



# 9

## God Calls Abram

### Key Themes

- God's plans are perfect.
- God rewards faith and obedience.

### Key Passages

- Genesis 12:1–5; Hebrews 11:6, 11:8–10, 11:16

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe how Abram demonstrated his faith in God.
- Distinguish between rewards on earth and rewards in heaven.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

page 5

Students will decipher a “Backward Message” relating to the lesson.



### Activity 1: God Calls Abram

page 5

Students will review Abram's obedience to God and God's promises to Abram by filling in the worksheet as they study Genesis 12:1–5.



### Studying God's Word

page 6

God called Abram to leave his family. God promised Abram would be a blessing and inherit a great land, a great nation, and a great name. Abram believed God, demonstrating faith and obedience though he never saw the promises fulfilled. Abram was confident in the heavenly rewards.



### Activity 2: Heavenly Rewards—Worth the Wait

page 11

Students will be offered a treat but asked to wait to eat it. You will demonstrate it is better to wait for heavenly rewards than desire earthly rewards that can't satisfy.

# Lesson Preparation

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED



### COME ON IN

- Print one Backward Message worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Backward Message worksheet for each student



### GOD CALLS ABRAM

- Print one Lesson Worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your own use.

- Lesson Worksheet for each student
- Lesson Worksheet Answer Key
- Pencils



### STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Map showing Ur from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Print one Memory Verse Picture sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM, lesson 8, for each student.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Map showing Ur
- Memory Verse Picture sheet for each student



### REWARDS—WORTH THE WAIT

- HEAVENLY Bake brownies or cake if desired. (Begin this activity at the start of class. See instructions in the Review section and in the Heavenly Rewards: Worth the Wait section.)

- Simple candy or cookies like mints, Starbursts, animal crackers.
- Larger more impressive treats like full-sized candy bars, brownies, cake, ice cream.



## Memory Verse

**Acts 17:26–27** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare for this lesson, read Genesis 12:1–9, 13:1–8; Hebrews 11:8–12.

Before the creation of the world God determined to reveal Himself through His merciful plan of redemption (Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4). God offers this plan by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8) and originally revealed it to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the midst of the Curse that came as a result of their disobedience, God gave the promise of a Redeemer who would crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15).

As we learn of God's call to Abram (later renamed *Abraham*), we see more of the promise whose fulfillment is revealed throughout Scripture. God's eternal plan to bring redemption continued with the Abrahamic Covenant—God would make Abraham a great nation that would in turn bless all nations (Genesis 12:1–3). Abraham was called physically to be the father of the Jewish nation; but more than that, he was called to be the father of all those who believe by faith in the promised Messiah, both Jew and Gentile (Romans 4:9–12).

It was because of Abraham's amazing faith—faith in things hoped for but not yet seen (Hebrews 11:1)—that he could obediently follow God's lead and believe the incredible promises made to him (Genesis 17:17). In fact, his faith provided the stamina for him to leave his home, go to a foreign country, and wait for his wife Sarah to conceive and bear a child. This was the child that would produce for Abraham descendants as many as the stars of the sky and as innumerable as the sand by the sea (Hebrews 11:8–12). These descendants would become a new nation, appointed by God Himself, through which He would ultimately bring a Savior, Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1).

As mentioned earlier, our faith comes through grace, as a gift from God. In Romans 4, the Apostle Paul presents Abraham as an example of faith. Abraham proved his faith by his obedience. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith (Romans 4:20). This faith was what provided Abraham's righteousness (Romans 4:22), just as it is our faith in God's provided Savior, Jesus, that brings us to a righteous standing before Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

## APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

We trust the Bible as the inerrant Word of God and stand on it soundly as our authority in all things. But

it is exciting when God allows us to confirm biblical accounts with present-day discoveries as He has done for us in this account. You see, the ancient city of Ur (Abram's birthplace as mentioned in Genesis 11) was rediscovered and excavated by archaeologists between 1922 and 1934, providing much more information about the city and life during the time of Abram (Genesis 11:28).

