

Aim of lesson

The aim is that the young people will learn from the example of Abraham and David that we can trust the promises of God, and appreciate the relevance to us of the promises.

Abraham and David received promises which formed the foundations of their faith, and which concern not just themselves, but their descendants and us. This study concentrates on the more immediate fulfilment of the promises as recorded in the Old Testament

Bible background

Genesis 12-47; Exodus 1,12,14; Deuteronomy 1; Joshua 1; 2 Samuel 7; I Kings 2,4,9; I Chronicles 29; 2 Chronicles 2; Ezekiel 21; Matthew 1

Preparation required

There are rather a lot of references to look up in this lesson so you will have to decide how to tackle it with your group. You may decide not to look up all the promises - just some to show that they are there. You might share the fulfilment references out and get the young people to think about how they fulfil the relevant promises, or you might ask them to say from memory when some of the promises were fulfilled. Whichever way you decide it will make a useful record if they do fill in the correct references.

Suggested outline of lesson

First, read through the passages identified in the table in the Students' notes, and make sure that the young people understand the points which are summarised there. Now look through the other passages listed at the start of their notes, and see how the promises were fulfilled in Old Testament times.

Some of the words that Abraham and David heard were relevant to their own days and some to their immediate descendants. By looking at the promises concerning Abraham's immediate descendants and seeing how they came to be fulfilled, we can look at the other promises and say with confidence they will come true.

The Promise	The Fulfilment
Genesis 12:1-3	
Blessed	Genesis 24:1
Great Nation	Exodus 1:6,7
Great Name	Genesis 14:17-20
Bless / Curse	Genesis 12:10-20; Genesis 20
All peoples	
Genesis 13:14-17	
Land - You	
Land - Offspring	Joshua 1:1-6; 21:43-45
Offspring like dust	1 Kings 4:20
Genesis 15:1-6	
Son - heir	Genesis 21:1-2
Offspring like stars	Deuteronomy 1:8-10
Genesis 15:13-21	
Descendants will be strangers	Genesis 46:5-7
Descendants will be slaves 400 years	Exodus 1:8-13, 12:40-41
Enslaving nation judged	Exodus 14:26-28
Descendants will have great possessions	Exodus 12:31-36
Abraham will die in peace and old age	Genesis 25:7-8
Land from the river of Egypt to Euphrates	1 Kings 4:21

The Promise

The Fulfilment

Genesis 17:4-8

Abraham / father of many nations
Abraham / father of Kings
Abraham and descendants / everlasting covenant
Abraham and descendants / land of Canaan everlasting possession

Genesis 25:1-4, 12-16
Matthew 1:1-16

Genesis 22:16-18

Descendants / stars and sand
Descendants / gate of enemies
Descendants / all nations blessed

Deuteronomy 1:8-10; 1 Kings 4:20
1 Kings 4:21-25

2 Samuel 7:8-16

David / Great name
Israel / Peace
David / house
Offspring / kingdom
Offspring / home for God
Offspring / everlasting throne
Father / Son relationship
Iniquity / stripes
David's home and kingdom and throne for ever

1 Chronicles 29:26-28
1 Kings 4:21-25
1 Kings 2:12
1 Kings 9:3-5
2 Chronicles 2:1-5
Ezekiel 21:25-27; Matthew 1:1-16

Perhaps the clearest way to show the fulfilment of the promises is to set them out in tabular format, as above, and connect the promises with other scriptures which describe the truth of these words. Note that some scriptures can relate to more than one promise. Not all the promises were fulfilled in the Old Testament. This should lead to a discussion of when they were fulfilled or when they will be fulfilled.

Relevance to our lives

The fact that God has fulfilled these promises and others in such detail must surely give us confidence in those yet unfulfilled. If you have time you may like to spend a few minutes discussing the last questions in the Students' notes.

Prayer

Lord God of Abraham, the God whose word is to be praised and trusted, guide our minds to understand the depth of your promises made to men like Abraham and David, but which include all your servants. Amen.

Other suggestions for activities

The young people may like to read Ezekiel 36:8-15 and discuss this promise which shows how God cares for the land itself. Other interesting promises in the Old Testament are Deuteronomy 28, Hosea 2:23, Daniel 12:13.

What promises did God make to Abraham's other descendants, Ishmael (Genesis 15:10-12;17:20) and Esau (Genesis 27:39-40) for example?