

BEFORE YOU TEACH

We can grow in our relationship with God as we study and share the scriptures with our students! In this quarter, we will learn about “God’s Covenants With People.” We will learn about what covenants are and how God made them with people throughout the Bible. Following God can be challenging because we have so many distractions. As you go through the lessons this quarter think about the question: who are you following? God is ready to lead us, will we choose to follow God?

We will begin by learning that God is our creator. Then we will learn about God’s relationships with Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Israel, Joshua, King David, King Josiah, Nehemiah, Esther, and Job. We will see that God keeps His promises even when we don’t keep ours. God is loyal and calls us to follow Him.

This quarter highlights the message: we must choose to follow God! The way we live must be based on God’s Word. Our love for Him and other people can change our world. Finally, we end the quarter remembering that following God doesn’t mean life will be perfect. It means that even when we feel sad, we turn to God. When we make bad choices, we turn back to God. When good things happen, we thank God. As you go through this quarter, I pray you will get to know God better just like the people in the Bible did!

Grace & Peace,

UMI Editorial Team

ANSWERS TO JBA®

The *Juniorway® Bible Activities* magazine offers activities to supplement and expand lessons in the *Juniorway® Student Magazine*. You will need to plan adequate time for each lesson activity.

LESSON 2:

O	R	E	S	P	E	C	T	D
B	F	T	T	R	R	Q	R	J
E	A	F	H	O	N	O	R	Y
D	B	L	E	E	L	Z	Z	Y
I	S	L	T	R	S	S	T	L
E	E	L	E	A	I	I	I	L
N	S	M	R	S	R	N	O	N
C	O	Q	N	B	S	Q	G	N
E	M	X	K	J	P	W	T	S

Message: Holy God

LESSON 3:

O	R	S	X	E	D	V	F	P	I	R	Q	F	K	L
A	W	Z	J	Q	C	E	E	V	O	L	O	J	P	C
U	C	L	A	L	A	I	N	B	I	K	D	O	Y	H
F	A	O	A	R	W	U	T	E	H	X	I	F	P	Y
J	O	W	V	D	W	S	O	S	I	S	J	A	E	W
B	S	R	H	M	P	Z	U	T	U	L	A	I	D	F
R	O	B	H	G	I	E	N	S	W	J	A	R	R	N
B	N	J	R	C	C	X	U	E	E	C	M	Q	B	H
O	N	H	D	U	B	J	C	N	H	J	E	V	F	Q
L	X	L	T	X	K	R	G	O	F	I	O	O	K	O
L	K	R	V	Y	N	Z	B	H	X	R	L	B	Y	U
Q	E	T	J	G	M	V	J	W	C	Q	X	H	U	W
S	W	R	U	I	Z	M	E	C	S	H	V	E	H	
D	O	G	A	G	G	L	Q	G	X	T	J	T	I	
K	O	S	P	I	P	H	C	N	J	H	K	W	Q	S

LESSON 7:

Answers: The Children of Israel worshiped other gods. This made the Lord angry, so he handed them over to their attackers. The Lord showed mercy and raised up judges, who rescued the people from their enemies.

LESSON 8:

Answers: True, False, False, True, False

LESSON 9:

Answers: 1. David; 2. Moses; 3. Peter; 4. Paul; 5. Samaritan Woman

LESSON 10:

T	T	M	K	U	W	T	Y	Y	T
R	X	C	B	V	D	R	J	Q	R
N	E	T	S	I	L	U	L	S	A
R	T	S	X	Z	P	M	H	Z	E
P	E	P	I	R	H	P	L	J	H
R	X	L	A	N	G	E	U	G	S
A	T	I	B	O	G	T	D	S	M
Y	S	D	D	I	M	Z	O	A	O
E	H	P	C	O	B	R	X	M	S
S	H	O	U	T	C	E	V	M	O

LESSON 11:

Answers: They laughed, scorned, and despised them.

LESSON 12:

Answers: HER MAJESTY QUEEN ESTHER

LESSON 12:

H	Y	X	P	L	O	T	G
A	R	E	N	I	W	V	N
M	O	R	D	E	C	A	I
A	Y	X	T	N	O	S	K
N	A	E	P	E	J	H	K
W	L	S	W	E	J	T	G
O	K	A	S	U	S	I	A
R	B	A	N	Q	U	E	T
C	H	R	E	H	T	S	E

LESSON 13:

Answers: One day Jesus came upon a man who was demon-possessed. He was so troubled that he wore no clothes and he lived among the tombs. He was so strong that he had broken the chains that had been placed on him. Jesus freed the man from the evil spirits and sent them into a herd of pigs. The herd then rushed down a hill into a lake and was drowned. When the people from the town came to see what happened, they found the man dressed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus. But instead of praising God for the miracle, they asked Jesus to leave.

