

YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ADVENTURES

Divine Drama

YE5E · Student Workbook

Seniors · Year 2: Creation

Christian Educational Ministries — a faithful digital edition of the printed program

There Was Nothing!

MEMORY VERSE

John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 1:1

Isaiah 14:12-15

Ezekiel 28:13-15

John 1:1

John 1:1-4

1 Corinthians 14:33

Ephesians 6:10-18

Hebrews 1:14

Jude 12

Revelation 12:9

Revelation 20:2-3

WORDS TO KNOW

BROODING - to sit on or incubate

SUBVERSIVE - a systematic attempt to overthrow a government or political party by secretly working to that end

INSURRECTION - an act of revolting against a civil government or power

THE LESSON

Was there a time when there was nothing? God is and God has always been. So what else? Oh, there were some really interesting things going on before and during the creation of this earth. God's plan is so much deeper and more purposeful than the evolutionist would have you believe. John 1:1 tells us "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." "The Word was distinct from the Father, was God. Jesus was God in the fullest sense" (NIV Study Bible).

But that doesn't tell us who the Word is. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of

grace and truth.” Did you notice how this describes Jesus as being the One who is the Word? He became flesh when He was born as a human baby. He lived with man here on this earth. And He was full of grace and truth.

Then where did Satan come from? Now that's an intriguing story. Read Ezekiel 28: 13-15. These very interesting verses tell us a lot! There was an archangel - "the anointed cherub that covers" - whose throne was on this earth. He had been in Eden, the garden of God, and was once perfect. Who exactly was this archangel and what did he do? This is not a man who was born of woman. He was a created spirit being - angelic.

Isaiah 14:12-15 sheds more light on this. "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground - mighty though you were against the nations of the world. For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and rule the angels. I will take the highest throne. I will preside on the Mount of Assembly far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High'" (TLB). You have just read about the greatest subversive plan in all eternity! Satan attempted to overthrow God's exalted position!

Lucifer once tried to go to heaven, rule the angels, and take the highest throne - God's throne. He wanted to be like God. But to put it bluntly, God kicked him out of heaven. Why? Because his attitude and actions stunk! He was given everything. He was filthy rich, beautiful, and had access to the holy mountain of God. His clothing was bejeweled with every precious stone - ruby, topaz, diamond, chrysolite, onyx, jasper, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald set in the finest gold. He had all of this, and yet he was not satisfied. He wanted even more! Angels are ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14), and he no longer wanted to minister or serve. He wanted to dethrone God and rule in His place. Now that takes a real load of audacity! Satan was rebellious and power hungry.

So what happened to Satan because of this insurrection? Satan was cast out of heaven and his angels with him (Revelation 12:9). Satan has several names. The Great Dragon is one of them. To better understand this subject, write or call CEM for a booklet or tape by Ronald L. Dart titled *The Tracks of the Devil*.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) This is the thematic sentence for the whole rest of the chapter. It tells us that in the beginning, God created everything. Then it tells us what the earth looked like: “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:2) The earth had no form and it was empty and dark. God is beginning His creation with light. We don't know exactly when Satan was created, nor do we know exactly when he rebelled. We do know that at some point God decided to extend His creation beyond the spiritual realm that included angels. His love is so great and His plan is so far reaching and

inclusive. God wanted to have a family. He wants to share what He has with you. So He turned the dark, formless, empty world into a place suitable for human beings to live.

When did this happen? We don't know because the Bible doesn't tell us. Neither does it tell us how many years old the earth is. We do know that at some point God decided to extend His creation beyond the spiritual realm that included angels. His love is so great and His plan is so far reaching and inclusive. God wanted to have a family. He wants to share what He has with you. So He turned this shapeless, chaotic mass into a place suitable for human beings to live here.

Every child asks, "Who made God?" That is a question no one can answer. God is and has always been. Humans can't conceive of the beginning of time nor the end of time. It's even beyond us to comprehend the boundaries of space or that the earth was Made From Nothing.

Where did it all come from? Why did God allow sin to enter the world? Satan was made a free moral agent; that is, God created him in such a way that would allow him to make choices. Satan chose to be the very first sinner. Look at what it cost him! We can choose to do good or to sin. We can choose life or death. God sets before you these choices. He wants you to choose life. He loves you so much that He created a world designed specifically for your needs. He loves you so much that He wants you in His family. He will give you the help you need to be there. Will you choose to obey God? Will you choose life?

STUDENT PRAYER

Exalted Father,

Thank you for revealing to me that Satan is real and that you will give me the help to overcome him. Help me to always choose to obey you. Father, I choose life!

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - John 1:1-4

Monday - Ezekiel 28:13-15

Tuesday - Isaiah 14:12-15

Wednesday - Hebrews 1:14

Thursday - Revelation 12:9, 20:2, 3

Friday - Ephesians 6:10-18

Saturday - Jude 12

Activity

1. On the lines below, write the first word that comes to your mind when you hear the name Satan.

2. Explain the amount of truth that you think is in movies about demons and Satan.

3. Rate what you feel is the frequency of Satan's involvement, on a scale of one to ten, for the following situations: The same rating can be applied to more than one.

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| a. Movies | _____ | d. Dating | _____ | g. Premarital sex | _____ |
| b. Astrology | _____ | e. Drug use | _____ | h. Fashion | _____ |
| c. Halloween | _____ | f. A Christian's daily life | _____ | | |

4. Give your opinion please. A= I agree DK= I Don't know D= I disagree

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Heavy metal music themes are gimmicks to increase sales? | _____ |
| b. Teens don't take Satan's ability to influence them seriously enough? | _____ |
| c. It is relatively harmless to do such things as play with Ouija boards, tarot cards, etc. | _____ |
| d. Following ones horoscope is relatively harmless. | _____ |
| e. Getting involved with seances and fortune-telling is relatively harmless. | _____ |

5. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and answer the following questions:

a. What do you do to stand against the devil's schemes? _____

b. Does a Christian struggle against humans, if not why? _____

c. List the pieces to the "Armor of God" _____

d. After you put on the whole Armor of God, then what do you do? _____

Clearly Seen

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 1:20, 25 - "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. ..Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever."