The people of Ur had adopted Nanna, the moon god, as their patron. A ziggurat was erected as a temple to Nanna, perhaps hearkening back only a few generations to the Tower of Babel, when God judged the people for disobedience and idolatry by confusing their language. Ur was a thoroughly pagan city where the religious leaders and rulers used their idolatry to control the populace. Royal burial pits were discovered that included masters and their servants—giving the appearance that once the royalty died, servants willingly (or unwillingly) committed suicide. In one case, as many as 68 servants were found buried with their master.

After realizing the pagan, godless nature of the people of Ur, we are not surprised that God would call Abram to move from that city and journey to a new location where He would continue the fulfillment of His plan of redemption for all who would believe.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

What better way is there to look at the history of Abraham than to consider the genealogy carefully recorded by God? Genesis begins at the beginning and gives us details of the history of mankind—starting with Adam. (See Genesis chapters 10 and 11).

These genealogies are God's way of revealing His intention from the very beginning to use sinful man to accomplish His perfect plan of redemption. We witness generations of the descendants of Adam weaving through history to the patriarch, Abraham. We recognize his role in the plan and watch expectantly as he begets Isaac to carry on the seed that will one day provide the Messiah.

The history of this account includes God's call to Abram to leave Ur and go to the land of Canaan. Abram was traveling with his father and family (Genesis 11:31) and stopped short of Canaan in Haran (Acts 7:2–3). We aren't told why this caravan stopped in Haran, but we do know that Abram's father, Terah, succumbed to the idolatry of that pagan city (Joshua 24:2). It was after Terah died in Haran that God again called

Abram to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1). Once Abram arrived in Canaan, the Lord appeared to him and promised the land to his descendants.

Here again we observe the faith of Abraham as he built an altar to the Lord and worshipped Him despite the fact that he was still childless. Abraham believed God and knew that the truth and promises yet to be fulfilled in this land would include all mankind for all eternity.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## **BEFORE THE THRONE**

Dear Lord, thank you for your Word and for opening my eyes to your truth. Lord, as I teach this lesson, please increase my faith and trust in

you—in what you do. Help me to see that all of your purposes are good—even when tears are running down my face. Help me to realize fully that only the things you promise through faith in your Word will bring me true joy. No amount of earthly goods or pleasures will fill my heart like your truth can. I long to be completely yours—to look to the heavenly city that God has designed and built for me. And please take the young minds of my students, and their hardened hearts, and mold them to your will. Give them the faith of Abraham that will bring obedience to you and your Word. Help them, Lord, to see that the things of the earth cannot satisfy and won't last. Fix their eyes on the things above as only you can do.



## COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- Distribute the Backward Message worksheets for students to decipher.

To make it more exciting and engaging for the class, you may want to have your students compete by setting up teams—with girls against boys, blondes against brunettes, etc. Time them to see who can figure the message out first.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



## REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme posters from previous weeks, quickly review the lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you review the Lesson Theme posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.

Review the memory verse using the Memory Verse Picture sheets. Pass out the sheets. Have students recite the verse as a class together. Next, say the verse slowly, then quickly, then quietly, then loudly.

To make Activity 2 more effective, pass out the “simple” treats now. (See Heavenly Rewards—Worth the Wait for more information). Ask the students if they’d like to eat them now. Tell them if they wait, they will get an even better treat. If they can’t wait, they will miss out on the better treat. You may show them the “better” treats you brought in.



# God Calls Abram

## MATERIALS

- God Calls Abram worksheet for each student
- Pencils

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Pass out the worksheets before beginning your lesson.*

We are going to fill in these worksheets as we read and study Genesis 12:1–5.

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

We will record the commands and promises God gave Abram. Abram demonstrated great faith as he obeyed God and believed the promises, even though most of them never came to pass during his lifetime.



# Studying God's Word

## READ THE WORD

? We're going to start today's lesson by reading Genesis 12:1–5. Turn there in your Bibles. This lesson is about Abram.

