

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

2ND GRADE

TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 23

Strangers and Pilgrims



Strangers and Pilgrims

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

These are the books of the Bible we will be memorizing. New books for this month are in bold. If a student can memorize all the books up to this month's books, you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that, as strangers and pilgrims in this world, we should do what is right, not what makes us feel good.

Key Verses

Genesis 12:1-9; Hebrews 11:8-16—Main Teaching Passages
Hebrews 11:25

Books to Memorize

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter, **1,2,&3 John, Jude, Revelation**

Hook

Ask the class how old they think the average person lives. Ask who the oldest person they know is. Do they know anyone over 100? Does 100 years sound like a long time to live? Then pick up the rope provided on your cart and stretch it as far as it will go. If this rope represents eternity, how much of the rope represents 100 years on earth? Less than the tiniest speck of the rope!

Living on earth for 80+ years may sound like a long time, but that's nothing compared to our lives in heaven. Today we will learn why that matters.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In Genesis 12, God called Abraham (who was at that time known as Abram) to leave his homeland and his family to go to a place God would tell him to go. God promised to bless Abram and his descendants, make them great, and bless the world through them. Abram was rich and had a comfortable life in his home of Ur, but he responded to God's command by taking his wife Sarai (Sarah) and nephew Lot and going to the land God was leading him to, the land of Canaan. When he got there, the Lord promised to give that land to his descendants. Abram built an altar to the Lord there and set up his tent in the city of Bethel in Canaan.

Thousands of years later, the writer of Hebrews reflected on the life of Abraham. In Hebrews 11:8-12, he mentions some of the great acts of faith in Abraham and Sarah's lives. By faith Abraham left his homeland to obey God, even though he didn't know where he was going. By faith Sarah had a child when she was very old. Then in verses 13-16, it explains why they did these great acts of faith. Abraham was able to leave Ur because he realized that he was a stranger and pilgrim on earth, which means this world was not his home. He knew that his true home was in heaven and that he would never find real happiness on this earth. If he was focusing on all that he was leaving behind and his comfort and happiness on this earth, Abraham would never have left Ur. But Abraham wasn't seeking temporary, earthly comfort, but an eternal, heavenly home.

LOOK

Abraham had many reasons not to leave his home in Ur. He was very rich and no doubt had a nice house. Going to Canaan meant leaving his house to live in tents the rest of his life. By leaving Ur, Abraham would also be leaving behind his whole family other than the few who went with him. If the most important thing to Abraham was happiness on this earth, he wouldn't have left his home. But Abraham recognized an important truth: he was a stranger and pilgrim in this world, and his true, final, eternal home was in heaven. Because of that, he obeyed God's command and went to the land of Canaan.

A stranger is someone who doesn't belong somewhere. A pilgrim is someone who is passing through somewhere on a journey. In Canaan, Abraham was both literally and figuratively a pilgrim. Though he would live 100 years after leaving his home, Abraham dwelt in a tent the whole time. Never once did he build a permanent house, because he was just passing through. This is also how he viewed his life. Earth was just his temporary home until he got to heaven.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

As believers, what was true for Abraham is true for us as well. This world may be all we've ever known, but it's not our permanent home. We learned earlier this year that when a Christian dies, they live in heaven forever. Our life on earth might seem long, but in reality our time here is incredibly short compared to the time we spend with Jesus Christ in heaven. Just like Abraham, as Christians we are strangers and pilgrims in this world.

Because we are strangers and pilgrims in this world, we have a choice to make. We can live for what makes us happy in this world and do what makes us feel good, even when we know it's wrong, or we can obey God and do what's right, even if it means giving something up here on earth. For example, it might feel good to be first all the time, to put down others so that we look cool, or to be selfish and always try to get what we want, even if someone else wants the same thing. But those things are not right, and will bring us no pleasure in heaven. Instead, we should think of others and try to show them the love of Christ. We might be giving things up in this life, but the Bible says it's better to suffer a little while to receive heavenly rewards than to enjoy sin for a short time (Hebrews 11:25).

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class what God asked Abraham to do. How did he respond? What did he give up by obeying God? Why did he do that? How can we make the same choice?

Pray: Thank the Lord for the promise of our eternal home in heaven. Ask Him to help us live as strangers and pilgrims in this world.

Parent Question: What does it mean that we are "strangers and pilgrims in this world"?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Genesis 12:1-9 by David Guzik

A. GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAM.

1. ([Gen 12:1-3](#)) God's previous covenant with Abram.

Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

a. **Now the Lord had said to Abram:** We know from [Acts 7:2-4](#) that this promise was made to Abram *before* he left Ur of the Chaldeans. Now that his father was dead and he was compelled to a more complete obedience, God repeated the promise.

i. Abram's partial obedience did not take God's promise away. Instead, it meant the promise was on "hold" until Abram was ready to do what the Lord said.

ii. Abram would certainly become a giant of faith, even being the father of the believing ([Galatians 3:7](#)); yet he did not start there. We see Abram as an example of *growing* in faith and obedience.

b. **To a land I that I will show you:** After stating He wanted Abram to leave his country and his relatives, God promised Abram a **land**. Specifically, God promised the land of greater Israel.

i. These are *God's* promises; notice how often God says **I will** in these verses. Genesis [chapter 11](#) is all about the plans of man. Genesis [chapter 12](#) is all about the plans of God.

c. **I will make you a great nation:** God promised to make a **nation** from Abram. He will have enough children and grandchildren and further descendants to populate a nation.

d. **And make your name great:** God promised to bless Abram and to **make** [his] **name great**. There is probably no more honored name in history than the name of Abram, who is honored by Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

e. **I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you:** God also promised He would **bless those who bless you** and to **curse him who curses you**. This remains true today and is a root reason for the decline and death of many empires.

i. "When the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others, and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome soon fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition against the Jews; Poland fell after the pogroms; Hitler's Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism; Britain lost her empire when she broke her faith with Israel." (Barnhouse)

ii. This is also one reason why the United States has been so blessed. The United States was one of the first modern nations to grant full citizenship and protection to Jewish people.

iii. This promise has also affected the church. The times when the church took upon itself the persecution of the Jewish people were dark times not only for the Jews, but also for the church.

f. **In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed:** Not only was Abram promised blessing, but God also promised to *make him* a blessing, even to the point where **all the families of the earth** would be blessed in Abram.

i. *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*([Galatians 3:8-9](#))

ii. *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation* ([Revelation 5:9](#)). The work of Jesus will touch every people group on the earth.

iii. Luther said the promise **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed** should be written "in golden letters and should be extolled in the languages of all people," for "who else ... has dispensed this blessing among all nations except the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ?" (Boice)

2. ([Gen 12:4](#)) Abram's departure from Haran.

So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

a. **And Lot went with him:** This was partial obedience by Abram. God commanded him to go out *from his kindred*, and he brought his nephew Lot.

b. **Lot went with him:** Lot would not be a blessing to Abram. He would be nothing but trouble and inconvenience.

3. ([Gen 12:5-6](#)) Abram's arrival in Canaan.

Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

4. ([Gen 12:7-9](#)) God appears to Abram in Canaan.

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

a. **Then the Lord appeared to Abram:** Once Abram was in the land, God reminded him of His promise. The land Abram saw belonged to Abram and his descendants.

b. **To your descendants I will give this land:** Abram never owned any of this land except his burial plot ([Genesis 23:14-20](#)). Yet God's promise was enough evidence to assure Abram that he did indeed own the whole country.

c. **And there he built an altar to the Lord:** Abram thought this was important to do. The altar was important to Abram because it was a place to meet with God, to offer sacrifice for sin, to show submission to God, and to

worship God.

i. Christians have an altar also ([Hebrews 13:10](#)). We meet with God at our own place where we remember the sacrifice Jesus made for sin ([Ephesians 5:2](#)), where we submit to God as living sacrifices ([Romans 12:1](#)), and where we offer the sacrifice of praise ([Hebrews 13:15](#)).

d. **He pitched his tent:** Even in the land God gave him, Abram never lived in a house – he lived in a tent. Tents are the home of those who are just passing through and do not put down permanent roots.

i. We too are to live like tent-dwellers, as pilgrims on this earth ([1 Peter 2:11](#)). We should live as people who have their permanent dwelling place in heaven, not on earth. Too many Christians want to build mansions on earth and think they would be happy with tents in heaven.

ii. A pilgrim is someone who leaves home and travels to a specific destination. A pilgrim isn't a drifter; a pilgrim has a goal. Abram's goal (and our goal) was God's heavenly city ([Hebrews 11:8-10, 14-16](#)).

