

ABRAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD

Lesson Aim: Believe God's promises so you can be called a friend of God.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the following questions where they fit the lesson for class discussion.

Abram was called by God out of a city that worshipped the moon god. He trusted His promises "and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (Jam 2:23).

How did the great grandson of Noah rebel against God? Gen 10:8-12

Nimrod rebelled against God by building Babel and eight other cities, and second, it is inferred that he directly or indirectly led the people in building a tower to the heavens. These two things were done to make a name for themselves and not be scattered over all the earth. God told Noah that they were to fill the earth, that is, they were to fill all parts of the earth. He did not intend for them to gather together in cities where a rebellious ruler could easily influence them to rebel against Him, but that is exactly what Nimrod did when he founded nine cities and ruled over them. He was a "mighty hunter before the Lord," not of animals, but a hunter of souls, to bring them under his control in these cities (for this use of hunter see Jer 16:16; Mic 7:2). Satan still uses cities to promote sin and rebellion against God. The second act of rebellion was the desire of the people in Babel to build a tower to make the top a place to worship the heavens. This was a practice that was condemned by God throughout the Old Testament (cf Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kg 17:16; 21:3; Zep 1:5).

How did the Lord stop the building of their city including the tower in their city? (Gen 11:5-9)

The Lord gave them different languages, so they could not understand each other, and the work was stopped. It also accomplished the Lord's will in that they were scattered to all parts of the earth. But their desire to worship the host of heaven was still in their hearts. They persisted in building towers to the heavens, called ziggurats, which are found in that area and in South America. Sacrifices were made at the top of these ziggurats and it is said that humans were the highest sacrifices offered to their gods.

How is the Lord's covenant with Abram a blessing for all families of the earth? (Gen 12:3)

The Lord promised to bless Abram. At first He told him about the land that his seed would possess (12:1; 13:15, 17). The Lord also told him that his seed would be in number like the dust of the earth (13:16). His seed would include God's Son (Mt 1:1), but Abram may not have understood that at first. However, it is clear now that his divine Son, born of Mary, would pay for the sins of all people (1 Jn 2:2). In that sense, the Lord's covenant with Abram would be a blessing to all families of the earth.

How did the Lord test Abram's character? (Gen 12:4-14:24)

The Lord tested Abram by his faith to leave Ur and go to a land that was not made known to him until he arrived in Canaan (12:4-9). Even though he stayed in Haran for awhile, the Lord did not rebuke him. He just put it in his heart to proceed toward Egypt. When he arrived in Canaan, the Lord told him this is the land that his descendants would possess. His experience in finding the Lord's will is useful for believers to know. The Lord's will is not fully known at first, but we are to keep moving until He gives assurance that this is it.

Then the Lord tested Abram by a famine in Canaan (Gen 12:10-20). Abram decided to go to Egypt where there was food. He did not seek the Lord's will and he lied about his wife and told the Pharaoh that she was his sister to save his own life. The Pharaoh did take Sarai into his house. Abram failed this test, but the Lord was gracious to him and plagued Pharaoh and his house so that he gave Sarai back to Abram and sent him out of Egypt without harming or killing him.

Now the Lord tested Abram by his family (Gen 13:5-14:16). The herdsmen of Lot and Abram quarreled over the land to graze their cattle. Abram told Lot that they should separate. Lot could make the choice as to where he desired to go and Abram would go the opposite direction. That was gracious of Abram. Lot chose to go to the well watered plains of the Jordan, but Lot made a bad choice because the

wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were there. Then the Lord met with Abram and told him all the land to the north and south, east and west would be given to his seed forever (Gen 13:14-17). That promise is still valid and will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns to rule all the nations of the world from that land. Abram was tested again when Lot was taken as a captive by a foreign king and his allies. Abram immediately took his 318 armed men with the men of three neighbors and they defeated these foreign kings, rescued Lot and brought back all the people of Sodom and goods that were taken from Sodom. Abram was faithful to his family. Believers must be alert and walk with the Lord to be able to pass all the tests that He gives to them.

How did Abram treat two kings that met him when he returned in victory? (Gen 14:19-24)

Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the Most High, brought bread and wine to Abram and blessed him. Then Abram gave tithes to Melchizedek of all that he had recaptured in his victory (14:18-20). The king of Sodom asked Abram to give him the persons, but to keep all of the goods. Abram gave him his share of the goods, lest he would say at a later time that he had made Abram rich. Abram wanted to give the Lord credit for that claim. That is a good principle for all believers to practice.