SPECIAL STUDENT ACTIVITY ANSWERS

Before the quarter begins, carefully examine the following activities in the student magazine. Be prepared to clarify instructions for these activities and check answers for accuracy. Plan to let your students use the activity pages in class when you have time or as special outside assignments.

WHUZZUP?

1. Psalm 37:4
Promise: To give us the desires of our hearts
Condition: Delight in Him
2. Matthew 6:25–33
Promise: Take care of all of our needs (e.g., food and clothing)
Condition: Not worry; seek Him first and His righteousness
3. John 3:16
Promise: Eternal life
Condition: Believe in God's Son
4. 1 John 1:9
Promise: Forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness
Condition: Confess our sins

HIGH FIVE

Answers will vary. Allow volunteers to share their answers.

JUNIORWAY TRAILS

1. *Answers will vary.*
2. In every situation no matter what

BIBLE DISCOVERY

Front page answers:

1. Bible Reference: Genesis 9:11, 13
Person(s): Noah
Covenant Promise: God would not destroy the earth with the waters of a flood again.
2. Bible Reference: Genesis 17:4, 7, 9–10
Person(s): Abraham
Covenant Promise: Abraham would be the father of many nations and have many descendants (seed).
3. Bible Reference: Exodus 19:5, 20:1–24
Person(s): Moses and the people of Israel

Covenant Promise: Remain loyal to God and be God's people (His treasure)

4. Bible Reference: 2 Samuel 7:16–17

Person(s): King David

Covenant Promise: David's kingdom (reign), house, and throne would never end.

Back page answers:

1. Bible Reference: Psalm 103:12
Person: You
Covenant Promise: Removed your transgressions (sins) from you as far as the east is from the west
2. Bible Reference: John 14:27
Person: You
Covenant Promise: Peace
3. Bible Reference: Philippians 4:19
Person: You
Covenant Promise: Supply all your needs
4. Bible Reference: 1 John 2:25
Person: You
Covenant Promise: Eternal life

QUARTER IN REVIEW

True Or False?

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. T

Short Answer

1. *Answers will vary.*
2. God gives us His Word, God encourages us.

Learning About God

Answers will vary.

Keeping It In Mind

Answers will vary.

The Entire Bible in One Year

Quarter At-A-Glance – September 2023

September 3, 2023: Week 1 Genesis **Blessing for All Nations** **Genesis 12:1–9**

The Lord instructs Abram to take his family to another country and promises to make him a great name and nation. Abram obeyed the Lord and went toward the Land of Canaan.

September 10, 2023: Week 2 Exodus **Obeying God's Law** **Exodus 20:18–26**

Without obedience to the law, people live in chaos, hurting themselves, others, and their environment. God delivered the commandments to the Israelites while showing divine and holy power that tested them to convince them to obey the laws of the covenant.

September 17, 2023: Week 3 Leviticus **Living as God's Just People** **Leviticus 19:9–18, 33–37**

This chapter begins with a call to reflect on the nature of God: “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (v. 2, NKJV).

September 24, 2023: Week 4 Numbers **People Grumble** **Numbers 11:1–6, 10–15**

During times of trouble, what happens when we forget our blessings? When God brought the people out of slavery in Egypt and provided for them in the desert, Moses and the people complained repeatedly, loudly, and often about their hardships. They had forgotten what God had done for them.

October 1, 2023: Week 5 Deuteronomy **The Heart of the Law** **Deuteronomy 10:12–22; 16:18–20**

The principle underlying justice in this passage does not originate in humankind, but in the nature of God. Loving God involves more than a sentimental response; it means serving God with one's heart and soul.

October 8, 2023: Week 6 Joshua **God Is Victorious** **Joshua 6:2–3, 4b, 12–20b**

At God's command, Joshua and the children of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days. On the final day as Israel conquered the city, God miraculously caused the walls to collapse.

October 15, 2023: Week 7 Judges - Ruth **Listen to God's Judges** **Judges 2:11–19**

This passage is an introduction to the book of Judges, which explains Israel's recurring cycles of national apostasy.

October 22, 2023: Week 8 1-2 Samuel **God's Covenant with David** **2 Samuel 7:1–13**

This lesson is based on the story of David's desire to build a permanent structure for the Ark of God, a house for the Lord. Instead, God promises to establish David's dynasty including a descendant who would build the temple and establish his kingdom forever.

October 29, 2023: Week 9 1-2 Kings

Josiah Brings Reform

2 Kings 22:8-10; 23:1-3, 21-23

During the repair of the temple, the Book of the Covenant was found and brought to King Josiah. Upon reading it and realizing God's Word was not being followed, Josiah called the people together, read the Book of the Covenant to them, and led them in a renewal of the covenant, pledging to follow the Lord and keep His commands.