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Hebrews 11:8-16 by David Guzik

C. Faith in the life of Abraham and the Patriarchs.

1. ([Hbr 11:8](#)) Abraham's obedience by faith.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

a. **By faith, Abraham obeyed:** Abraham did step out in faith, going to the place God promised him; but his faith was less than perfect. This is seen by comparing [Genesis 12:1-5](#) with [Acts 7:2-4](#), where it is evident that Abraham first went half way to where God called him, and only *eventually* obeyed completely. Yet thousands of years later, God did not “remember” the delayed obedience, only the faith.

2. ([Hbr 11:9-10](#)) Abraham's sojourning life of faith.

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

a. **By faith, he dwelt in the land of promise:** Abraham lived as a “sojourner” in the land God promised, never owning any of it except the plots that he and Sarah were buried on. **Dwelt** translates the ancient Greek word *paroikos*, describing a “resident alien” – one who lives somewhere, but doesn't have permanent status there.

i. A resident alien or a sojourner is evident. The way they talk, the way they dress, their mannerisms, their entertainment, their citizenship, and their friends, all speak of their native home. If someone is the same in all these areas as the “natives,” they are no longer sojourners – they are permanent residents. Christians shouldn't live as if they are permanent residents of planet earth.

b. **Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob:** Because they had no permanent home, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in **tents** instead of houses. They looked forward to a better city – **the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

3. ([Hbr 11:11-12](#)) Sarah's faith and its results.

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude; innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

a. **By faith Sarah:** Sarah's faith was not perfect. She first laughed in unbelief ([Genesis 18:9-15](#)) and then she learned to laugh in faith ([Genesis 21:6](#)).

b. **Because she judged Him faithful who had promised:** Faith comes down to judging that God is faithful and able to keep His promises. It was this faith that enabled Sarah to **receive strength to conceive seed.**

God gave the strength, but Sarah received it by faith.

c. **Were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude:** Because of the faith of Sarah and Abraham, thousands – millions – of descendants were born. Their faith had an impact on more lives than they ever dreamed of.

4. ([Hbr 11:13-16](#)) What the faith of Abraham and Sarah teaches us.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

a. **These all died in faith, not having received the promises:** The promise of the Messiah was made to Abraham and Sarah, and they believed the promise. Yet they **died** having never received it, only seeing it **in faith**.

i. They **saw the promises afar off**, willing to look at and consider the promise of God, even though the fulfillment seemed so far away.

ii. They **were assured of them**, carefully considering the promise, assured that the promise was valid because *God* made the promise.

iii. They **embraced them**, taking the promise and embracing it in faith. Abraham and Sarah probably thought many times each day about the son God promised to them and each time they **embraced** the promise. “*The saints ‘embraced’ the promises.* The Greek word signifies ‘salutes,’ as when we see a friend at a distance.” (Spurgeon)

iv. They **confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims:** Abraham and Sarah always took the promise with the understanding that this world was not their home. They knew God had a better and more enduring home for them in heaven.

v. If these examples of faith endured through difficulty and discouragement without **having received the promises**, then we who *have* received the promises have even more reason for endurance.

iv. **These all died in faith:**

- They did not need to seek faith on their deathbed. They **died in faith**.
- Though they did have faith, they did also die. We do not have faith to escape death, but to die **in faith**.
- They never went *beyond* faith and “grew beyond” simple dependence on God.
- They never went *below* faith or lost faith.

b. **They seek a homeland... they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country.** Living by faith is easier when we remember that this world is not our home. It is easier when we remember that on this side of eternity, not everything is settled and not every wrong is righted. That is why they **seek a homeland** and a **better... heavenly country**.

i. Faith is very difficult when we live as “practical atheists.” This describes someone who may have a theoretical belief in God, but the belief doesn’t *matter* in what they do from day to day. When we remember there is a spiritual reality – a heavenly home that is our real home – faith is much easier.

ii. The great theme of modern times is *naturalism*, the belief that only what can be found and measured in nature is “real.” Scientists and educators who trust in naturalism may be content to let us believe in God, just as long as we agree that God is a fairy tale – someone not *real*. But when we believe in the *reality* of God and of heaven and of His Word, it is completely unacceptable to those who live by naturalism.

iii. H.L. Mencken said faith is the “Illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible.” This would only be true if there is no God or if He does not matter. Since God *is* and since He *does* matter, faith is entirely logical.

c. **Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God:** For those courageous enough to believe in God, and to believe in Him as *real*, and heaven and eternal life as *real*, **God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.**

i. We often consider the idea that we should not be ashamed of God, but we must also consider that we may make God ashamed of us. When we do not regard God and heaven and eternity as real, there can be a sense in which God is **ashamed to be called our God.**