

IN THE BEGINNING GOD**An Everlasting Covenant****Genesis 15:1 —18:15**

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said,
"I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me
and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Genesis 17:1, 2*

Day 1: Read Genesis 15: 1–7.

1. What is Abram's big concern at the beginning of this chapter? (vv. 1–3) Why is this a problem? (Gen. 12:2, 7; 13:15)
2. Verse six says, "Abram believed the LORD". What amazing thing does he believe? (v. 5; Rom. 4:18–21).
3. Abram is declared to be "right" with God because of his faith. We are made "right" with God because of our faith. What amazing thing do we have to believe? (Rom. 4: 23–25)

Day 2: Read Genesis 15: 8–21.

4. What is Abram's other big concern? (vv. 7, 8; 18–21)
5. God reassures Abram by making a formal covenant with him, which is ratified by a ceremony.

What does Abram have to do? (vv. 9–10)

What appears and passes down the row, between the carcasses? (v. 17)

Who is this? (Ex. 13:21; 19:18)

6. In a modern court of law people make an oath by placing their hand on the Bible and swearing to "...tell the truth, the whole truth...." In Abram's culture people made an oath by cutting up animals and walking between them. What does this ceremony imply will happen to God if he doesn't keep His promise to Abram?

Day 3: Read Genesis 16:1–16.

7. How long has it been now since God made his promise to Abram? (v. 3) How old is Abram? (Gen. 12:4)
8. What is Sarai's problem? How does she take things into her own hands? (vv. 1–4)
9. Hagar is 'used' by Abram and 'abused' by Sarai. She runs away from her difficulties but there she meets the LORD and experiences his unexpected kindness. What does she learn about God?

Day 4: Read Genesis 17: 1–15.

10. How old is Abram now? (v. 1) How old is Ishmael? (v. 25)
11. Abraham's side of the covenant is to circumcise all the males in the community. If the foreskin of every male is not 'cut off,' what will happen to them? (v. 14)
What do you think that would mean? (Think about the two promises of the Covenant: seed and land.)
12. Isaiah 53 speaks of God's suffering servant. What will one day happen to this servant? (Isa. 53:8)
How is this fulfilled in Jesus, the promised seed? (Acts 3:13–15)
13. Circumcision was a constant physical reminder of what? (vv. 7, 11; Lev. 26:11–12)
14. Abraham's descendants fail to remain committed to their relationship to God. Throughout the Old Testament they broke the Covenant by worshipping idols and being evil and disobedient. What did they really need? (Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:25–27)
15. Jesus, the Son of God, is "torn apart" and "cut off." He is treated like a covenant breaker even though he isn't. So why does he die? (Isa. 53:5–6; I Pet. 2:22–24.)

Day 5: Read Genesis 17:15–27 and 18:1–15.

16. Put yourselves in Abraham's shoes, what is the huge surprise in 17:16? What has Abraham been assuming all this time? (vv. 18, 21) Why does he laugh? (v. 17)
17. God chooses Isaac instead of Ishmael to be the seed-bearer. How does Paul describe the difference between these two sons? (Gal. 4:22–26)
18. What is Sarah's reaction to what she overhears? (Gen. 18:11, 12, 15) What's the danger in persisting in unbelief? (Heb. 3:12–15) What should our constant prayer be? (Mk. 9:24)
19. What lesson is Sarah about to learn? (Gen. 18:14)
How does God prove this throughout history? (Jer. 32:17; Is. 50:2; Lk. 1:34–37; Acts 2:22–24)