

Gen.15-16

Abram has come home from his battle with the kings who had taken Lot and his family captive. Abram's neighbors who went with him were given some of the riches and spoil but Abram just quietly came back to his flocks and herds and Sarai who had been anxiously waiting for him. Abram probably spent some time thinking about all the golden jewelry and silver coins and rich clothing that were the rewards of those who fought the battle with him. Abram also probably thought of the different weapons and armor that the soldiers had. He remembered the heavy shields that protected the soldiers from arrows and spears. Many people in Abram's time used the shields for their protection in battles.



Have you seen pictures on TV of Policemen of today who also use shields when there are riots in big cities?



That night God spoke to Abram and said, "Don't be afraid, Abram, I am your shield and I am your exceedingly great reward." Abram didn't need a real shield to protect him for God was close to Abram and would always protect him. Abram didn't need gold and silver rewards from battle, for God was the best reward that anyone can ever have. God can give us life and happiness forever ... that is a much greater reward than fancy clothes and jewelry and money, isn't it? This is your memory verse "**Don't be afraid, for I am your shield and exceedingly great reward.**" Gen.15:1 When you have learned it put a check mark in the box.

Abram would be protected by God all through his life but who would inherit his cattle and sheep and all his property? Abram was growing old but he still didn't have any children. The only person that Abram had to hand his wealth to was a servant in his house named Eliezer. God had said, "this man won't be your heir." Do you know what an "heir" is? This isn't pronounced like the hair on your head, but it sounds like "air." An heir is someone who inherits things when a person dies. Today grandparents and moms and dads write a will and tell who they want to leave their things to. If your grandpa has \$1,000.00 and your grandma has some silver dishes, they may want your parents to inherit them. The heir of the dishes and the \$1,000.00 would be the parents when the grandparents die.

God told Abram "You will have a son!" Then God said, "look up at the stars in the sky - can you count them? If you can count them, that's how many descendants you will have.

Have you ever gone camping out in the woods or on a beach or in the desert? If you lay on your back at night and look up at the stars do you think you could count them? The next time you get a chance to go outside at night where there aren't any street lights...look up and see how many stars you can count. It is almost impossible to count all the stars, isn't it?



This is how many descendants God told Abram would have! Abram wondered how could this be when he and Sarai were so old? However, even though it seemed impossible, Abram believed God. Abram knew that somehow, God would keep his word.

Abram told Sarai what God had promised. She was past the age to have children, so Sarai began to think ... maybe Abram could marry her servant girl, Hagar. If Hagar got pregnant it would be "almost" like Sarai having a child, she thought. Sarai told Abram what she was thinking and even though it didn't seem quite right, Abram agreed that maybe he would have a son if he married a younger woman. In those days people would sometimes have several wives. This usually caused problems and it wasn't what God wanted. When God made man and woman he told them to marry and have children but he didn't tell them to marry several people. This doesn't please God and it nearly always causes trouble.

However, Abram married the Sarai's handmaid, Hagar. When she found out she was going to have a baby, Hagar got very proud. Hagar didn't think she had to work for Sarai anymore and she didn't think she had to be nice to Sarai anymore. After all, she thought, I'm the one who can have a baby and Sarai isn't...I'm more important than she is!



Soon there was a lot of quarreling and anger around Abram's tents. Sarai was mad at Abram and she was mad at Hagar. She complained so much to Abram that he said "do whatever you want with Hagar, I'm tired of all of this!" So one day Hagar and Sarah were arguing and Sarah slapped or hit at Hagar. Hagar ran out of the tent and ran away. Perhaps she was trying to go back to Egypt where she had once lived. Hagar walked and walked further and further into the desert. It was hot and Hagar became very tired. There was a well beside the path so Hagar stopped and washed her face and took a long drink of water. Oh how good it tasted to her!



Suddenly Hagar hear a voice calling her name,

"I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai," Hagar said. Do you know who was speaking to Hagar? It was an angel; a messenger sent from God. Hagar wasn't alone and without a friend, God was watching over her. The angel said "Go back to your mistress Sarai. Do what she says and be a good servant. God will give you many descendants and you will have a baby son. You will name him Ishmael and he will be a strong, man." Hagar was very thankful that God had seen her distress. Then Hagar got up and went back to Abram and Sarai's tents. She became Sarai's servant again and obeyed her.

Sometimes we get angry with a brother or sister or with mom or dad or with a friend at school. We might want to fight back or hit out at them. Or we may want to run away instead of helping our parents or others, but this isn't God's way to act, is it? God tells us ways to act in the Bible. We are to try and be kind and loving and helpful. If someone older asks you to do something, we should do it for them without arguing and fighting over it, shouldn't we?



