

Promise Covenant and Return

Cornerstone 1131 Sunday School • Lesson 3

From Creation to Restoration

A 50-minute teaching guide for adults or older teenagers. Complete KJV Scripture readings follow the teaching notes. A separate student worksheet with the same readings accompanies this guide.

The central truth

God takes the initiative in calling people into relationship with Him. His promises invite trust, His covenant calls for faithful living, and His mercy makes return possible. Through Christ, the blessing promised to Abraham reaches people of every nation.

What students should learn

- Describe the promise to Abraham and its purpose beyond Abraham's own household.
- Explain covenant as a relationship established by God through solemn commitment, with promises and responsibilities.
- Read Israel's invitation to return in its covenant setting and recognize God's work in renewing the heart.
- Connect the blessing of the nations with Christ and choose a practical response of trust.

Readings and preparation

Core class readings: Genesis 12:1–4; 15:6; Deuteronomy 30:1–6; Galatians 3:8, 26–29. Teacher preparation: Genesis 15:1–6, 17–21; 17:1–8; Exodus 19:3–6; Deuteronomy 30:1–14; Galatians 3:16. Scripture quotations use the King James Version.

Companion reading: When God Heals the Land in the Cornerstone Journal, especially its discussion of covenant, repentance, and restoration. Have the included Scripture readings, pens, and copies of the handout ready.

Class plan

Welcome, review, and prayer — 5 minutes

Opening question — 5 minutes

Scripture and teaching — 20 minutes

Discussion — 10 minutes

Personal response and service — 7 minutes

Closing prayer — 3 minutes

Opening the class

Recall the first two lessons: God gives life, and human disobedience brings a fracture into fellowship. Ask: "What helps you trust a promise when its fulfillment is not yet visible?" Keep examples voluntary and ordinary.

Pray: "Father, God bless the reading of the Word. Help us hear Your call and understand Your faithfulness. Give us hearts willing to trust You, return to You, and become a blessing to others through Jesus Christ. Amen."

God calls and makes a promise

Allow about 10 minutes for these first two teaching movements. Invite students to distinguish what God promises from the response He calls Abraham to make.

1 A blessing intended to reach others

Read Genesis 12:1–4. Ask: “What is Abram called to leave, what does God promise, and who else is included in the purpose?” Explain that Abram is later named Abraham in Genesis 17.

Suggested teaching: “The story moves from humanity’s failure toward a particular call. God speaks to Abram and tells him to leave his country, his kindred, and his father’s house for a land God will show him. Abram is asked to take a real step before he can see the whole journey.”

“God promises to make of him a great nation, bless him, and make his name great. But the blessing reaches beyond his own security or reputation. God says, ‘and thou shalt be a blessing,’ and declares that all families of the earth will be blessed in him. The promise carries a purpose for others.”

“Abram departs as the LORD has spoken. Trust takes shape in a response. He does not yet possess the completed promise, but he begins to live in relation to the One who made it.”

Ask: “How does the call to be a blessing change our understanding of what we receive from God?” Listen for a movement from receiving care toward sharing it, while keeping God’s promise at the center.

2 Trust within a covenant relationship

Read Genesis 15:6. Briefly explain the setting in verses 1–6: Abram has questions about his future, God speaks again concerning his offspring, and Abram believes Him.

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” — Genesis 15:6, KJV

Suggested teaching: “Abram’s questions do not end the conversation. God addresses him, and Abram believes. Trust rests upon the One who speaks. It does not require us to pretend we have no questions.”

“Genesis 15:18 describes God making a covenant with Abram. A covenant is a relationship established through solemn commitment. God’s promises are more than a passing reassurance; He binds Himself to a purpose. Genesis 17 also calls Abraham to walk before God faithfully.”

“Abraham’s response does not purchase God’s promise. God calls and gives; Abraham receives and responds in faith. As we continue the course, we will see how trust and obedience belong together.”

Teacher note: Keep the promise to Abraham distinct from the later covenant given to Israel at Sinai. They belong to the unfolding biblical story, but are not identical events or interchangeable sets of terms.

Return and the blessing through Christ

Allow about 10 minutes for these two movements. Preserve the setting of the passages as you connect the story with Christian faith and practice.

3 God calls His people to return

Read Deuteronomy 30:1–6. Explain the setting: Moses addresses Israel before entry into the land. These verses look ahead to blessing, covenant failure, scattering, and return.

Suggested teaching: “The invitation to return comes within a relationship God has already established with His people. To return means to turn toward the LORD, hear His voice, and obey with the whole heart. It is more than regretting an unpleasant consequence.”

“God promises compassion and gathering for His scattered people. The passage also speaks of God circumcising their hearts so that they will love Him. Restoration includes His work within them. Changed circumstances alone cannot supply the loving, faithful heart the covenant calls for.”