SCRIPTURES

1 Kings 8:27-30

1 Chronicles 16:23-27

Job 10:8-12

Psalm 8:1-9

Psalm 19:1-6

Psalm 24:1-6

Romans 1:19-25

Romans 1:20, 25

WORDS TO KNOW

PERVASIVE - to pervade, penetrate, saturate

PROPAGANDA- spreading ideas for the purpose of hurting a cause

THEORY - an idea or a hypothetical set of facts

IDEOLOGY - visionary theorizing

DIABOLICAL - relating to or characteristic of the devil

FORTIFY - to make strong; to strengthen

THE LESSON

You are bombarded with evolutionary propaganda from every side. When you go on to college you will find that textbooks, lectures, peers, and faculty will be even more proactive in pushing evolutionary concepts down your throat. So the time to fortify yourself against such diabolical teachings is now!

Evolution propaganda is rampant in our society. Spend some time looking up the statistics for yourself. You'll find that results vary widely from poll to poll, depending largely upon how the

question is asked. For instance, fewer people believe that God spoke the world into existence and people have remained unchanged since creation (biblical creationists). Some believe that God is guiding evolution (theistic evolution), but again, the questions greatly dictate the results. It's difficult to know exactly what the majority of people truly believe. However, when you hear an instructor telling you that our universe just happened without a plan, purpose, designer, or Creator, take heart. You know that's not true - and you have the Bible backing you up.

Why isn't everyone falling for the evolutionary propaganda that is so pervasive today? For one reason, "scientists, and professors in general, are often confused about evolution. They may know a lot of details, but they don't understand the basics. The professors typically think that evolution from molecule to man is a single process. . .

"The people suspect that what is being presented to them as 'scientific fact' consists largely of an ideology that goes far beyond the scientific evidence. . ." (Defeating Darwinism by Philip Johnson). Consists largely of what? Ideology, which means visionary theorizing. In other words 90 percent of the people can see the "scientific fact" that is being presented to them is largely speculation existing only in the scientists' and professors' imagination.

Why would scientists, high school teachers, and college professors in general prefer to accept that our universe came about entirely by chance rather by a Supreme Being creating it? Paul tells us in Romans I, that "Since earliest times men have seen the earth and sky and all God made, and have known of his existence and great eternal power. So they will have no excuse (when they stand before God at Judgment Day)" (v.s 20, TLB). The King James Version says: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen." "Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies" (v. 25). Now that's strong stuff! This says that evolutionists have no excuse because God's creative powers can clearly be seen and they deliberately chose to believe lies.

Our universe is far more complex than any car, computer, television, CD player or radio. Think about how much more complex our solar system, stars and constellations, eco system, magnetic fields, oceans with tides, climate, etc. are than any of your mechanical or electronic stuff. You can clearly see that each one of them required an intelligent designer. Then how can our universe that's mega-times more complex come about without a purpose and without an intelligent Designer and Creator? The universe is so perfectly balanced that you can live here on planet earth with everything you need to sustain life.

Doesn't it insult your intelligence to be told that "The diversity of life on earth is the outcome of evolution: an unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process of temporal descent with genetic modification that is affected by natural selection, chance, historical contingencies and changing environments"?

You learned in your biology class that photosynthesis is a process in plants, which in daylight, turns carbon dioxide into oxygen. Plankton in the ocean also produces oxygen. Certain plants support insects, and insects pollinate plants which enables trees and bushes to produce all kinds of blossoms and fruit. These combinations couldn't exist without each other. This means one could not have waited thousands of years to evolve without the other; they had to be created together to provide a livable balance.

Evolutionists would like for us to think "the first organized form of primitive life was a tiny protozoan. . . . From these one-celled organisms evolved all life on earth." They have overlooked that elements in our intricate universe, such as plant and animal life, are interdependent for survival. They are also overlooking something very important - intelligent design. When you break a molecule down to its smallest denominator what do you have? DNA! Then what does DNA have? Information! Information cannot evolve in a puddle of slime. Information requires an intelligent Designer! Like Paul said, this can be Clearly Seen and evolutionists are without excuse.

STUDENT PRAYER

Holy Creator,

Thank you for clearly showing me that you are the Creator of this universe. You tell us in the Bible that those who say you're not the great Creator will have no excuse on the Judgment Day because they chose to believe a lie. Grant me the ability to discern right from wrong in all the confusion that is thrown at me about evolution.

I ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Romans 1:19-25

Monday - Psalm 24:1-6

Tuesday - Job 10:8-12

Wednesday- 1 Kings 8:27-30

Thursday - 1 Chronicles 16:23-27

Friday - Psalm 8:1-9

Saturday - Psalm 19:1-6

Activity

Keep in mind with the question of evolution and Darwinism the first principle is that you must not fool yourself – and you are the easiest person to fool. To refute evolution and defeat Darwinism, you need to learn to use terms precisely and consistently. Evolution is a term of meanings, and the meanings have a way of changing without notice. You must learn to distinguish between what scientist assume and what they investigate.