November 5, 2023: Week 10 1-2 Chronicles

The Ark Comes to Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 15:1-3, 14-16, 25-28

King David was seeking to deliver the Ark of the Covenant to a temporary tent where it would be housed. The ark itself is a symbol of the importance of worship in the lives of God's people.

November 12, 2023: Week 11 Ezra - Nehemiah

Nehemiah: The Captive Cupbearer Rebuilds a Nation

Nehemiah 2:11-20

People are often contemplative before they make major decisions. How does one or should one react after careful consideration of a major decision? Nehemiah set out to rebuild the wall after praying and surveying the ruins.

November 19, 2023: Week 12 Esther

A Time for Courage

Esther 3:2-3, 5-6a; 4:7-16

Haman was infuriated when Mordecai refused to bow down to him. In retaliation, he ordered not only that Mordecai be killed, but all the Jews of the kingdom. Mordecai gave this message to Esther, the queen, who was his cousin/niece. Mordecai told Esther to plead the cause of the Jewish people before the king.

November 26, 2023: Week 13 Job

When Tragedy Occurs

Job 1:14-15, 18-19, 22; 3:1-3, 11

These Scripture passages deal with the age-old question, "Why do Christians or good people suffer?" It acknowledges the fact that even God said that Job was "perfect, upright, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). However, these facts did not keep Job from being tried in the crucible of suffering.

GOD CAN BE TRUSTED

WEEKLY THEME:

A BLESSING FOR ALL NATIONS

BASED ON:

Genesis 12:1–9

KEEP IN MIND:

Genesis 12:2

FROM YOUR BIBLE:

The Scripture text is in the student lesson under “Learning From God.”

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

During this lesson, Juniors will learn the story of God’s call and promise to Abram, reflect on the joy Abram’s and Sarai’s faith gave them from obeying the Lord, and decide what they are willing to sacrifice to claim the promises of God.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

1. Suggested Materials—Bibles, student magazines, paper, and pencils

2. Lesson Background—For background information, read Genesis 12:1–9. Be sure to read the student lesson. Also, see “Bible Study Guide 1” in the white pages of this book, as well as in *Precepts For Living*®, UMI’s Annual Sunday School Lesson Commentary.

God commanded Abram and Sarai to leave their home and their extended family in the sophisticated city of Ur, and embark on a journey to a new land. Abram was 75 years old at this time, which some may consider too old to start life all over again. But that’s just what God told him to do, and Abram obeyed. Abram demonstrated his faith in God by obedience to Him. In turn, God kept all His promises to Abram. Believing that God will keep all His promises to us sometimes involves a great leap of faith. Such faith is demonstrated through obedience.

Juniors have their lives ahead of them and do not know what God has in store for them. But they can begin to learn the promises contained in the Bible and be encouraged to have faith in those promises. Like Abram, they, too, can demonstrate their faith by obeying all that God commands.

OPEN THE LESSON
Get Started Activity

Review last week’s “Doing My Part” activity. Then, ask volunteers to talk about a time they have done something difficult because they were promised a reward. Looking back, do they feel the deed was worth the reward? Why or why not?

What’s It All About?

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Student Story: God Can Be Trusted

“I just want to go home!” Kim cried.

“We are home, Kim,” Mom said. “Seattle is our new home.”

“I don’t like it here—I hate it here! I don’t know anyone. I don’t want to go to a new school. I don’t want to play on a new volleyball team—I don’t even know if I’ll make this team. I still don’t get why we had to move so far away from our family and friends. We moved all the way across the United States!”

Mom hugged Kim. “We talked about this before moving, honey. My company offered me a new position here in Seattle, and I took it.”

“Why? How do you know you made the right decision? What if you made a mistake?”

“I don’t believe I made a mistake, Kim. I prayed to God and asked for guidance. I believe God has blessed me with this new opportunity, which will allow me to better provide for us. I trust God, and I encourage you to trust God, too.”

What do you think? Should Kim trust God and believe that something good will come from her move to Seattle? Why or why not? Why is Kim having a hard time adjusting to the move? Would

you feel the same way as Kim? Why or why not? Do you think that Kim needs to have faith? Can God reward your faith? Explain.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Learning From God

Teaching time about 10–15 minutes

After reading the passage aloud, talk about Abram's decision. What sacrifices did Abram have to make? Do Juniors think it was easy for Abram to obey God? Why or why not? Do Juniors think they would have done the same? Why or why not? Based on this passage, have volunteers explain how they should respond if God gives them a task.

What I Have Learned

Teaching time about 5–8 minutes

Look again at Genesis 12:2–3 and write down the seven blessings that God promised to Abram.

1. God promised to make Abram into a great nation.
2. God promised to bless Abram.
3. God promised to make Abram's name great.
4. God promised that Abram would be a blessing.
5. God promised to bless those who bless Abram.
6. God promised to curse whoever cursed Abram.
7. God promised to bless all people on earth through Abram.

