

Abraham Took Matters into his Own Hands (Genesis 15:1-6 and Genesis 16:1-5)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. The Promise of a Seed and Some Land (Genesis 12:1-3)
2. Into Egypt and Back Again (Genesis 13:1)
3. Getting Ahead of the Lord (Genesis 15:1-6 and Genesis 16:1-5)
4. Hagar Learned that God even saw Her (Genesis 16:13)
5. Birth of the Promised Son (Genesis 21:1-7)
6. Jehovahjireh and Jehovah (Genesis 22:13-14 and Exodus 3:13-14)

Question: What two promises were made to Abraham?

B. Abraham was promised a seed and land.

1. Genesis 12:7 says, “And ***the LORD appeared unto Abram***, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.”
 - a. Appeared (***ra'ah***) – to be visible, to perceive, to cause to see, or to have a vision of something or someone
 - b. Spoken in verse 4 (***dabar***) - to speak with one another
 - c. The Hebrew word for spoken can mean to lead. The Gesenius’ Lexicon (www.blueletterbible.org) says, “As a shepherd follows his flock, from the idea of leading there arises that of following.”
2. Lot and Abram go separate ways.
3. Genesis 13:15-16 says, “For all the land which thou seest, ***to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever***. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, [then] shall thy seed also be numbered.”

C. Abraham was impatient, but God was patient.

1. Genesis 15:3 says, “And Abram said, Behold, ***to me thou hast given no seed***: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.”
2. Genesis 15:5 says, “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***.”
3. Genesis 15:18 says, “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:”
4. Genesis 17:8 says, “***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.”

D. Did God communicate with Abram visibly and orally or invisibly and silently?

1. Rationale for visibly and orally.
 - a. The biblical account does not say that Abram could not hear or see God.

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- b. The biblical account sounds like two entities talking.
- c. Most people would assume that Abram could at least hear God talking to him.
2. Rationale for invisibly and silently.
 - a. Why would Abram be afraid of Pharaoh after having an audible conversation with the God of Creation?
 - b. Why would Abram have doubts about the promises and so often take matters into his own hands if he could see and hear God?
 - c. God stopped appearing and speaking audibly at some point in history after Adam and Eve. If not before Abram, then when?
 - d. **Abraham did not see God (Exodus 33:20).**
 - e. How could Abram be a hero of the Faith if he had a clear view of the Lord? We exhibit faith by acting on his voice speaking to our heart. ***Why should it have been any easier for Abram?***
 - f. Who is the greater hero of the Faith, the person that acts without having seen or heard the Lord or the person that acts after having seen and/or heard the Lord?
 - g. As we mature in the Lord, we all become heroes of the Faith.
3. Imagine Abram's faith to leave Ur and Haran for a God that he could not see or hear (Hebrews 11:8).
4. Imagine his faith to offer Isaac for a God that he could not see or hear.
5. Hebrews 11:19 says, "Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."
6. **When the outcome is assured, faith is not required.**
- E. How to be a person be a true hero of the Faith.
 1. Have Faith in the Lord that you cannot see or hear: Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 2. Go where He leads without question or hesitation even though you cannot see or hear Him: Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
 3. Blind obedience in all things: Hebrews 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."
 4. Be a person of genuine integrity: Hebrews 11:24 says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;"
 5. Be Christ-centered in all areas of your life even though you cannot hear or see Him: Of Moses, Hebrews 11:26 says, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

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Question: What ways did Abram or Abraham get ahead of God concerning his promised seed? Who was Hagar, what was her son's name, and what people have descended from her? How did Abraham treat Hagar? How did the Lord reveal Himself to Hagar? What does Jehovah Rohi mean, and why was that significant to Hagar?