Answer true or false to the following questions:

TRUE

FALSE

1. Darwinism is the established religion of the west.
2. Deism is the notion that God is a remote First Cause who establishes the scientific laws and thereafter leaves nature to its own devices.
3. Naturalism is the doctrine that "nature is all there is."
4. Evolution is a God-guided process.
5. God is outside of time and the Creator of time.
6. Our creation is a purposeless material system.
7. Darwin taught us that our real creator was a natural process that leaves humans reason to make up new rules whenever we want.
8. Only life can beget life.
9. The results of scientific conclusions may depend more on who has the power than who has the truth.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Taken from *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*

The Drama Unfolds

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 19:1-2 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge" (NIV).

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 1:1-25

Psalm 19:1-2

Psalm 102:25-28

Isaiah 44:24

Jeremiah 51:15-16

Matthew 13:35

Romans 1:20

Hebrews 1:10-12

WORDS TO KNOW

GALAXY - any of the very large groups of stars and associated matter that are found throughout the universe

LUNAR - as relating to the moon

SOLAR - as relating to the sun especially as it affects the earth

ODORIFEROUS - yielding an odor

THE LESSON

Hold onto your hats. The most awesome drama ever told is about to unfold! But first let's review. The universe and everything that is was created by the Word of God. Despite what the evolutionists would have you believe, the One who would become Jesus Christ actually created everything that is, both in heaven and on earth. We're told that the drama we're about ready to read about was so incredible that the angels of God shouted for joy! (Job 38:7)

James Weldon Johnson tells this drama of creation in a beautiful poetic way that is quoted in part below:

"AND God stepped out on space,
And He looked around and said, 'I'm lonely-
I'll make me a world.'

"And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp. . . ."

"Then God said, 'Let there be light.' And light appeared." Night time and daytime together formed the first day. Then God separated the vapors to form the sky and the oceans. This all happened on the second day of creation. On the third day of creation God told the waters to gather into oceans so that the dry land would emerge. The dry land was called "earth" and the waters "seas." God planned all of this so perfectly, and He knew what was coming next. And He knew what the things that He was yet to create would immediately need for survival. Now that there was ground, God planted the first garden. He planted grass, herbs yielding seed, and an enormous variety of trees including fruit and nut trees after their kind. God was pleased with this awesome accomplishment!

On the fourth day of Creation God decorated the heavens with its necessary parts preparatory for plant, animal, and human life. Yes, all of these things were absolutely necessary for these things to survive; they couldn't wait a year, let alone a billion years for these things to evolve. So He hung the sun to provide light for us and every element of creation in the daylight hours and the moon to come up at night. He also made them for signs, seasons, and for days, and years. In other words, God provided us with a calendar based on the light He hung in the sky. This was such an awesome display of intricate beauty in the sky.

"Astronomers estimate that the Milky Way, the Galaxy to which our earth and solar system belong, contains over 30,000,000,000 suns, many of them immensely larger than our sun, which is a million and a half times larger than the earth. The Milky Way is shaped like a thin watch, its diameter from rim to rim being 200,000 light-years. A light-year is the distance that light travels in a year at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. And there are, at least 100,000 Galaxies like the Milky Way, some of them millions of light-years apart. And all this may be only a tiny speck in what is beyond in the infinite, endless stretch of space" (Halley's Bible Handbook - The Universe which God Created). How awesome! And evolutionists think that all of this came about from a pool of slime.

On the fifth day of creation God filled the oceans, seas, lakes, creeks, and streams with a fascinating variety of fish and sea life both large and small, male and female. Some of these were good to eat and others added balance to nature. He populated the sky with every kind of bird

both male and female. Oh, the variety was so immense! Some were breathtakingly beautiful. Some could swim. Some were designed for tropical climates and others were our garden-variety sparrow. God looked at all of this and it gave Him great pleasure! He blessed them and told them to multiply and increase in numbers.

As The Drama Unfolds, the earth is advanced and equipped well enough to put animal life on it. God's sense of humor is seen in the enormous variety of critters He put here. He made the giraffe with a long enough neck to eat leaves from trees and the hippopotamus that likes to wallow in the mud. There's the odoriferous skunk with its protective spray. There's also the kangaroo that carries her babies in a specially-designed pouch. God made the cow that provides us with milk, butter, cheese, and beef for hamburgers. God knew that man needs something to love and care for that will cheer our day. So He gave us our dogs and cats as household pets. He made the butterfly and bees that pollinate fruit trees and vegetable plants so that they will produce. All of this requires an intelligence far greater than ours. But we haven't even finished the sixth day of creation. The most exciting part of this drama is yet ahead in lesson four. It holds the answers as to why God went to so much trouble in the first six days of creation.

STUDENT PRAYER

Awesome Creator,
Thank you for unfolding the Divine Drama for me to see. Surely man who rejects you as Creator is without excuse because your eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen in your creation. This places an enormous responsibility on me to bow before you, believe you, and obey you. It's in Jesus' name that I pray.
Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Genesis 1:1-15

Monday - Jeremiah 51:15-16

Tuesday - Matthew 13:35

Wednesday - Isaiah 44:24

Thursday - Romans 16:17-20

Friday- Hebrews 1:10-12

Saturday - Psalm 102:25-28

Activity

The account of this drama in Genesis is actually called the “Creation Hymn” because it was written in a poetic way. Read James Weldon Johnson’s, *A Negro Sermon*, that is included in your book as an insert. It is also a poem about the Creation story. On the lines below, write your own Creation poem. Hint: use a modern translation such as the Living or NIV Bible and you will find it easier to do. It can be as long or short as you would like, as long as you include what happened on all seven days of Creation.

God Wants a Family

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (TLB).