Write down how God has blessed you through Abram: **Answers will vary slightly.** Allow volunteers to read their answers.

Juniorway® Bible Activities

For additional material, see the activity for this lesson in the *JBA® (Juniorway® Bible Activities)* book.

Keep In Mind

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

The “Keep In Mind” verse lists four of the seven blessings from God to Abram. Divide the class into five groups. Have each of the first four groups memorize one of the blessings. Have the last group memorize the reference. Consider having the groups add a step or hand-clap routine to aid in memorization. Have the groups perform their sections, one after the other, in rapid succession.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Choosing What's Best

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Juniors are asked to read Mark 6:1, 1 John 1:9, and Acts 9:39 and decide which verse contains a promise from God. The answer is **1 John 1:9**.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Doing My Part

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Juniors are asked to decide what they are willing to sacrifice to claim the promises of God. If time permits, talk about some things they could sacrifice.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slightly aged or off-white appearance.

Genesis

A BLESSING FOR ALL NATIONS

Focal Verses • GENESIS 12:1–9

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: ANALYZE the story of God’s call and promise to Abram; EMBRACE the joy that Abram and Sarai’s faith gave to them from obeying the Lord; and DECIDE what we are willing to sacrifice to claim the promises of God.

In Focus

Warren and his wife, Deloris, have been married for over 25 years and live a very comfortable life. Warren is a respected corporate executive and community leader, and Deloris is a College Professor. Both are active and faithful members of their church and within their circle of friends. Lately, they both had been thinking about doing more for God, even in distant lands. One day during Warren’s morning devotion, he felt in his spirit that it was time to leave. When he felt it again as he was shaving, he immediately stopped what he was doing and inquired of the Lord. He knew in his spirit that it was time to move on to a new workplace assignment, which might include moving to another country to make a greater impact for God on the world. At work that morning, he learned that the company was in fact reorganizing. They were expanding operations to compete globally, and he was tapped to run overseas operations.

As we will see with Warren and Deloris, and Abram and Sarai in today’s lesson, a decision to follow God’s command continues to reap a reward for those who by faith in Jesus Christ become His seed.



Keep in Mind

“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” (Genesis 12:2, KJV).

Focal Verses

KJV **Genesis 12:1** 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.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had

gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 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.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

The People, Places, and Times

Abram. The significance of God's call for a nation through Abram was that up to this point, there was no distinction between people and races in the manner that we think of today. After the Flood, the people were dispersed at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). The Bible depicts a detailed review of Shem's descendants—Noah's eldest son. It is out of Shem's lineage, through Abram, that God would call out a people unto Himself to be witnesses in the earth of His greatness. They would receive the blessing for serving the one true and living God in the midst of universal idolatry. Ultimately, Abram's seed through 42 generations would bring forth the Messiah who would reconcile the world back to the Father (Matthew 1:1–17). Abram exemplifies the faith necessary to obtain righteousness and access to the promises of God through Jesus Christ.

The Land of Canaan. The Hebrew word for "Canaan" (*Kena'an*, ken-AH-an) means

low region or lowland. Its name denotes that the country resides west of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, between those waters on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Named after Noah's fourth son Ham, the land was given by God to Abram's posterity, the Children of Israel, as promised. In modern geography, Canaan is now Palestine.

Background

In the preceding chapter (Genesis 11:10–32), we learn of Abram's lineage as a descendant of Noah's son Shem. In Genesis 9:26, Noah prophesied over Shem, after he and his brother Japheth covered his nakedness, declaring that he would be blessed and that Canaan would be his servant. Genesis 11 ends with Abram's father, Terah, leading his family's migration from his native land Ur of the Chaldees to make their way to the land of Canaan, but instead, the group settles in Haran (Genesis 11:31). It is noted in verse 32, however, that Terah remained in

Haran until his death. Geographically, scholars maintain that Haran was perched between Ur and Canaan, so they were in the middle of their intended destination. Terah's name was believed to mean "delay," and as referenced in a review of Israel's history (Joshua 24:2), he was an idol worshiper. We will see why Abram and Sarai's faith and obedience were pivotal to the blessing for all nations as God separates him from his people.

At-A-Glance

1. God's Call for a Blessed Nation (Genesis 12:1–3)
2. Abram's Response to God's Call (vv. 4–6)
3. God's Promise of Generational Blessings (v. 7)
4. Abram's Obedience in Answering God's Call (vv. 8–9)

In Depth

1. God's Call for a Blessed Nation (Genesis 12:1–3)

Abram was the youngest son of Terah. He was a descendant of Noah's son Shem. According to Stephen's account in Acts 7:2–4, the God of glory appeared to Abram while he was in Mesopotamia, which was before he settled in Haran. Therefore, when Abram heard God's call in Genesis 12:1, this was his second encounter with the Lord Jehovah, and it's believed to be not long after his father's death. Abram was told to leave his country and his family and uproot his home to go to a place the Lord would soon reveal. The Scripture does not indicate that there was a discussion after this command was given, but that Abram moved at God's word. Abram was surrounded by people, including his own family, who were polytheistic (worshiped multiple gods).