Does anyone know what God changed his name to, later in the Bible?  
*Abraham.*

Genesis 12:1–5

? Good, but at this point he's still called Abram. Let's read Genesis 12:1–5.  
*Choose a volunteer to read.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

? Who is speaking in verse one, and who is He speaking to? *The Lord is speaking to Abram. Have students fill in the word "Abram" on number one of the worksheets.*

? What is the Lord telling Abram to do in verse one? **Be specific.** *Go out of his country; leave his home and family; and go to a different land that the Lord would show him. Have students fill in the words country, home, family, land on number two of the worksheets.*

? Now look in verse 2. God promised Abram three things in this verse. **What are the things God promised?** *To make Abram a great nation; bless him and make his name great; make him a blessing. Have students fill in the words nation, name, and blessing on number three of the worksheets.*

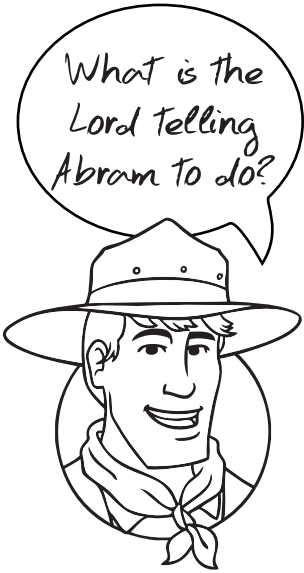
? Look closely at verse 3. There are three more promises. **What are they?** *God would bless those who bless Abram. God would curse those who curse him. Many families will be blessed by him. Have students fill in the words bless, bless, curse, curse, bless, families on number four of the worksheets.*

? What great promises! The Lord had a lot in store for Abram. **Did you notice how old Abram was when God asked him to leave home and made these promises to him?** *Genesis 12:4. Seventy-five. Have students fill in seventy-five on number five of the worksheets.*

? He was 75 when God called him. Seventy-five may seem too old to leave home and start a new life away from everything. **Did Abram go?** *Genesis 12:4. Yes!*

? **And what relatives were with Abram?** *Genesis 12:5. Sarai, his wife; and Lot, Abram's nephew. Have students fill in number six of their worksheets—Sarai, Lot.*

? **Where were they headed, according to the very end of verse 5?** *The Land of Canaan. Have students fill in number seven of their worksheets.*





## Discover the Truth

This is an incredible event. Sometimes we take for granted the faith of people in the Bible. But today, I want you to think about Abram as if you have never heard about him before. Realize that he was a regular guy—not a character from a make-believe story and not a super hero. He was a 75-year old man, and what God was asking him to do wasn't easy.

? Have you ever moved to a different country? Or a different state? *Yes/no. Allow a brief discussion.*

? You had to leave so many things behind, didn't you? What kind of things do you have to sacrifice whenever you move? *Friends, home, the familiar, school, church, favorite restaurants and stores, etc.*

It's hard to move. Abram was leaving behind everything he knew, too. What if God called you to move, and He didn't tell you where you were going? That would be even harder and scary. But that's exactly what Abram did. He had faith in God. Faith is believing in something even though you can't see it. And Abram did not know where he was going.

Yet, he was obedient to God's call to leave everything he knew, pack up his family and all of his possessions, and head for a different land—a land he didn't know much about! That's faith, isn't it?

This passage is filled with many wonderful promises that God made to Abram. God promised Abram that he would be the father of a great nation. Yet Abram had no children.

If Abram only used human wisdom, God's promise wouldn't have made any sense. He and his wife were old. The chances of Abram becoming a father were slim to none. But Abram trusted God even when what he heard didn't make sense.

Take a look at your worksheet. Look at all the promises God made to Abram—so many blessings! God said Abram's name would be great; God would bless those who bless Abram and curse those who curse him; and God would bless many through him.

? Look closely at numbers 3 and 4 on your list. Which of these promises from God were fulfilled during Abram's lifetime? *Allow discussion. Review the promises on the worksheet.*

Actually, none of the promises on the worksheet were fulfilled while Abram was still alive! Not one. The only promise that was fulfilled during Abram's lifetime was the promise of a son. And two of the promises God made to Abram were dependent on that son.

? Which promises would those be? Take a look at your worksheets. *Allow discussion. God promised Abram He would make Abram a great nation and God promised He would bless many families through Abram.*

In order for Abram to become a great nation, he would have to have a child. Abram saw the birth of that child, but did not see his descendants become a great nation. That would happen after he died.