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 1:26-31

Genesis 2:1-25

Genesis 3:1-24

Romans 6:23

WORDS TO KNOW

HABITAT - a place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows

THE LESSON

How important are you to God? Well, God thinks you're very important. We can speculate about how much time God, the Father, and the One who would become Jesus Christ spent talking about and designing the universe in all of its intricacies. But the reality is that we don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us. Psalm 33:6, 9 says, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts. . . . For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded and it stood firm" (ESV). We do know that the Word of God created an awesome place suitable for man. Think about it. The sun and moon had to be hung exactly in the right place. The earth had very defined limits as to where it could be on its own so that our climates would be habitable for mankind - you!

The Earth is surrounded by a blanket of air, which we call the atmosphere. It reaches over 348 miles from the surface of the Earth. God created our atmosphere with solar energy and our planet's magnetic fields to support life on earth. The atmosphere absorbs the energy from the sun, recycles water and other chemicals, and works with the electrical and magnetic forces to provide a moderate climate that is suitable for human and animals life. The atmosphere also protects us from high-energy radiation and the frigid vacuum of space.

This is only the beginning of our complex universe that was designed ultimately for humans to populate the earth. But why? Why did God do so much planning, see to every detail, and work so

hard to provide a habitat suitable for mankind?

God first revealed His great and awesome reason for this in the Garden of Eden. He said, "Let us make a man - someone like ourselves, to be the master of all life upon the earth and in the skies and in the seas. So God made man like his Maker" (Genesis 1:26-27a TLB). Wow! So He made you like Himself. He didn't make you like a frog, a pig, a spider, or a baboon. He made a clay model resembling His own outward form and shape. Like no other animal, God breathed into this man the breath of life, and he became a living intelligent person with His potential mind power and creative abilities. He named him Adam.

Poor Adam was the only living being without an opposite gender counterpart. He had gardens, oceans, seas, and beautiful landscapes to enjoy. He could listen to the birds sing, watch the deer graze, enjoy the sunset, and pet any dog he wanted to. But none of these had the same intelligence. They couldn't become his mate to love and begin a family to start populating this earth.

"And the Lord God said, 'It isn't good for man to be alone; I will make a companion for him, a helper suited to his needs.' God brought all of the animals to Adam to name. Then He caused a deep sleep to come over Adam and He performed the first operation. Adam's rib was removed, the incision closed, and God brought this woman to him. Adam sounded excited when he saw this perfect woman. He said, "This is it!" "She is part of my own bone and flesh! Her name is 'woman' because she was taken out of a man." The first wedding took place with an explanation that a man is to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and become one flesh. Do you find it interesting that God didn't make this woman from Adam's foot bone? Could it be that a bone close to Adam's heart would better depict what their relationship should be like?

God created two perfect sinless human beings in His own image. He blessed them and told them to have a family and fill the earth. He also gave them the first commandment. There was a tree in the midst on the Garden of Eden where God had placed Adam and Eve. "You may eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat: for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die," God told Adam.

We've learned that evil was already present on the earth and Satan, in the form of a serpent, was in the Garden of Eden. He was a subtle beast that tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. Satan lied to Eve and told her she wouldn't die if she ate this fruit. She ate it, despite God's command, and gave some to her husband. The Garden had all sorts of delicious fruits for the couple to enjoy. So why would she believe this lying beast, rather than obeying God?

This first couple had everything. There was never a more beautiful and enjoyable place to live. They had each other to love. They could start a family. But they made the wrong choice. They sinned! Consequences galore would follow. Suddenly they knew they were naked and were

ashamed. They were driven from this beautiful garden. Childbirth would be painful. God placed a curse of thorns and thistles upon the soil and Adam would have to struggle to make a living. And they would die! But God is so merciful that He didn't give up on man. God wants a family and Satan could not thwart His plan. His plan included a way for man to be forgiven of his sins and become a part of God's family. God commanded all the living creatures to reproduce after their kind. He too is reproducing after His kind. Through His Son's sacrifice God provides a way for every one of us to be a member of God's family and live forever. Just like Adam and Eve, you've made wrong choices and have sinned. You too will die. But you are important to God. He wants you in His family and He has provided a way for you to live again. Will you accept Jesus' sacrifice for your sins and live a life that exalts God so He will make you a member of His family? It's your choice!

STUDENT PRAYER

Great Creator and Father,
How awesome to think that you consider me to be so important that you've provided a way to forgive me of my sins. Thank you for Jesus Christ's sacrifice. I am so unworthy. Help me always to live a life that exalts you.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Genesis 1:26-31

Monday - Genesis 2:1-9

Tuesday - Genesis 2:10-17

Wednesday - Genesis 2:18-25

Thursday - Genesis 3:1-7

Friday - Genesis 3:8-15

Saturday - Genesis 3:16-23

Activity

What Did The Story Say ?

Answer the following questions from the story in today's lesson **TRUE** OR **FALSE**.

- | | TRUE | FALSE |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| 1. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the center of the garden. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. There was a gateway out of the Garden of Eden. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Everything the serpent told Eve was false. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Adam and Eve were in the Garden three days before Satan tempted them. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Man's nature changed when Adam and Eve sinned. | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Explain what the downside was to Adam and Eve's world while they lived in the Garden of Eden. _____ | | |
| _____ | | |
| 7. God told Adam and Eve plainly not to eat of the one tree. So why was it there? | | |
| _____ | | |
| 8. List four consequences for Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit. | | |
| 1. _____ | | |
| 2. _____ | | |
| 3. _____ | | |
| 4. _____ | | |
| 9. Why did God create man? | | |
| _____ | | |
| 10. Explain what God did to ensure His plan is carried out with man. | | |
| _____ | | |

Divine Rest

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 56:2 - "Blessed is the man who refuses to work during my Sabbath Days of rest, but honors them; and blessed is the man who checks himself from doing wrong" (TLB).

