

## ONE STORY | ONE SAVIOR - UNIT 1 | LESSON 06a

### The Pentateuch – The Promise Given Through the Royal Gift Covenant

#### God is a PROMISE Making God

God 1) **CREATES** a place where 2) He will **MEET** with his People 3) for their **JOY**. 4) His People reject Him. 5) God binds Himself through **PROMISE (i.e. The Royal Gift Covenant)** to 6) **RESCUE** His people from their sin and 7) **RESTORE** them to Himself for their **JOY**.

**ILLUSTRATION** – What is a promise? A promise is something said about something that has yet to happen, but will. FOR EXAMPLE, if you clean your room, I will give you a piece of candy. Or, if you go to the store, you can have a can of soda. Well, both of those promises are conditional. You have to do something to get them, like clean your room or go to the store. God told Abraham that he and, his wife, Sarah would have a lot of children and their children would be a blessing to the world. God’s promise to Abraham was **Unconditional**. Abraham did not have to do anything other than believe God would make good on His promise.

**God's Promise for Abraham | Stories of the Bible, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUhs-MWoTbg>**




This lesson celebrates God’s faithfulness to keep His promise from Genesis 3:15 and 21.

## “The Abrahamic Covenant”

### God’s Plan Foreshadowed in a Covenant

### Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9

Genesis 17:4 “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.”

	<p>THE HEAD - To Know how the Bible tells a single Story and at the center of this Story is Jesus.</p> <p>Q – After looking at this lesson, “Has anything changed concerning your thinking?” What do you now know that you might not have known?</p>
	<p>THE HEART - To Choose the biblical Story as true and reliable and to be obeyed.</p> <p>Q – After looking at this lesson, “How does it make you feel?” What emotional response does this truth solicit / produce in you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example: <sup>22</sup>love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control [Gal. 5:22, 23 NLT].</li> </ul>
	<p>THE HAND - To Pray we will obey [i.e. believe] all that God has said.</p> <p>Q – After looking at this lesson, “What might you begin to do differently?” Is there something because of what you know that you might need to start doing or perhaps even stop doing?</p>

## EMPHASIS

The Promise made to Adam and his offspring would be centralized through Abraham and his offspring, the Jews. God will do for Abraham [i.e. Abram] what he cannot do for himself. The Covenant God makes with Abraham is dependent on God to fulfill. What God began in Genesis 3:15 and 3:21, He continues to move forward in the Seed of Abraham. **God will fulfill all of the physical promises made to Abraham in Jesus. Jesus completes all prophecies, pictures, and promises of the Old Testament.**

**It is absolutely crucial to see how this covenant made with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) is an expansion on the covenant made with Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28 and 3:15. This covenant made with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 is different than the one made with Israel in Exodus 19 and following. This idea will be expanded on in the Historical Context.**

God's Plan – God's promise to provide salvation from sin and death and for joy and glory *continues to move forward through the choice of Abraham*. God cuts a covenant with Abraham that He will fulfill.

God is faithful to fulfill His promise to Adam and Eve through Abraham's Seed.

## LITERARY CONTEXT

The preceding section (chapters 4-11) described multiple assaults against the SEED PROMISE. In this section (chapters 12-50), God pushes the Story forward by making a covenant with Abraham that the SEED PROMISE would come through his family line.

Chapters 1-11	Chapters 12-50
Historical	Biographical
The Four Great Events	The Four Great People
History of the Humanity [Prologue] – Setting the Stage	History of the Hebrews- The Main Event

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"Abraham left Mesopotamia in the early 2nd millennium B.C. on his way to Canaan, the Promised Land."<sup>1</sup>

Roughly speaking, Abraham left Mesopotamia around 2000BCE.

## BIBLICAL CONTEXT

As to the biblical context for our passage, let us note two ideas.

First, the occurrence of Abraham in the biblical Storyline.

The name ABRAM occurs in 50 verses in the Old Testament. Of those, only 1 Chron. 1:27 and Nehemiah 9:7 occur outside of Genesis.

The name ABRAHAM occurs in 159 verses in the Old Testament. Of the 159 verses, only 24 occur after Deuteronomy. After ABRAHAM'S passing, he is a reference point, a historical anchor for the Nation of Israel. He is referred to as the Father of the Nation and as the starting point for the covenant [i.e. promise] made to the Nation.

In the New Testament, Abraham occurs in 70 verses. Like the Old Testament, he occurs as a reference point and a historical anchor for the Nation of Israel and the believing people of God.

If Abraham is not a literal, physical, historical, and actual figure, then for 2000 years the people of Israel and the early church got it wrong. The Bible, however, present Abraham as a literal, physical, historical, and actual figure.

Second, the covenant God makes with Abraham.

**ILLUSTRATION** – the idea of a covenant is an agreement. In the Bible, it is a legally binding agreement or promise. When your mother or father purchase a car or a house, they make a contract with the bank saying they will pay for the car or the house. That contract is an agreement. If they do their part [pay the bill each month], they can enjoy the car and the house. In the Bible, God makes an agreement with Abraham and his children. God tells him He will give them a land, an offspring, and be a blessing, BUT He will do this in the future when the final king comes, KING JESUS. God makes a promise with Abraham.