And what about the promise that Abram would bless many families? How would that happen? Well, that was actually a promise about Jesus. Jesus, our precious Savior, was born from the line of Abram—Jesus was one of Abram’s descendants. Jesus was born many generations later. Yet He did bless many families! So you see? Not only was Abram faithful to God, but God remained faithful to Abram and kept all of His promises—even though Abram did not see the fulfillment of them here on earth.



## READ THE WORD

We just read about Abram in Genesis. Now we’re going to learn more about him in Hebrews. Hebrews is in the New Testament.

? Who can find the book of Hebrews on the Books of the Bible poster? *Refer to the Books of the Bible poster and call on someone to show the class where the book of Hebrews is.*

Turn to Hebrews 11:8–10. Abram’s name has been changed to Abraham by God. *Choose a volunteer to read the verses.*

Hebrews 11:8–10

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? What did Abraham do by faith? *He obeyed.*
- ? Who did he obey? *God.*
- ? What had God commanded him to do in Hebrews 11:8? *God called him to go to a place he did not know.*
- ? What does Hebrews 11:9 call the land Abraham went to? *The land of promise; a foreign country.*
- ? Who shared in that promise with Abraham? *Hebrews 11:9. Two other people are mentioned. Isaac and Jacob.*
- ? And who are Isaac and Jacob? *You know this! Isaac was Abraham’s son; Jacob was Isaac’s son.*

That’s right. Isaac was the son God promised to Abraham. And Jacob was Isaac’s son. They were all part of God’s plan of redemption through Jesus.

- ? Now look in verse 10. What was Abraham waiting for? *A city.*
- ? And who is the builder and maker of the city Abraham was waiting for? *God.*

We have talked a lot about Abraham’s faith to obey God in every situation. And verse 10 tells us why Abraham was able to have such

What did Abraham do?





faith. He believed God’s promises—that his descendants would one day become a great nation—but he never saw that happen. He died long before God kept His promise.

But it didn’t matter to Abraham. We read in Hebrews 11:10 that Abraham was really waiting for a different city—a city whose builder and maker is God.

? Look again in Hebrews 11:10. What do you think that is referring to?  
*Heaven.*

That’s right. Now someone read Hebrews 11:16. *Assign a reader.*

? What kind of a country are they looking for? *A heavenly country.*

? What does the verse say about this heavenly country? *It is a better country.*

That’s right, a heavenly country—a better country. A city whose builder and maker is God. It is the same city mentioned in Hebrews 11:10.

? And who has prepared that city for them? *Hebrews 11:16. God.*

? And what is that city or country? *Heaven.*

### Discover the Truth

Do you see? Abraham was promised a new land here on earth—Canaan. It was an earthly reward. Abraham never saw all of the things God promised him. But he always had faith in God. He was always hoping for an even better land or city—heaven!

To Abraham, heaven was more important—and he was hoping for his rewards there. Abraham was patient and trusted God even though his life was often hard. But he had faith that God had something better for him. God was preparing the better city for him.

There is a big difference between earthly rewards and heavenly rewards, isn’t there? Earthly rewards bring temporary pleasure. We think earthly rewards are so important.

? What are some examples of earthly rewards that only bring temporary pleasure? *Fame, money, cars, houses, clothes, games, movies, etc.*

These things cannot last forever. None of them. And they distract us from the heavenly reward God promises. The rewards God promises are eternal. They alone will bring everlasting joy. And we can only earn them one way. Through faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.



## READ THE WORD

- ? What would you say was the theme of today's lesson? *Faith.*
- ? Yes. Faith! I hope when you hear the word "faith" or the phrase "have faith" you don't tune out. Faith is a word we throw around casually sometimes without stopping to think about its meaning. Don't tune out today or you'll miss something very important about faith.

