



Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



Episode 005- God's Promises:

Genesis 12:1-20

God made three promises to Abraham: land, descendants, and that he would be a blessing to all nations. The bounty of these promises extended far beyond Abraham's earthly life; they stretch through this present world into eternity itself—the new heavens and the new earth.

Land:

At his death Abraham owned nothing but a burial cave for Sarah and himself.

- What questions and doubts would you have had if you were in Abraham's place?

When God gave Abraham's descendants the land of Israel they began a cycle: they would fall away from God; He would take away their land; they would repent and return to God, and then He would have mercy and restore their land to them.

- What things would cause us to lose the blessings God promises us?
- If we lose those blessings, is there any way to get them back again?
- What can we do to break this cycle or make sure we don't start it in the first place in our lives?

Like Abraham, Jesus never owned a home of His own on earth. His followers thought He would rule as king over the land of Israel but He told Pontius Pilate "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36b).

- In what sense do we Christians also live as strangers on this earth? When Jesus returns and restores creation, the new heavens and the new earth will be our land of inheritance forever.
- Describe what you think the new heavens and the new earth will be like.

A Nation of Descendants:

Abraham's nation started small and grew slowly. It began with one son of promise, Isaac, and one grandson of promise, Jacob, whose twelve sons began the twelve tribes of Israel.

- Why do you think God chose such small and humble beginnings for His chosen nation?

God promised Abraham descendants as countless as the stars. Though there were many Israelites, few were true believers and true children of Abraham. Likewise many people call themselves "Christians" today, but not all are believing children of Abraham.

- How do some people fool themselves into thinking they are God's children when they really aren't?

In eternity all of the children of Abraham will become one nation, filling the new earth, and enjoying each other and the presence of their Lord forever.

- Discuss some of your friendships and family relationships. How do these give us a glimpse of the closeness we will share with all Abraham's children in heaven?

A Blessing to all Nations:

Abraham often failed to be a blessing to the nations around him. Throughout its history, the people of Israel often followed the pagan nations around them and turned away from God, rather than leading these nations to God.

- How did Israel's idolatry, greed, and violence affect the faith of nations that should have been blessed by them?
- How was God thinking of the people of other nations when He sent punishments on Israel (defeat in battle, loss of land)?

The only lasting blessing that came to the nations through Abraham was the coming of His descendant Jesus Christ. By His perfect life and innocent suffering and death, Jesus has removed the sins of all nations and won eternal life for each person. When we sin in our lives and mistreat others, we fail to act as God's children and His love is not shown through us. As a result, we prove to be far more of a curse than a blessing to others.

- Describe how our actions and attitudes demonstrate the love of Jesus to our neighbors. What are some ways they may hide the grace of God from them.
- Why is sharing the story of salvation in Jesus Christ the very best way to be a blessing to the nations?

God's promises hold true through every generation. But sometimes we will not see those promises fulfilled until we see them through our resurrected eyes on Judgment Day.