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 1:31

Genesis 2:1-3

Joshua 24:15

Proverbs 1:29-33

Isaiah 56:1-7

Isaiah 56:2

Isaiah 58:13-14

Ezekiel 20:12-24

Mark 2:27

Luke 6:1-5

Hebrews 4:4-9

WORDS TO KNOW

DIVINE - relating to or proceeding directly of or from God

ARBITRARY- depending on an individual's discretion and not fixed by law

THE LESSON

It had been a busy week. God had just completed six most productive and gratifying days. Everything in creation finished out to be exactly like He thought it would . . . and on schedule. Think about it. Never has so much been accomplished in such a short period of time. If you had created the universe, stars, planets, suns, moon, the earth, oceans, trees, grass, flowers, sea life, birds of every kind, animals and critters, and a man and woman in six days, wouldn't you have a great feeling of satisfaction? Would you want a day off? Wouldn't you want time to celebrate and enjoy it?

"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning - the sixth day.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done” (Genesis 1:31-2:3, NIV).

God celebrated the completion of a work that didn't have to be repeated, revised, or repaired. Not only did God have heaven to enjoy with the Word, all of the angels, now He had this newly created universe and the beautiful planet called Earth to feast His eyes on. It was a sight to behold and He was ready to stop and enjoy what He created. The sun set at the end of the sixth day and a Divine Rest began - the first Sabbath. It was time to celebrate human beginnings.

The seventh day is a memorial of creation that we celebrate every Sabbath. How do you think God celebrated this first Sabbath? He could hold a Bible Study and instruct the two people He had just created. They could sing songs of praise. He could walk by the streams and see the fish He had made, rub the ears of a dog, or pet a lamb. He could pick a peach off a tree and eat it or have a cold drink of great-tasting water from a brook. But the Bible doesn't tell us what God did on this first Sabbath other than He rested and was refreshed.

This was the Garden of Eden. It was the most beautiful and tranquil place on earth. Surely spending a Sabbath here where the temperature was perfect, the company was delightful, and the scenery awesome would have been a Divine Rest. How could it get any better? Even God was refreshed from His Sabbath rest.

Do you look upon the Sabbath as a day of can't dos? Have you felt that the Sabbath day prevents you from doing what you really want to do by placing arbitrary restrictions on you? If the Almighty was refreshed from resting on the Sabbath after a busy week, what makes you think that you, a mere human being, won't benefit from having a day of rest? God gives us 24 hours each week to sleep, enjoy His awesome creation, allow our minds to feast on His Word, and to become just a little more like Him. We too can be refreshed as God was every seventh day.

There was nothing about God's creation that was arbitrary. It was all done with a well-thought out plan and a goal in mind. Keeping the Sabbath holy has long term and short term benefits for you. Isaiah 58:13-14 says, "If you keep the Sabbath holy, not having your own fun and business on that day, but enjoying the Sabbath and speaking of it with delight as the Lord's holy day, and honoring the Lord in what you do, not following your own desires and pleasure, nor talking idly - then the Lord will be your delight, and I will see to it that you ride high, and get your full share of the blessings I promised to Jacob, your father. The Lord has spoken" (TLB).

Are you tired of always playing second fiddle or maybe feeling like a second class citizen? Do you want a competitive edge in life? God says that if you'll keep the Sabbath day holy, He will "see to it that you ride high, and get your full share of the blessings." Sin always has consequences, and

rewards follow obedience. Adam and Eve were given a choice. You too are faced with a choice if you will keep the Sabbath holy.

Playing ball on the Sabbath or going to the senior prom is very tempting. It looks as good as the forbidden fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But never forget, Adam and Eve's world drastically changed for the worse because they made the wrong choice. If you haven't already, you'll soon be faced with a job decision of whether or not you'll work on the Sabbath. Again, the money you get from doing this may be as tempting as the forbidden fruit was to Eve. She never considered that she and Adam would get kicked out of the Garden of Eden and that she and every woman after her would experience painful childbirth because of her sin. Remember to count the cost before you choose to break God's Sabbath.

God created the Sabbath day out of love for you. Jesus, our Creator, is "the Lord of the Sabbath" (Luke 6:5). And He said, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). This rest is a gift to you - not just any seventh day, but the seventh day. Do you love God enough to set aside just one day in seven to spend additional time in prayer with Him, study His Word, and become more like Him? Choose right and enjoy the benefits!

STUDENT PRAYER

Great Lord of the Sabbath,

What an awesome day the first Sabbath must have been. What a pleasure it must have been for you! Thank you for giving me the Sabbath day, a day that I can rest, focus my mind on you, and be refreshed as you were. Help me always to celebrate this day in a way that honors you.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Mark 2:27

Monday- Isaiah 56:1-7

Tuesday - Ezekiel 20:12-24

Wednesday - Hebrews 4:4-9

Thursday - Joshua 24:15

Friday - Luke 6:1-5

Saturday - Proverbs 1:29-33

Activity

The Sabbath may be a lonely or boring day for you. God never intended it be that way. One reason we feel lonely is because we think no one wants to be around us. We get bored on the Sabbath because we don't look for excitement in knowing God better. Evidence of God and His love can be seen in many places. List as many ways as you can come up with that God's love, image, or divine evidence is seen in the following people:

Your father

Your mother

Your friend

Your minister

Now list two things you can do on the Sabbath to make their day a *Divine Rest*.

Was Noah “Nutty?”

MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 29:1 - "He that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 6:1-22

Genesis 7:1-24

Genesis 8:1-22

Psalm 119:156

Psalm 121:7

Proverbs 21:21

Proverbs 29:1

Matthew 5:7

Matthew 24:36-39

2 Peter 2:5

2 Peter 3:5-6

WORDS TO KNOW

ENSUE - to take place afterwards, or as a result

THE LESSON

Have you ever known a kid who couldn't stay out of trouble? No matter how many good things his parents showered upon him, he went from bad to worse. Unfortunately, this seems to be the story of man. God created this beautiful world, gave man every thing he needed for survival and more, yet he seems bent on doing the opposite from what God tells him to do. Man seems to always choose things that aren't in his best interest.

A population explosion took place on planet Earth as people began having children. The crime rate was rising rapidly across the earth. The world was rotten to the core! According to Usher's chronology, man had only been on this earth about 1500 years when the entire population was in deep trouble. People didn't seem to realize how corrupt they had become. Maybe they didn't care, or they liked their world. But God didn't!

"When the Lord God saw the extent of human wickedness, and that the trend and direction of men's lives were only towards evil, he was sorry he had made them. It broke his heart.

"And he said, 'I will blot out from the face of the earth all mankind that I created. Yes, and the animals too, and the reptiles and the birds. For I am sorry I made them'" (Genesis 6:5-7 TLB).

How tragic! The crown of creation had become so vile, evil, corrupt, vicious, and depraved that God was sorry He had ever made man. It broke His heart to see such disobedience, lack of appreciation, and total rejection of Him and His way.

There was only one truly righteous man on the entire earth at that time and his name was Noah - a preacher of righteousness. He tried to live according to God's will. What was Noah's life like? All of his peers must have pressured him to be like they were. He was certainly the odd man on the . . . earth. Noah found grace in God's eyes. He took notice of Noah's lifestyle and liked what He saw. He told Noah to build a boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high because He was going to destroy all mankind with a flood. He promised to keep Noah, his wife, sons, and their wives safe.

God instructed Noah to "Bring a pair of every animal - a male and a female- into the boat with you, to keep them alive through the flood. Bring a pair of each kind of bird and animal and reptile. Store away in the boat all the food that they and you will need. And Noah did everything as God commanded him." He was also to take seven pairs of every clean bird and animal into the boat for eating and sacrificing.

Noah was almost 500 years old when God told him to build the Ark. God said that He would give man 120 years to mend his ways. Noah must have been preaching to people as he built the Ark. Friends and passers-by probably thought Noah was nutty. They may have even nicknamed him Nutty Noah. Such jeers as this must have been nonstop: "This old man won't live long enough to finish this boat."

God gave Noah his marching orders and Noah promptly proceeded to do exactly as he was told. He didn't argue with God. He just went to work building the Ark. When it was finished "He boarded the boat with his wife and sons and their wives, to escape the flood. With him were all the various kinds of animals. . . "Then a week after Noah was 600 years, two months, and 17 days old, this torrential rain began coming down in unbelievable sheets. In addition to this, the subterranean waters burst forth on the earth. It was too late for all the other people, animals, and birds that were not safely on the Ark. Instant chaos ensued. People rushed to the highest hill, then climbed the tallest tree to save their lives. But it was too late! Noah warned them, but they failed to heed his warning. They failed to mend their ways. The ark's door was closed.

The water began rising. It was deep enough for the boat to begin to float. For 40 days the floods roared and the water rose higher and higher above the ground. All living things on the earth

died! The water covered the earth for 150 days. But God never forgot Noah and everyone and everything in the Ark. He sent wind to blow and the water began to subside.

After 40 days Noah opened a porthole and let a raven out. It flew back and forth until the earth was dry. He sent out a dove to see if it could find dry land. It couldn't and returned to the boat. Seven days later Noah released the dove again. This time the dove returned with an olive leaf in her beak. Noah knew the water was almost gone. A week later he released the dove again, and this time she didn't come back. Noah waited 29 days before he opened the door to look out. After eight more days the earth was dry and God told Noah that they could leave the Ark.

Noah built an altar and sacrificed an animal to God. Then God made a covenant with Noah and put a rainbow in the sky as a perpetual reminder that He would never destroy the earth again with water. "As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night" (Genesis 8:22 TLB). Noah learned that it pays to obey God. What about you? Will you obey Him?

STUDENT PRAYER

Gracious Father,

Noah found grace in your eyes because he was willing to obeyed you. He must have had more real peer pressure than I've ever had, yet he built the Ark when everyone thought he was nutty. Help me to remember Noah's example and to always trust you.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Genesis 6:1-13

Monday- Matthew 24:36-39

Tuesday - Proverbs 21:21

Wednesday - 2 Peter 2:5; 3:5-6

Thursday - Psalm 119:156

Friday - Psalm 121:7

Saturday - Matthew 5:7

Activity

1. It only took 1500 years from creation before the world became totally corrupted. List six ways that you feel our world is similar to the world that Noah lived in.

2. Write a paragraph about what you can do to change your world to be a better place that is more pleasing to God.

3. God was merciful to Noah and his family because of Noah's righteousness. From the list of Scriptures below, select the one that gives you the most encouragement and write it on the lines below.

Proverbs 21:21

Psalms 37:25

Matthew 5:7

Psalms 119:156

Psalms 121:7

What Did You Say?

