

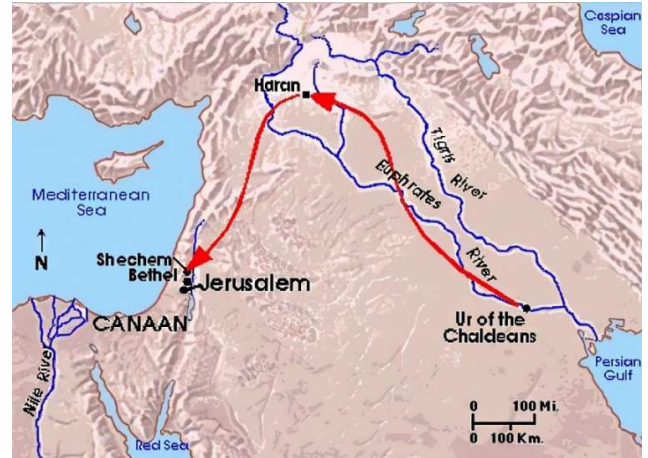
Abrahamic Covenant: Abraham in Canaan (Gen 15:5-11, 17-21)

A covenant is an agreement, pact, or treaty between two parties. During Abraham's time, a covenant was ratified by cutting animals in half and each covenant participant passes through between them as a sign of their covenant commitment or face the fate of the animals.

1. After Abram arrives in Canaan, God indicates the land He will give to Abram and his descendants (Gen 12:7; 13:14-17); but, Abram has two concerns: he has no children and he does not know how he could possess the Promised Land (Gen 15:2-7). What do you observe about Abram's covenant ratification ceremony with God?

And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. (Gen 15:5-11, ESV)



When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (Gen 15:17-21, ESV)

2. One year before Isaac is born, God repeats His covenant promises to Abram. List those promises and discuss what does God mean, "I will establish my covenant to be God to you"?

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Gen 17:1-8, ESV)

3. As you learn more about Abraham, you may encounter other references of his family (Gen 16:4-15, 18:11-15; 25:1-2, 9-10). How many wives and sons did Abraham have? With whom among Abraham's descendants was the Abrahamic Covenant confirmed? Who came to bury Abraham when he died?

4. Aside from Abraham's great faith in God, what was another reason for God choice of Abraham to make His covenant with? Observe carefully Genesis 18:17-19.

There is no other divine covenant that is repeated as many as five times in the Bible as the Abrahamic Covenant where God makes promises a) to Abraham personally, b) to Abraham's descendants Israel, and c) indirectly to humanity (Gentiles). This covenant forms the basis from which other covenants expand upon. The Land Covenant (also known as Deuteronomic) expands upon the promise of land to Israel. The Davidic Covenant expands upon the issue of kingship and inheritance through Israel. The New Covenant expands on the promise of blessing to humanity.

The Teacher Note for this lesson is at:
<http://Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/25Curriculum/Class6-8/print/God.Covenant.Abraham.6-8.pdf>

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Teacher Notes

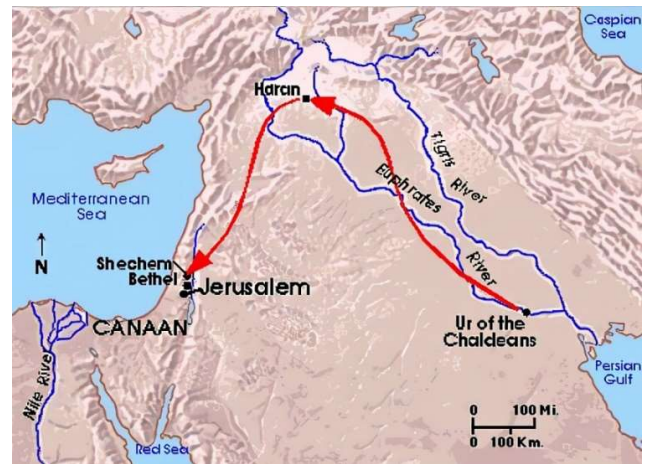
A covenant is an agreement, pact, or treaty between two parties. During Abraham's time, a covenant was ratified by cutting animals in half and each covenant participant passes through between them as a sign of their covenant commitment or face the fate of the animals.

Note to teacher: understanding God's covenants is an important key to understanding the Bible; the Abrahamic Covenant defines God's interaction with human beings. Introduced in Genesis, the Abrahamic Covenant is completely fulfilled in Revelation.

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Abram sees a "smoking fire pot and a flaming torch," representing God as the only person walking between the sacrificed animals and ratifying the covenant; God is making an agreement with only Himself (unilateral) and without any conditions required of Abram (unconditional).

Help the student understand the significance of this with an example on an employment contract. When you join a company, you often will sign a contract with the company in which you promise to work and the company promises to pay with benefits. Now imagine what it means when a company commits to a binding contract because of a certain quality about you, in which the company's pay and benefits is not conditioned on what you do.

Allow time for discussion. It is important to note the God made the covenant with Abram primarily because of a certain quality he had – a genuine faith in God.

2. One year before Isaac is born, God repeats His covenant promises to Abram. List those promises and discuss what does God mean, "I will establish my covenant to be God to you"?

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Gen 17:1-8, ESV)

Help the student identify God's covenant promises and encourage them to underline or circle each promise observed in the text. The objective is to help them with their skill of observation.

God repeats His promises to Abram: 1) Abram will have exceedingly numerous descendants, 2) Abram's name will change to Abraham, because he will be the father of a multitude of nations and kings, 3) Abraham's covenant will not die with him, but will be established everlasting with his descendants, and God will be their God, 4) his descendants will have an everlasting possession of the Land, and God will be their God.

Allow discussion of God's statement, "I will establish my covenant **to be God to you.**" Ask questions to stimulate thought and discussion. Would it help the student if "God" was substituted with "Supreme King Protector"?

3. As you learn more about Abraham, you may encounter other references of his family (Gen 16:4-15, 18:11-15; 25:1-2, 9-10). How many wives and sons did Abraham have? With whom among Abraham's descendants was the Abrahamic Covenant confirmed? Who came to bury Abraham when he died?

Encourage the student to read the Bible, and look for details. To fully understand a person or event, details really matter.

Hagar bore Ishmael (Gen 16:4-15)

Sarah bore Isaac (Gen 18:11-15)

Keturah bore Zimram, Joshkan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah (Gen 25:1-2)

Of all the women associated with Abraham, only Hagar received promises of blessing directly from God: a) "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count," b) "you shall bear a son," c) "you shall call him Ishmael," d) "he will be a wild donkey of a man," e) "his hand will be against everyone," f) "everyone's hand will be against him," g) "he will live to the east of all his brothers" (Gen 16:9-12).

God's covenant with Abraham was confirmed through Isaac (Gen 26:2-5, 24), confirmed through Isaac's second son Jacob (Gen 28:13-15), and confirmed through all 12 sons of Jacob (Gen 49). But Judah was the most appropriate to receive the covenant promise of the King.

Only two sons came to bury their father Abraham: Ishmael and Isaac (Gen 25:9-10).

4. Aside from Abraham's great faith in God, what was another reason for God choice of Abraham to make His covenant with? Observe carefully Genesis 18:17-19.

Abraham was chosen, because God knew he could teach "his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord."

Abraham's faith did not simply believe that God was real and subjectively trusted His words. Abraham saw God as his Lord, King and Ruler of his life and the implication of himself as a servant. In recognition of God's sovereignty, obedience to God's word was demanded. And because Abraham "listened and obeyed," he learned how to be holy and walk blameless before God (Gen 17:1).