For him to hear the voice of the true and living God was monumental. Because of his obedience, Abram is forever etched as "the father of faith." With this second encounter, however, God made Abram a promise to bless him and make him a great nation, to make his name great and for him to be a blessing (v. 2). This promise from God was astounding due to Abram's age (v. 4), and as first noted in Genesis 11:30, his wife Sarai was barren. God gave Abram further motivation to adhere to His command with the pronouncement of future blessings. For leaving his father's house, Abram would receive a father's blessing—a namesake. God told Abram His sovereign promise to fulfill His word to make a great nation from him and to make his name great. Abram went from not having any children and with no hope of ever being a father to having the promise of an entire nation coming from his loins.

In Genesis 12:3, God established His relationship and the power of this connection by stating that He would bless those who blessed Abram and curse those who cursed him. God's presence is marked in the lives of those chosen by Him. Verse 3 ends with the most important component of this promise: God commits to blessing all the families of the earth through Abram. Abram's seed birthed three world religions; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Ishmael) all lay claim to him as father. However, the ending of this verse points to the coming Christ who would bring salvation and restoration to the world. Abram's seed is the divinely appointed channel through which blessing would come to all humankind by faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:6–7, 14).

2. Abram's Response to God's Call (vv. 4–6)

Abram followed God's spoken command and departed from his familiar surroundings to a place unknown. Abram, after having departed once with his kindred from his native land of Ur, was once again a nomad at the age of 75,

leaving Haran. He took with him his wife, all their possessions, his nephew Lot, and his servants. We can imagine how very unsettling it must have been for Abram to be uprooted again and to move everything he owned to answer God's call. However, in spite of the circumstances, Abram walked in obedience and trusted God based on what God had revealed to him. He went forward and began the journey. His father, Terah, stopped short his migration to Canaan (see Genesis 11:31, NIV). When God declares a call on your life, not everyone is privy to seeing the revelation of God's plan. Therefore, even close relatives may need to be left behind.

In Genesis 12:6, Abram arrives in Canaan and the land is already occupied by the Canaanites. He is yet again a stranger in a strange land. He was put in an uncomfortable position by coming into a land that was promised to him but was already inhabited, which could have been a reason to give up. But Abram continued to follow God and remain confident he heard God correctly. Oftentimes, when God gives us a directive, it may not come with full disclosure of the details—like what we have to go through to get to the promise. Just like Jesus, Abram teaches us to keep moving forward by focusing on God's promise (Hebrews 12:2).

3. God's Promise of Generational Blessings (v. 7)

In this instance, rather than just speaking to Abram, God appeared in the form of a theophany—God appeared in human form. Some scholars believe this appearance was Christ in His pre-incarnate state. He showed Abram once again the land He was going to bless Abram with and reinstated His promise to give him seed or offspring. Abram yet again heard a word from the Lord declaring that he would not only receive this land that is already occupied but that his children would live in it. In response to God's appearance, Abram built an altar unto the Lord. The proper

response to God's presence and confirmation of His promise is worship. Abram had God's continued assurance that he would receive that which God had spoken, and by making a personal appearance, it further sealed the guarantee.

4. Abram's Obedience in Answering God's Call (vv. 8–9)

Abram continued to move forward at God's command and thus declared his own allegiance to serve God alone. In spite of the culture around him, which had a god for everything, Abram is the father of a monotheistic religion that is based on a relationship with the true and living God. Abram pitched his tent, and wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar unto the Lord. He remained in constant contact with Him through worship and prayer as he called on the name of the Lord. Abram lived a disciplined life of worship and walked in obedience by listening for the voice of the Lord God. Abram's faithful response to God's promise to make him a great nation required a close relationship and strict adherence to God's instructions. Abram would have been shortsighted if he thought only of the personal impact of this promise, but because the call was greater than he could ever imagine, he was willing to make the sacrifice with his wife by his side.

Search the Scriptures

1. What was God's instruction to Abram (Genesis 12:1)?
2. What was God's promise to Abram (vv. 2–3)?
3. What was Abram's response to God's call (vv. 4–5)?

Discuss the Meaning

How would you respond if God told you to uproot your life and leave behind all you know to follow Him with only a promise of what's to come?

