



Church of God Sunday School

ABRAHAM: FATHER OF MANY NATIONS

Genesis 11:27 — 21:5

Many years after God mixed up the languages of the people at the Tower of Babel, a baby was born in the land of Ur (*UHR*) of the Chaldees (*KAL-dees*). This baby, the son of Terah (*TER-uh*), was named Abram. Abram would one day be the father of many nations.

The people who lived in Ur "served other gods" (Joshua 24:2). How quickly the people had forgotten about the one true God! One day God appeared to Abram "when he was in Mesopotamia [*mes-oh-puh-TAY-mee-uh*], before he dwelt in Charran [or Haran]" (Acts 7:2).

God had a special message for Abram: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." Abram, "not knowing whither he went," left the land of Ur "by faith" (Hebrews 11:8).

Abram, his wife Sarai (*SAIR-i*), his father Terah, and his nephew Lot traveled to "Haran [*HAY-ran*], and dwelt there." It was there that Terah died, at the age of 205. After his death, Abram, Sarai, and Lot continued their journey.

God had promised Abram, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." God also promised to give Abram's children the land of Canaan. Abram believed God and built an altar and "called upon the name of the LORD."

When a great famine came on the land of Canaan, Abram went to Egypt. After a time Abram left Egypt and returned to the place where he had once built an altar. There Abram worshiped the Lord.

Soon after this, God encouraged Abram, telling him to look to the north, the south, the east, and the west. All this land, God told Abram, would be his and his children's forever. God also said Abram's descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. And Abram "believed in the LORD."

By this time Abram was 85 and Sarai was 75. They had been unable to have children, and now they were too old. How could God's promise to Abram be

fulfilled? One day Sarai told Abram to take her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar (*HAY-gahr*), as his second wife. Although this was not in God's plan, Abram listened to Sarai.

Soon there were problems between Sarai and Hagar. Hagar was expecting a baby, and "her mistress was despised in her eyes." Sarai treated her handmaid sternly and severe, and Hagar ran away.

The angel of the Lord found Hagar "by a fountain of water in the wilderness." The angel spoke with Hagar and told her to return and submit to her mistress, Sarai. The angel also instructed her to name her son Ishmael (*ISH-may-uhl*), "because the LORD hath heard thy affliction."

Hagar obeyed the angel and returned home. When Abram was 86, Ishmael was born. But he was not the son promised of God.

When Abram was 99, the Lord appeared to him again. At that time God changed Abram's name to *Abraham*, which means "father of many." Sarai's name was changed to *Sarah*, which means "princess." God promised that she would become the mother of nations. Abraham laughed and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear [a son]?"

God told Abraham that He would establish His covenant for the people of God with the promised son. His name would be called *Isaac* (*I-zik*), which means "laughter."

When Abraham and Sarah were living in the plains of Mamre (*MAM-ree*), the Lord came to visit Abraham in the form of three men. Abraham had a meal prepared for them. After eating, the men asked where Sarah was. Abraham said she was in the tent. Abraham was told, again, that Sarah



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would surely have a son. Sarah heard it and laughed within herself, thinking it was not possible for her to bear children. The Lord asked Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"

Over and over God had told Abraham that the promised child would come and that Abraham would be the "father of many nations." It looked impossible, but "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Did God's words come true? Yes! Sarah did have a son. Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 when Isaac was born. God kept His promise to Abraham. Abraham believed God's promise, "and he was called the

Friend of God" (James 2:23).

The Bible is full of God's promises to His children. Do you believe them? God sent His Son, Jesus, to "carry out and fulfill all of God's promises, no matter how many of them there are" (2 Corinthians 1:20, *The Living Bible*). If God's promises seem hard to believe, remember this story of Abraham. Just like Abraham, you, too, can believe God's promises.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"*

—*Genesis 18:14a*  
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