacher should have access to a Bible map for reference.) Point out that the distance between Haran and Shechem is about 450 miles. To help students understand how far 450 miles is, choose a couple cities that the students would be familiar with that are about 450 miles from your church. Students will be surprised to know that Abraham and Sarah either walked or rode camels that entire distance. If time allows, use a Bible map to label remaining dots on the map that show other places Abram traveled.*

Activity 2

Answers found in Genesis 12:2-3 and 15:1-5.

If this activity is too difficult for students to do on their own, then do it together as a class. The teacher may want to write on a chalkboard or marker board the specific verses where each promise is given.

ANSWERS:

1. *Yes* (Genesis 12:2)
2. *Yes* (Genesis 12:2)
3. *No*
4. *Yes* (Genesis 12:3)
5. *Yes* (Genesis 15:1)
6. *No*
7. *Yes* (Genesis 15:4)

8. *Yes* (Genesis 15:5)

CLOSING THE LESSON

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for speaking to us through the Bible. Thank You for blessing us with salvation through faith in Jesus. Thank You for sending Jesus to die on the cross so we can have forgiveness for our sin. Please strengthen our faith so we can more fully trust You every day. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Assignment

1. Send home the activity pages. Remind the students to use the activity pages to share with their family what they learned in class. Encourage the students to finish any part of the activity pages that was not done in class.
2. Remind students to memorize the First Article and I Thessalonians 5:24.