- II. Abram was impatient about the promised seed on several occasions.
- A. With Pharaoh (Genesis 12:11-20), he lied about Sarai.
1. He could have been afraid of dying.
 2. He could have been afraid of dying for the promise of a seed.
 3. ***Why would he fear dying if he had just talked to God?***
- B. With Lot, he was stretching to consider him the promised seed.
1. Abram was at least seventy-five when he considered Lot the possible seed (Genesis 12:4).
 2. He let Lot have the better land, possibly because he wanted his promised seed to have the very best.
 3. He went after Lot when Sodom was attacked (Genesis 14:16).
 4. He asked three angels to spare Lot when Sodom and Gomorrah were about to be destroyed (Genesis 18:23-33).
 - a. This exchange revealed an interesting observation.
 - b. Abraham did not know God as Jehovah. He only knew Him as Adonay (referring to God reverently).
 - c. Exodus 3:13 says, "And Moses said unto God, Behold, [when] I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, ***What [is] his name?*** what shall I say unto them?"
 - d. Exodus 6:3 says, "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the name of] God Almighty, ***but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.***"
- C. With Eliezer, he was looking for a surrogate seed (Genesis 15:2).
1. Notice God's patience with Abram in Genesis 15:5 and 15:18.
 2. If God had been speaking audibly and appearing visibly, He might have been harsher with Abram.
- D. With Hagar, Abram was looking for a surrogate wife (Genesis 16:4)
1. Sarai wanted the promise to be fulfilled, too.
 2. Concerning Hagar
 - a. Abraham had an affair with Hagar. Under the circumstances, was that the correct thing to do (***situational ethics***)?
 - b. Genesis 16:6 shows that he was nonchalant about how Hagar was treated. ***Did he have the right attitude?***

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- c. Even though she was pregnant, Hagar felt compelled to leave because Sarai treated her very badly.
- d. An injustice might have been done towards Hagar, but the Lord aided her.
- e. An angel of the Lord told her to return to Sarai. He also promised that her son would also become a large family.
- f. Her experience revealed another name for God that tells us something about Him (Jehovah Rohi – God Who sees – Genesis 16:13).
- g. She returned to Sarai and gave birth to her son, who was named Ishmael.
- h. Ishmael is father to the Arabs that now battle Israel for possession of the Promised Land.
 - 1) Their claim to the Promised Land is not correct, but they are not without reason to believe what they believe.
 - 2) They view Ishmael as the promised seed.
3. Again, the Lord patiently repeated His promise to Abram at 99 years of age in Genesis 17:8.
4. ***My opinion is that the Lord would have been much harsher with Abram by this time if visible, audible communications have been occurring.***

Question: How did God reveal Himself to Abraham when Isaac was to be offered? In that episode, how did Isaac compare to Jesus on the cross? Who was Jehovahjireh, and when was that name given?

III. Abraham faced his biggest test in Genesis 22:1-14.

- A. He was told to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice to the Lord.
 1. Despite his possible anguish, Scriptures do not record any resistance on his part.
 2. By this time in his life, he had learned to trust the Lord completely.
 3. His spiritual journey started in Ur, got delayed in Haran, and continued into Canaan when he was 75 years old.
 4. In Genesis 22:1, he was at least 100 years old (Genesis 21:5).
- B. Isaac was a type of Christ in so much as he was willing to be offered.
 1. Genesis 22:9 says, "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood."
 2. There was no indication of a struggle.
- C. Genesis 22:14 gives God another descriptive name (Jevohahjireh – God will provide).

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Question: In Exodus 3:13-14, Moses asked God His name so that the Egyptians and Jews would know Him? What did that name mean? Why was that name new to the Jews since it frequently appears in the Book of Genesis? By what name did Abraham know God? See Exodus 6:3.

IV. God's proper name is Jehovah.

- A. That name means "self-created" One.
 1. God was not created. He is the Creator.
 2. Jesus infuriated the Pharisees in John 8:58, when He referred to Himself as I AM.
- B. Abraham did not know God as Jehovah. He only knew Him as Adonay (referring to God reverently).
 1. Exodus 3:13 says, "And Moses said unto God, Behold, [when] I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, ***What [is] his name?*** what shall I say unto them?"
 2. Exodus 6:3 says, "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the name of] God Almighty, ***but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.***"
- C. ***You just cannot make this stuff up. If the Bible were a phony Book, how could different authors come up with such an incredible tale over the course of more than 1500 years?***

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Next week's lesson: "Lot's Wife was Turned to a Pillar of Salt" (Genesis 19:15-38)

Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday:	Genesis 12:1-3
Tuesday:	Genesis 13:8-13
Wednesday:	Genesis 19:15-38
Thursday:	Matthew 5:1-13
Friday:	II Peter 2:4-9

Study questions:

1. What promises did God make to Abraham?
2. What did God require Abraham to do? Did Abraham fully comply?
3. Why did Abraham and Lot have to separate? What did Lot's choice say about him? What did Abraham's reaction to Lot's choice say about him?
4. Once the decision was made, how did Lot go wrong? When the angels came to Lot's house, how did Lot show even more how far he had fallen?
5. What happened to Lot's sons-in-law? What happened to his wife? Why did they come to such terrible ends? Was Lot in any way responsible?
6. How did Lot further disgrace himself with his daughters?
7. Do you think Lot was saved?