Liberating Lesson

Today, we are reaping the benefits of the blood, sweat, and tears of our heroes and heroines of the Civil Rights Movement, as well as the ancestors before them who sacrificed so that we might have the freedom to be whatever God called us to be. Like Abram, Dr. Martin Luther King did not live to see the fullness of this vision of freedom, but he moved at God's Word and did as he was instructed, walking in love. He trusted God and sacrificed his own personal comfort and gain by believing that God would do what He said. We can continue to honor Dr. King's legacy by showing our willingness to submit to God's plan no matter where it takes us as we serve others and strive to move toward lives of freedom.

Application for Activation

As you reflect on today's lesson, what has God promised in your life that will bless you and others now as well as in generations to come? What are you willing to risk to follow through with God's plan and bring Him glory, even at the risk of your own comfort? Pray and assess your own ambitions, goals, and interests to see if they line up with God's Word. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you about anything that needs adjustment.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

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Say It Correctly

Canaan. **KAY**-nuhn.
Haran. **HAY**-ran, -ruhn.
Moreh. **MOH**-ray.
Sichem. **SHEE**-kem.

Daily Bible Readings

DAY 1

Genesis 1–3

DAY 2

Genesis 4–7

DAY 3

Genesis 8–11

DAY 4

Genesis 12–15

DAY 5

Genesis 16–18

DAY 6

Genesis 19–21

DAY 7

Genesis 22–24

Notes

COMMANDMENTS FOR SURVIVAL

WEEKLY THEME:

OBEYING GOD'S LAW

BASED ON:

Exodus 20:18–26

KEEP IN MIND:

Exodus 20:24

FROM YOUR BIBLE:

The Scripture text is in the student lesson under “Learning From God.”

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

During this lesson, Juniors will agree that God tested the Israelites in order to convince them to obey the divine laws; choose to obey because they desire to honor and respect God; and demonstrate a way to fulfill the fifth commandment by honoring their parents.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

1. Suggested Materials—Bibles, student magazines, pens or pencils, sheets with Memory Verse sections and your selected promises of God

2. Lesson Background—For background information, read Exodus 20. Be sure to read the student lesson. Also see Bible Study Guide 2 in the white pages of this book, as well as in the UMI Annual Commentary, *Precepts For Living*®.

The events of this passage take place in the third month after God had led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. For nearly three months, two million men, women, and children had been slowly moving across formidable deserts. All the miraculous events that God had ordained in Egypt, including the night of the Passover and the parting of the Red Sea, were certainly still fresh in their minds.

In the past few months, they had seen God's presence in the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day. They had been miraculously fed by the manna and quail. God had provided water when none could be found. The Israelites were constantly aware of God's presence and power in their midst.

Now they are camped at the foot of Mount Sinai, where God would once again show His

mighty power and give the Law to His people through their leader Moses. Through the process, the people would learn more about God and what He expected of them.

OPEN THE LESSON

Get Started Activity

Review last week's “Doing My Part” activity.

Explain to the Juniors that in His Divinity, God is holy and all-powerful, and when God asks us to do or not do something, He is serious about our obedience. We should respond by submitting ourselves to Him and obeying Him. Ask the students to explain the seriousness of making a covenant with God and obeying Him in their own words.

What's It All About?

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Student Story: Commandments for Survival

Aiden and Mia were picked to go to the Survival Day outing as representatives of their school. They had never been in the woods before and wanted to learn all they could.

Ben, the leader of Survival Day, welcomed them and shared the Ten Survival Commandments that each of them needed to learn and obey. One of the commandments was to “respect nature and the God who made it.”

Aiden asked, “How do we do this?”

Ben replied, “These woods are filled with animals and plants that could be dangerous to you. So, don't pull up plants or chase the animals, for both their and your protection and safety. As you look at God's creations, thank Him for making them.”

Mia asked, “Can we get copies of the Ten Survival Commandments to share with our schools?”

“Yes,” Ben said. “They are for you to memorize, obey, and share.”

“Great!” chimed Mia. “I want my classmates to be safe in the woods, too.”

“Very good,” replied Ben. “Now let’s go over all of the Ten Survival Commandments and repeat them after me.” Ben read each commandment and explained why they should obey them.

He then led them into the woods and taught them various survival tips, showing them how each commandment would help them in different situations.

At the end of the day, Aiden asked Ben if these Survival Commandments were like the Ten Commandments God gave Moses.

“In a way,” Ben explained. “The Ten Commandments were to teach the people how to live the life God had for them. The Survival Commandments are to teach you how to behave in the woods. But, God’s commandments also taught the people to honor and respect God and each other. In a similar way, the Survival Commandments teach you to respect nature as God’s creation and honor Him for making things for us to enjoy.”

How can obeying God’s commandments teach you to honor and respect God and others? Will they be hard for you to follow?

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Learning From God

Teaching time about 10–15 minutes

Our text teaches us the necessity of obeying God and using His Word and commandments to govern our lives. God showed Himself strong and mighty to the Israelites so that they knew the One they served was very serious about how He wanted them to live and interact with Him.