MEMORY VERSE

1 John 2:16-17 - “For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world . . . but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 9:1-7

Genesis 10:8-12

Genesis 11:1-9

Psalm 33:8-11

Proverbs 16:15-22

Zephaniah 3:9-13

James 4:7-12

1 John 2:16-17

WORDS TO KNOW

ARROGANCE - the state of being arrogant, haughtiness, insolent pride

ZIGGURAT- a temple tower of the ancient Babylonians, having the form of a terraced pyramid of successively receding stories

BITUMEN - various mixture of hydrocarbons occurring naturally, asphalt, tar

ARCHEOLOGICAL - from the study of man's life and culture in past ages

IMPERIALISM - The extension or imposition of power, authority, or influence

THE LESSON

¿Habras español? Parlez-vous français? What did you say? Do you speak English? Have you ever wondered why people around the world speak so many different languages? From creation and even after the flood, there was only one language. “Now the whole earth had one language and one speech” (Genesis 11:1). So what happened? Let’s discover the who, what, when, where, and why of the origin of multiple languages.

God gave post-Flood instructions to Noah and his sons. “So God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.’” God had given Adam and Eve these

same instructions. God wanted the earth inhabited and cared for. He wanted Noah's sons and their families to spread out and take care of the earth.

So as the sons of Noah and their families moved out and away to inhabit the earth, some of them found an area in Shinar, and they decided to just stay there and build a city. "And they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth'" (Genesis 11:4).

They didn't have stone to use for building materials, but they could make bricks out of mud and straw. There was an abundance of bitumen to use for mortar. Archeological evidence indicates that the tower would have been a ziggurat, a multi-storied building popular at that time.

These people were proud and arrogant. They wanted to be known for their skill and the awesome tower they were trying to build. They had the technology to make the bricks, bake them in the sun, and use the natural asphalt for mortar. They wanted to stay together even though this directly defied God's instructions to fill the earth. Who cared what God wanted!

The sons of Noah and their families had just been saved from the Great Flood and blessed by God. Now look at how quickly their attitudes went astray. Where did they come from? Nimrod was Noah's arrogant great-grandson who had a reputation as a mighty man and hunter. He was impressive, and he was impressed with himself. Prideful Nimrod founded the city of Babylon and started building the Tower of Babel. He also led his family and people to disobey God.

But God was watching. He saw the attitudes and the construction. "But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built" (Genesis 11:5). Think about it. How puny and insignificant do you think this structure looked compared to God's creation?

God saw that they were united and spoke the same language. He noticed how they proudly focused on disobeying Him - staying in that city and completing the tower. He knew they could accomplish it with the talents and skills that He had given them. But God didn't want them to complete the tower; He wanted them to spread out and fill the earth. He said, "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So, the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city" (Genesis 11:7, 8).

Think about what happened that day. People were going about their work as they had always done. Suddenly they couldn't understand what their work-partner said. When a man asked for a hammer, his partner probably said, "What did you say?" But what good did that do? He didn't understand that either. Confusion reigned! There was such a variety of languages being spoken and no one could understand what the other person was saying. All of this happened because arrogant men refused to obey God

You can always count on God accomplishing His plan and winning in the end. "The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect" (Psalm 33:10). Nimrod's plan for a great city and a tower couldn't stand up to the Almighty God.

The same is true today. We can allow ourselves to be filled with pride and become disobedient - thinking we know what is best and desiring to do what we want to do. We may think that we know more than our parents, our teachers, our minister, and even God. We may forget that our skills and talents are gifts from God. Remember, God has a plan, and the plans of people will have no effect on God's awesome redemptive plan of salvation for us and this sin-filled world.

So what can you do to prevent being filled with pride? First, concentrate on being thankful. Everything you have comes from God. Without His gifts you are nothing. Then pray, "Thy kingdom come." "For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve him with one accord" (Zephaniah 3:9). Never again will you have to ask, "What did you say?"

STUDENT PRAYER

All-Wise and All-Knowing God,

Thank you for being in charge. I can always count on you to be the same. Help me each day to be thankful for the talents and things you've given me, and to humble myself before you. Help me also to carefully follow your instructions.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Genesis 9:1-7

Monday - Genesis 10:8-12

Tuesday - Genesis 11:1-9

Wednesday - Psalm 33:8-11

Thursday - Zephaniah 3:9-13

Friday - Proverbs 16:15-22

Saturday - James 4:7-12

Activity

1. On the lines below, list as many languages as you can think of that are spoken in your community.

2. Think about it – in what ways would life, school, business, commerce, communications, etc. be simpler if there was only one language? Write these on the lines below.

3. God always makes the consequence fit the crime. How do you see confusing the languages fitting the crime? Write this on the lines below.

4. What should these people have done that would have prevented God from becoming angry with them and confusing their language? Write these on the lines below.

A Remarkable Man!

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 23:1-3 "BECAUSE THE LORD is my Shepherd, I have everything I need! He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams. He restores my failing health. He helps me do what honors him the most. Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding al the way" (TLB).

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 12:1-20

Genesis 15:1-21

Genesis 16:1-15

2 Samuel 22:28-29

Psalm 23:1-3

Psalm 23:1-6

Psalm 48:1-14

WORDS TO KNOW

ENTOURAGE - ones attendants and associates

THE LESSON

Do you think people will say you were a remarkable person when you're gone? If so, in what ways? After Jesus Christ, who do you think was the most remarkable person who ever lived? Was it a president - Washington, Lincoln, Kennedy, or Bush? All of these men are remarkable men. But none of these men measured up to how God looks upon Abraham. The Bible calls him the father of the faithful and a friend of God.

After the tower of Babel, God scattered the people all over the earth. After Abram's father died, God told him to leave his country and people behind and go to the land where He would guide him. Abram didn't say, "Why me, Lord?" He just did what God said. This blessing came with these instructions - "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you; and the entire world will be blessed because of you." Think about it. The entire world will be blessed because of Abram. That's awesome!

Abram, a very wealthy man, got up and went just like God told him to do. He took his wife Sarah, Lot his nephew, his cattle, servants, and all of his wealth and trekked off to Canaan. When he arrived God said He was going to give this land to Abram's descendants. So Abram built an altar to commemorate God's visit and kept on traveling to Egypt.