Hebrews 11:6

Turn to Hebrews 11:6. I want someone to read that to us. *Choose a volunteer to read the verse.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? What does this verse tell us about faith? *We must have it to please God.*  
That's right. It is impossible to please God without faith! Faith is very important!
- ? What must we believe in if we are to have faith that pleases God? The answer is in the same verse. *We must believe that God is who He says He is.*  
That's right. We must believe that God is who He says He is.
- ? Where do we find out about God? *The Bible.*  
Yes. That is why Bible study is so important. We learn about God through the Bible. Knowing God and believing in God increases our faith. And we must have that faith in order to please God.
- ? What will God do for those who have faith, who diligently seek Him in His Word? *Hebrews 11:6. He will reward them.*

### Discover the Truth

Remember what we mentioned earlier. Abraham, although promised a reward on earth, always had his eyes fixed on the heavenly city. The city whose builder and maker is God! Abraham never saw his descendants live in the land of Canaan. But he believed that it would happen. And even more than that, he believed that there was something beyond this world that is far better. Abraham had faith that God would fulfill His promises, but Abraham was not upset that he didn't get to see those promises completed. Abraham knew that heavenly rewards were waiting for him. Heavenly rewards God had prepared for him.





# Heavenly Rewards—Worth the Wait

## MATERIALS

- “Simple” treats—animal crackers, bag of small candies like Starbursts or mints for each student
- “Better” treats—brownies, cake, full-sized candy bar, etc. for each student

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Before class begins, place the “simple” treats in front of each student.*

Who would like to eat their snack right now, before we get started? Everyone? Well, wait just a minute. I have something else for you. *Bring out the larger candy bars, the brownies, cake, whatever the “better” treat is. But you can’t eat this until later. Can you wait? Go on with the class without eating any treats.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

*When ready to proceed with Activity 2, distribute the “better” treats.*

We talked about earthly rewards and heavenly rewards today, didn’t we?

Abraham had the promise of earthly rewards but he never saw them. He also had the promise of heavenly rewards, the heavenly country that God had prepared for him. He kept his eyes on those rewards and continued to be faithful to God because of his trust that those heavenly rewards would be worth the wait.

That’s like our treats. The animal cracker (mints, etc.) looked great when you first saw them. But you were all willing to wait for the “better” treat. And it was worth the wait, right?

We think we have to have the things of the world to be happy. And we always want them right now! But they don’t satisfy; they can’t make us happy. And we’ll only want more and more. What the Lord has promised for all of eternity is so much better and worth waiting for. Let’s enjoy our better treat!



# Applying God’s Word

## WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

You know, we can see what real faith in God looks like when we study Abram. He had to leave everything he knew and head for the desert. He left his family and his father’s house. He packed it all up and headed out—and he wasn’t even sure where God was leading him. But his faith was firm. He had his eyes fixed on the heavenly city—heaven—designed and built by God. He was waiting for the rewards that awaited him there.

All the gifts or rewards the world offers don’t really make us happy. But the rewards that can be ours through Jesus who came to earth, died on the Cross, and rose from the dead—those rewards are worth waiting for.

Because those rewards will last forever and we won't ever get tired of them or want anything else!

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

There are many people who do not believe the Bible. They say there is no evidence of the things God wrote about. The account of Abraham is one of those things they may not believe. But we trust the Bible as God's true Word to us. We know the account of Abraham is true because it is in the Bible.

It is exciting when God allows discoveries that confirm what we read in Scripture, such as the city of Ur where Abraham was born. Present-day discoveries tell us a lot about this ancient city. *Show the map showing Ur.*

Ur was recently rediscovered and excavated by archaeologists between 1922 and 1934. What they discovered gives us more information about the city of Ur and life there during the time of Abram.

Evidence of just how sinful the city was came to light when archaeologists discovered that the people of Ur had adopted Nanna, the moon god, as their main god. A ziggurat was built as a temple to Nanna. Ur was a thoroughly pagan city. Pagan means they didn't worship the one true God.

That explains why God would call Abram out of there and never let him go back.

God needed Abram to go to a new place where He would be able to use Abram to fulfill His plan. God would use Abram to start a new nation and bring forth descendants that would one day result in the birth of Jesus. Ur wasn't a good place for that to happen.



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



### MEMORY VERSE

**Acts 17:26–27** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for the truth of His Word, and that through His Word we can have faith like Abraham had.
- Pray that we would not want the things the world offers—they will not make us happy—But that we would desire the things above—the heavenly city.