What I Have Learned

Teaching time about 5–8 minutes

Juniors are asked to complete the crossword puzzle. **Answers: Down: 1. Mountain, 2. Test, 4. Bless, 5. God, 6. Laws; Across: 3. Obey, 7. Covenant**

Juniorway® Bible Activities

For additional material, see the activity for this lesson in the *JBA® (Juniorway® Bible Activities)* book.

Keep In Mind

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Separate the Memory Verse into four or five sections. Write each section on a separate piece of paper. On the back of each paper, write a biblical promise. For example, “In every place (in all places, KJV)” is typed or written on one side and “I will bless you in the city and in the field” on the other side.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Choosing What’s Best

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Juniors are challenged to obey God’s commandments, in particular, the commandment to remember God. They are asked to think of something to help them remember God and write their response. They are also instructed to consider what they can do to ensure God is most important in their lives and write their response.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Doing My Part

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Students are to develop and execute a plan to live out the fifth commandment to honor their parents and guardians. Encourage them to think of ways they can honor their parents and show them how much they love and appreciate them. Pray for your students that this will be a fun and enriching experience for their families.

NOTES

Exodus

OBEYING GOD'S LAW Focal Verses • EXODUS 20:18-26

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will: EXPLORE the divine manifestations and warnings that accompanied the giving of the Ten Commandments; ASPIRE to live in more perfect obedience to God's laws; and SHARE one way to show God that we are serious about obeying His laws.

In Focus

Arron and Regina were married right out of school and rented a walk-up apartment near Regina's parents' brownstone. After several years of paying their bills on time, raising their credit score, and saving what they could, they decided it was time to buy their first home. They found an inexpensive house in the best school district in the city and set off to see the loan officer at the only African American bank in town.

"Banks are imposing, and bankers intimidate me," Regina told Aaron the morning of their appointment. "Don't worry," Aaron replied, "we are also meeting my uncle, who invests in real estate, and he can help us understand the documents and explain our rights and obligations. As for the bank building, those marble columns, high ceilings, and ornate wooden desks are all meant to assure us that the bank is solid, stable, and invested in our community." Excited, yet a bit apprehensive, Regina held Aaron's hand tightly as they walked through the massive brass and glass doors of the local bank.

On their way back to their apartment, Regina commented, "I feel so much better. The people at the bank were welcoming and willing to trust us with this loan. Let's pray together, right now, that God will help us to honor our part. Let's ask God to enable us to show the bank that their trust in us is well placed."

Describe a time when someone didn't do their part to honor an agreement. In this lesson, we will find out how the Israelites were called to honor their covenant agreement with God.



Keep in Mind

"In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee"
(from Exodus 20:24, KJV).

Focal Verses

KJV **Exodus 20:18** And all the people saw the thundering, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.

23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and they peace offering, they sheep, and thine oxen: In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon

The People, Places, and Times

Moses. Moses plays a prominent role in the events of this passage. Born a Hebrew slave, Moses was later raised in the home of the Pharaoh, God chose Moses to return to Egypt and lead the Hebrew people out of slavery. In the process, God shaped and molded Moses into His faithful servant who became an outstanding leader of His people.

Mount Sinai. The events of this passage take place at Mount Sinai, often referred to as “the mountain of God.” It is believed by some to be located about fifty miles north of the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, in an area now controlled by Egypt. On this mountain, Moses met God in the burning bush, and here God called Moses to go to Egypt and lead His people out of slavery (Exodus 3). Many years later, the prophet Elijah would return to this mountain (which is also called Horeb) and hear from God in the gentle whisper of a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:8–13).

How would you evaluate Moses’ relationship with God? Did God direct Moses’ life in ways that helped Moses mature and become the leader that He needed?

Background

The events of this Scripture take place in the third month after God had led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. For nearly three months, a vast multitude of men, women, and children had been slowly moving across formidable deserts. All the miraculous events that God had ordained in Egypt, including the night of the Passover and the parting of the Red Sea, were certainly still fresh in their minds. In the past few months, they had seen the presence of God in the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day. They had been miraculously fed by the manna and quail. God had provided water when none was to be found. The Israelites were constantly aware of the presence and power of God in their midst. Now they were camped at the foot

of Mount Sinai, where God would once again show His mighty power and give the Law to His people through their leader Moses. Through the process, the people would learn more about God and what He expected of them.

How would you evaluate the importance of the Ten Commandments in the lives of the Israelites, as well as all modern-day believers?

At-A-Glance

1. God Makes His Presence Known (Exodus 20:18)
2. The People Show Reverent Fear (vv. 19–21)
3. God Encourages Proper Worship (vv. 22–26)

In Depth

1. God Makes His Presence Known (Exodus 20:18)

For three months, God had made His presence known through miraculous physical phenomena such as the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. He led them to stop at Mount Sinai, where He would give His people the Law.