In time, Hagar had a little baby boy and Abram named him Ishmael, just as the angel had said. Abram was very proud of this little boy and thought he would be his heir and inherit all the promises of God as well as all of Abram's possessions when he died. However, this wasn't in God's plan as we'll learn.

God appeared again to Abram and told him that he was now to have a new name. It's very close to his old name - his name now would be Abraham instead of Abram. Abraham means "Father of many" Why do you think God named him this? Because God said "you'll be a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful and many nations and kings will be your descendants."

God gave Abraham a wonderful promise: "I will establish my covenant (or agreement) as an everlasting covenant. You and your descendants after you will be my people and I will be your God. The whole land of Canaan where you are now a stranger, will be your land and your descendants land as an everlasting possession."

Abraham didn't own any of the land at all. He was an old man and the land was full of enemies. But Abraham believed that God would keep his promise.



Did you know that today there are descendants of Abraham living in the land that Abraham was promised, just like God said there would be? The land that was called Canaan in Abraham's day is now called Israel. Abraham's descendants are called Jews. Many people say that the Jews shouldn't be in this land. They want the Jews to share this land with others and some say that that they don't really belong here. Many people are trying to push the Jewish nation out of the land of Israel, but do you think they will succeed? No, for God promised Abraham and the Jewish people that this would be their land forever!

God told Abraham that Sarai was also to have a new name. Her name was now to be Sarah. Then God said "I will bless Sarah and will give you a son by her. I will bless her and she will be the mother of nations and kings will be her descendants." Now Abraham knew that Sarah was too old to have children. It isn't possible for women to have babies when they are ninety years old! Abraham fell down and started laughing to himself. "Will a man who is a hundred years old have a son?" he thought. "Will Sarah bear a child when she is ninety years old?"



God knew what Abraham was thinking and he said, "Sarah WILL bear you a son and you will call him Isaac!" Do you know what the name Isaac means? Isaac means laughter. Abraham laughed to think that he would have a son by Sarah, so God told Abraham his son was to be named "laughter." Then God said "I will establish my Covenant with Isaac as an everlasting covenant and to his descendants after him."

Abraham asked God, "What about Ishmael? Won't Ishmael have your blessing?" God answered, "As for Ishmael, I will also bless him and will make him fruitful. He will have many children and grandchildren and I will make a great nation from his descendants. However, my Covenant (God's promised agreement) will be with Isaac. Sarah will have baby Isaac by this time next year."

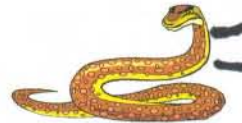
God often tells things two or three different times to make it a solid and sure thing. In our next lesson we'll see how God tells Sarah about this son.



Question Page

1. Who did God tell Abram would be his shield and reward?
2. True or false...an heir is someone who inherits possessions when another person dies
True _____ False _____
3. Who did Abram have as an heir? (a) a servant named Eliezar (b) a servant named Hagar
4. What did God tell Abram about the stars when he looked up at them?
5. Why did Abram marry Hagar when he already had a wife?
6. How did Hagar act toward her mistress Sarai when Hagar discovered she was to have a baby and Sarai couldn't have one?
7. What did Hagar do when Sarai got angry and mistreated her?
8. Who talked with Hagar when she stopped at a well? What did he tell her?
9. What name was Hagar to give her son? (a) Saul (b) Isaac (c) Ishmael
10. What is a Covenant? (a) a promised agreement (b) a dream (c) a written will
11. What was Abram's new name? _____ What was Sarai's new name? _____
12. True or False - The land of Canaan, which is now called Israel, was promised to the Arabs forever. True _____ False _____
13. What should you do if you get angry with someone who is telling you to do a job?
 - (a) Willingly do the job even if you don't like the idea
 - (b) Fight back (what right do they have telling you what to do)
 - (c) Run away (you won't have to do it if they can't find you).

Draw a well of water for Hagar - then help her find a way along the correct path to Abraham and Sarah's tents



God made a Covenant (or agreement) with Abraham and God promised Abraham several things ... out of the pictures below can you pick out the things God promised? Some of them are NOT things God promised Abraham ... to check your answers, look up the references or have mom or dad help you look up the references.



Abraham served God, so he would have lots of money Luke 16:13



Inherit the land he lived on forever



He would go to heaven forever John 3:13



Sarah would have a son



He would have many descendents or offspring Genesis 15:5



He would be crowned as king Judges 17:6



He would live in a beautiful house Hebrews 11:9