



## Lesson 1

### Promises Accepted and Rejected

#### OPENING PRAYER

#### OVERVIEW & ASSUMPTIONS

1. God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were well known among the Israelites. They were passed down from generation to generation and treasured by all the believers in their family.
2. God's kingdom refers to his rule over all things. God wants to rule over all people in mercy and grace. He does that through the forgiveness of sins won by the world's Savior. In the Old Testament, God's work of salvation was centered on the people of Israel. God's Word would spread into the world through them. And from them, the Savior would be born. If the nation of Israel were destroyed, it would cease to accomplish God's purpose. If the people of the world died in a famine, God's elect among the Gentiles would perish eternally.
3. The story of Joseph is the story of how God used Jacob's son Joseph at a crucial time in the history of God's kingdom. God used Joseph to ensure that his plan of salvation was kept on track. The title of this course is *My Life for the Kingdom*. The title applies to Joseph, but it also applies to us as we use our gifts to take part in God's kingdom work through the proclamation and service to gospel in our particular time and place.

#### INTRODUCTION

#### BIBLE STUDY

**Genesis 12:2-3** "I [the LORD] will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

- 1.) What promise did God Give to Abraham?



2.) How would Abraham and his descendants be a blessing to the whole world?

**Genesis 15:2-5** But Abram said, “O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

**Genesis 17:19** God said, “...Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”

**Genesis 21:12** “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”

3.) What additional information did God reveal to Abraham about the future of his descendants?

**Genesis 15:6** Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

4.) How did Abraham respond to God’s promises, and what was the result of this for Abraham?

**Hebrews 11:13, 17-22** All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ...By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

5.) The writer of Hebrews tells us about the fruits of Abraham’s faith. The writer goes on to talk about Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Based on these verses, how well did these men know and understand the promises God had given to Abraham?

**Genesis 15:13-16** Then the LORD said to him, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

6.) What additional information did God give Abraham about his descendants?

7.) Despite having these precious promises from God, the twelve patriarchs often did not live up to them and acted in weakness and unbelief. They were unworthy and unfaithful towards the Lord. But the core message of Scripture is not humanity's moral reformation or innate goodness, but rather God's faithfulness and redemptive grace for sinners. How do the following verses and episodes drive this point home?

#### **Genesis 34** – Dinah and the Shechemites

**Genesis 35:22** While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it.

**Genesis 37:2** Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

#### **Genesis 38** – Judah and Tamar

8.) Note how Jacob trusts God and magnifies his faithfulness. (This is after the attack on Shechem.)

**Genesis 35:1-7, 11-15** Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God..." So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. Then they set out, and the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him.

And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him. Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.

(Genesis 49) / **Hebrews 11:21** By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

#### APPLICATION

1.) How might you encourage the people around you to treasure God's promises?

2.) Joseph knew about special promises that would come true for his family. What promises of great things do young Christians have to look forward to?

#### CLOSING BENEDICTION