The Israelites' stopping at Mount Sinai mirrors what happens in a believer's life. We worship the Lord and come to know who He is before we are given commands to obey. The Law outlined how they were expected to live as His people in relationship with Him and in relationship with each other. They were expected to fulfill these covenant requirements. This is in line with the commands that Jesus put forth as the first and second greatest commandments for us—to love God and to love people.

It was important for God to make sure His people knew that it was He, Almighty God, the God of their fathers, who was giving the Law.

So He used spectacular divine manifestations to cause them to respond in fear and reverence to keep their covenant commitment. He used smoke, thunder, the sound of heavenly trumpets, and lightning. God's manifestation of His presence had the desired effect. The presence of God and the recognized authorship of His commands also cause us to reverence God, receive His words, and obey them.

What has caused you to fear and revere God lately?

2. The People Show Reverent Fear (vv. 19–21)

The people withdrew in fear, knowing they were truly in the presence of Almighty God. Yet Moses told them, "Fear not, for God is come to prove you" (v. 20). What Moses was telling them was that they should not withdraw from God in terror; God intended to use this experience to instill in them a reverent awe of Him. It was as if God were saying, "I want you to know I really mean business here!" Thus, "fear of the LORD" would prompt His people to want to keep the Law, and never sin. God also used the divine manifestations to underscore the importance of His commands that He would be their only God, and that they were never to make any idols. After all they had seen, heard, and experienced, it is hard to imagine that any of the Israelites would ever consider following any other god! They had heard His voice and seen His power, yet they had not seen Him in any physical shape or form. But God knows the fragility of human nature, and no matter how many times they experienced God's miracles and presence, they turned to idols. It is the same way with us. We often forget who God is and turn to less-than-satisfactory idols.

What motivates you to modify your behavior and respond to God in obedience?

3. God Encourages Worship (vv. 22–26)

Finally, God gave instructions on the building of altars to be used in worship. While this command seems unusual to us, it was fitting for the culture of the time. From the beginning, God has always desired worship, and at that time worship included sacrifices and burnt offerings. What God wanted to make clear with the commands of verses 24–26 was that the altars were to be temporary and portable. They were not yet in the Promised Land, and their focus was to be on the object of their worship rather than the place of their sacrifice. The stones were to be unhewn, perhaps so that no one would be tempted to carve the stones into some image or idol. And the altars were not to have steps leading up to them so their sacrifices would be made in humility and modesty. Again, the focus was then, and is now, on the object of our worship, not on the means, place, or structure.

How and where can we create opportunities to worship God in addition to Saturday and Sunday worship services?

Search the Scriptures

1. Moses says that God appeared in the way He did so the people would not sin (Exodus 20:20). How does God's presence keep us from sinning?

2. Why did God want them to make an altar of unhewn stone (v. 25)?

Discuss the Meaning

In this Scripture, we learn a lot about God, His power, and His desire for us to live in obedience and fellowship with Him. What can we do to achieve and keep a proper attitude of awe, reverence, fear, and love for Him?

Liberating Lesson

Places such as banks, courtrooms, and churches are intentionally built to inspire awe,

respect, and even proper fear in us. And in those places, we often enter into agreements where we make certain promises and receive certain privileges. The awe, respect, and fear generated by our surroundings, as well as our faith in God, should prompt us to live up to the promises we have made, and joyfully comply with agreements into which we have entered. In this way, we will enjoy more blessings and peace in our relationship with God and with our neighbors.

Some years ago, Tavis Smiley helped to develop a book titled *The Covenant with Black America*. The book outlines strategies for the betterment of the African American community. This book addresses the problem on a structural level, but there also could be a solution to improving the African American community on a personal level. We need to tackle some of the weightier economic, educational, and health issues that plague our communities. At the same time, we also need to fear God and treat Him with reverence and respect. We need to live up to the agreements we have made in our churches, businesses, and relationships.

How can we prioritize our relationship with God and seek to improve our dealings with others?

Application for Activation

God's greatness and awesomeness compel us to honor our commitment to Him. Here are some ways we can remember to honor Him and what He has done in our lives:

- Go outdoors and look up at the sky to remind yourself of the greatness of God.
- Bring a special offering in thanksgiving to God.
- Spend time each morning reading God's Word and writing down a Bible verse on a card that you take with you.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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Say It Correctly

Hewn. **HEE**-yoon.

Altar. **AL**-ter.

Daily Bible Readings

DAY 8

Genesis 25–26

DAY 9

Genesis 27–29

DAY 10

Genesis 30–31

DAY 11

Genesis 32–34

DAY 12

Genesis 35–37

DAY 13

Genesis 38–40

DAY 14

Genesis 41–42

Notes