“We recognize here a pattern that prepares us to understand repentance: hearing God’s word, turning toward Him, and responding through changed conduct. His mercy makes the invitation hopeful.”

Ask: “What is the difference between wanting a difficulty to end and wanting to return to God?” Listen for renewed relationship, love, and obedience rather than only relief.

Teacher note: These promises address Israel and its covenant relationship to the land. Do not automatically transfer them into a guarantee of national prosperity or personal wealth for Christians. Application begins by hearing what the passage says to its original audience.

4 The promise reaches the nations through Christ

Read Galatians 3:8, 26–29. Refer to verse 16 during teaching: Paul identifies Christ in his discussion of the promised seed.

Suggested teaching: “Paul connects the promise that the nations will be blessed with the gospel. Through faith in Christ, people from different nations are brought into God’s family. Those who belong to Christ are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to promise.”

“This is a shared belonging that gives us reason to welcome one another. The blessing does not depend on social standing or ethnic privilege. Those gathered in Christ receive a common identity that should shape their treatment of one another.”

“Our course follows a purpose unfolding through the biblical story. God calls Abraham, forms a people, and calls them to return when they turn away. In Christ, the blessing promised to the nations becomes central to the gospel. Our response is trusting Him and expressing that trust through faithful love.”

Bridge to the next lesson

Say: “God calls people into relationship with Himself. Next we will ask how He makes His presence known among them, moving from the tabernacle and temple toward the Word made flesh.”

Discussion and a response of trust

Discuss together for 10 minutes

Choose two or three questions. Begin with the readings, then invite application. Suggested responses guide the teacher.

1. Who is meant to benefit from the promise in Genesis 12:1–3?

Suggested response: Abraham and the people who come from him receive promises, and God's purpose also includes blessing for all families of the earth.

2. What does Genesis 15:6 show about Abraham's response?

Suggested response: He believes the LORD. God counts that faith for righteousness. His trust is a response to God's word, rather than a payment that earns the promise.

3. What does returning to God involve in Deuteronomy 30:1–6?

Suggested response: Turning toward Him, hearing His voice, and responding wholeheartedly. God promises compassion and works in the heart so His people will love Him.

4. How does Galatians 3 connect the promise to life in Christ?

Suggested response: The blessing of the nations is connected with the gospel. Those who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise, sharing a belonging that calls for mutual care.

Personal response and service for 7 minutes

Invite students to reflect privately: "Where am I being called to trust God's word? Is there something I need to turn from so that my conduct agrees with that trust?" They may write a response without sharing personal details.

Choose one practical action for the week: resume a neglected time of Scripture and prayer, keep a commitment honestly, make room for someone who feels excluded, or share time and resources with a person in need. Connect the action with becoming a blessing to others.

Explain: "This action does not earn God's favor or place Him under obligation to us. It is a response to the life and mercy we receive. We can act faithfully even while we wait for answers."

Check understanding

Complete: "God's promise to Abraham reaches beyond him because..." and "Returning to God involves..."

Connect God's initiative with faith and care for others.

Closing prayer for 3 minutes

"Father, thank You for Your faithfulness through the generations. Help us trust Your word and turn toward You with our whole hearts. Work within us so that our obedience grows from love. In Christ, teach us to welcome one another and use what we receive to bless others. Amen."

Preparation for next week

Read Exodus 25:8; 2 Chronicles 6:18–21; 7:12–16; John 1:14. Ask: How does God make His presence known, and what does it mean for Him to dwell among His people?

Sources: Genesis 12, 15, 17; Deuteronomy 30; Galatians 3. Companion reading: When God Heals the Land, Cornerstone 1131.

Scripture readings

Lesson 3 • Promise Covenant and Return

King James Version. These complete passages are included for class study, supporting reading, and preparation for the next lesson. No separate Bible or internet connection is needed to read them in this document.

Words to know: Kindred means relatives; hearken means listen attentively; seed can mean offspring. Thou and thee mean you; unto means to.

Class readings

Genesis 12:1-4 • KJV

1 Now the LORD had said unto 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:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Genesis 15:1-6 • KJV

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 • KJV

1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Galatians 3:8 • KJV

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Galatians 3:16 • KJV

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Galatians 3:26-29 • KJV

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Teacher preparation and further reading

Genesis 15:17-21 • KJV

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Genesis 17:1-8 • KJV

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Exodus 19:3-6 • KJV

3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 30:7-14 • KJV

7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.

9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:

10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Before the next lesson

Exodus 25:8 • KJV

8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

2 Chronicles 6:18-21 • KJV

18 But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

19 Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee:

20 That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place.

21 Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

2 Chronicles 7:12-16 • KJV

12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

15 Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

16 For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

John 1:14 • KJV

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Scripture text: King James Version, reproduced from the KJV collection at bible-api.com. Verse numbering and translation were checked against the source data. Teaching notes and word explanations are separate from the Bible text.