Prior to Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, the relationship YHWH has with Adam and Eve was based on a **VASSAL TREATY** model. Adam and Eve failed to obey. As a consequence, they die in their relationship with God. God, however, condescends and gives them the **ROYAL GIFT**. He will provide an offspring from the woman who will destroy their enemy (Gen. 3:15). And He provides a blood sacrifice that atones for their sins (Gen. 3:21).

The **Mosaic Covenant is a Vassal Treaty** with Laws and Stipulations, Blessing and Cursing. **God's Redemptive Purpose, however, is a Royal Gift.**

"The covenant with Abraham and the covenant with David indeed belong to the grant type and not to the vassal type of document. Like the royal grants in the ancient Near East, the covenants with Abraham and David were gifts bestowed upon individuals who excelled in loyally serving their masters. Abraham is promised the land because he obeyed God and followed his mandate (Gen. 26:5; cf. 22:16, 18), and David is given the grace of dynasty because he served God with truth, righteousness, and loyalty (1 Kings 3, 6; cf. 9:4; 11:4, 6; 14:8; 15:3)."<sup>2</sup>

**"The Law was Israel's corporate covenant with God and her constitution as a nation.** Repeatedly, the Law which God gave Israel through Moses was referred to as a covenant (Exod. 19:5; 24:7-8; 34:10, 27-28; Deut. 4:23; 5:2). The three principle covenants of the Old Testament were the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3), the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:11-16; 1 Chronicles 17:10-14), and the Mosaic (or

Sinaitic) covenant. The Mosaic covenant is different from the other two covenants. This was a covenant which was provisional, and which was to be replaced by a “new covenant” which would be an eternal covenant:”<sup>3</sup>

“It is a bilateral covenant: they received special privileges but they must provide special services by the special discipline.”<sup>4</sup>

Why is this important?

First, God’s redemptive purpose is a gift.

Second, God’s governance of the Nation of Israel is a Vassal Treaty. The two are not the same. God is not saving Israel in the Mosaic Code or the Law. God is governing Israel in the Mosaic Code. God saves Israel as a Royal Gift. Thus, to impose redemptive purposes onto the vassal treaty leads to heresy. Is there continuity between the two? Yes. But the two are not the same.

Let us remember then when we speak of the LAW of MOSES, we are inside of COVENANTS which are built on the PROMISE. “Covenants are the backbone of the biblical story.”<sup>5</sup> “The new covenant is the climax of all of God’s covenants.”<sup>6</sup>

Look at Galatians 3:16-29 and notice with me the relationship between the ROYAL GIFT and the VASSAL TREATY.

- Gal. 3:17-19

<sup>17</sup> What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. <sup>19</sup> Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

The promise/covenant given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 is part of the SEED PROMISE and BLOOD PICTURE promises of Genesis 3:15 and 21. Jesus, as the fulfillment of the SEED PROMISE, is fully capable of completing the BLOOD PICTURE. Now, let us consider a simple outline for our study in Genesis 12:1ff.

## STRUCTURE

- I. The Covenant is Cordial (v. 1 [God takes the initiative])

There is no salvation without divine initiation.

- II. The Covenant is Comprehensive (vv. 2, 3)
  - a. A Land [Palestinian Covenant]
  - b. A Seed [Davidic Covenant]
  - c. A Blessing [New Covenant]

As Nations [people] accept Israel's role as the vehicle for special revelation and seed promise, they will be blessed.

III. The Covenant is Conditional (v. 4 ["I will; So Abraham went"])

Abraham had to accept the covenant in order to participate in the covenant.

IV. The Covenant is Courageous ("Fear not" Gen. 15:1-6)

V. The Covenant is Confirmed (Gen. 17:1-14)

VI. The Covenant is Completed in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20)

## **JESUS IN THE TEXT**

All that Abraham was, Jesus is. The three-fold promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 finds ultimate and actual fulfillment in Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Land, the Seed, and the Blessing. In Him, all the nations of the world are blessed.

The story of Abraham in Genesis 12 is one more link in a long chain reaching from Genesis 1 all the way to Jesus in Matthew 1. Jesus becomes the fulfillment of the promise made to Adam and Eve and then through Abraham to the world.

No Nation or Individual equals or exceeds Jesus. He is the promise fulfilled and completed.

## **APPLICATION**

God is always taking the initiative to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. You can't, but God can, and Jesus did. What God does in and for Abraham points to Jesus.

Have you accepted Jesus as the fulfillment of the covenant made to Abraham?

God fulfilling His promise exists in the context of a family and the surrounding community. Your salvation from sin and death and for joy and glory is as an individual for family/community. You were designed for church.

## **VISUALS**

## MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 17:4

“Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

## RESOURCES

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://study.com/academy/answer/when-did-abraham-leave-mesopotamia.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft596nb3tj&chunk.id=d0e10073&toc.id=&brand=ucpress>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/12-preamble-israel-s-constitution-exodus-19>

<sup>4</sup> <https://netbible.org/bible/Exodus+19>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-biblical-covenants/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-biblical-covenants/>