Abram was human just like you and me. He had choices to make. And sometimes they weren't choices he really wanted to make. As his entourage entered Egypt, he was afraid that the Egyptians would kill him if they knew that Sarah was his wife. She was such a beautiful woman, and he feared they would want her. So Abram asked Sarah to tell them that she was his sister. This was a half-truth. Sarah was his half sister, but she was very much his wife. Pharaoh had every right to assume that Sarah wasn't Abram's wife, so he took her into his harem. Plagues came immediately. The Egyptians knew something was wrong and demanded to know why Abram hadn't leveled with them about Sarah being his wife. Pharaoh wasn't very happy. So he sent Abram, Sarah, and their entourage out of the country under armed escort.

Even after this mistake God appeared to Abram in a vision and promised to defend him and give him great blessings. Abram and Sarah had no children. So He replied to God, "O Lord Jehovah, what good are all your blessings when I have no son? For without a son, some other member of my household will inherit all my wealth.

"Then Jehovah told him, 'No, no one else will be your heir, for you will have a son to inherit everything you own.' He took Abram outside at night and told him to look up at the sky and count the stars. Your descendants will be like that - too many to count!' Abram believed God; then God considered him righteous on account of his faith."

But apparently Sarah didn't have as much faith as Abram. She was about 75 years old and not getting any younger. She wanted a baby to love and cuddle. ... now! So she devised a plan and told it to Abram. "Since the Lord has given me no children you may sleep with my servant girl, and her children shall be mine."

Abram had his wife's permission and her encouragement to commit adultery. He too wanted a son that Sarah had not yet provided. So he agreed to this. Hagar conceived, and when she realized she was pregnant, she became very proud and arrogant toward Sarah. Doubtless, she must have felt superior since she could have a child by Abram and Sarah was unable to do it. So the family fight started. Sarah blamed Abram even though she gave him permission to do this. Then Abram gave Sarah permission to punish Hagar. So Sarah beat her and Hagar ran away.

An angel found this beaten, pregnant servant girl beside a desert spring and asked "What in the world are you doing out here?" The angel told Hagar to return home to her mistress. "This son of yours will be a wild one - free and untamed as a wild ass! He will be against everyone, and everyone will feel the same towards him. But he will live near the rest of his kin."

What lessons can you learn from this Remarkable Man, Abram? He was very human the same as we are. He sinned. And his sins carried consequences much longer than he had expected. The descendants of his son born from an adulterous relationship are the Arab people today. Abram did not wait for God to provide him and his wife a legitimate son. The angel's prophecy to Hagar about her son lingers to this very day. There are two lessons for you in this. First, wait on God to provide and don't take matters into your own hands. Second, God can forgive sin, but He doesn't always remove the consequences - they may linger for many generations to come.

Since Abram sinned, how can it be that he was A Remarkable Man? Even though he had the same weaknesses that all humans have, he believed God. And God considered him to be righteous on account of his faith. When God said get up and go, he got up and went even when he didn't know where God was leading him. He believed God. What about you? Do you believe God? Do you believe God enough to give up everything you have and follow Him?

STUDENT PRAYER

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

Thank you for Abraham's example of faith. Help me to remember it daily. Also, help me to never forget that even Abram's sins had consequences that followed, even to this day. May I always think of this before I sin or commit an evil or even a hurtful act that is not pleasing in your sight.

In the name of Jesus I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Psalm 23:1-6

Monday - Genesis 15:1-12

Tuesday - Genesis 15:12-21

Wednesday - Genesis 16:1-6

Thursday - Genesis 16:7-15

Friday - 2 Samuel 22:28-29

Saturday - Psalm 48:1-14

Activity

1. What would you say if God gave you these instructions "Leave your own country behind you, and your own people, and go to the land I will guide you to" (Genesis 12:1 TLB)? Put a check by the one you would say.
 - A. Why me, Lord? _____
 - B. Maybe later, Lord. _____
 - C. You've got the wrong person. _____
 - D. Please don't ask me to leave my friends, family, and stuff. _____
 - E. You expect me to go, and I don't know where. _____
 - F. Here I am Lord, send me. _____
 - G. I like my life like it is. No thank you. _____

2. Having God tell me what to do with my life and where I should go is something that (Check the ones that you relate to most):
 - A. I have never considered. _____
 - B. I don't think He has the right to do this. _____
 - C. God only tells ministers what to do and where to go. _____
 - D. Why would He want me to do something? I don't have anything to offer. _____
 - E. It would mess up my plans if God started messing around with my life. _____
 - F. I know what I want to do and I don't want God telling me what I should do. _____
 - G. Following God where He leads is the path to the greatest happiness and rewards. _____

3. On the lines below, write out your favorite Scripture verse that inspires you to follow God's lead. There are some below for you to check out, but if you have another one that is your favorite, use it. Write the one you select on the lines below.

2 Samuel 22:29

Psalm 5:8

Psalm 34:2

Psalm 25:5

Psalm 31:3

Psalm 32:8

Psalm 48:14

Isaiah 40:11

Isaiah 48:17

National Contract

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 22:12 - “Lay down the knife; don’t hurt the lad in any way,” the Angel said, “for I know that God is first in your life - you have not withheld even your beloved son from me” (TLB).

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 17:1-27

Genesis 21:1- 34

Genesis 22:1-24

Genesis 22:12

Jeremiah 32:17-20

Malachi 3:5-6

Hebrews 8:8

WORDS TO KNOW

POSTERITY - the offspring of one progenitor to the furthest generation

THE LESSON

When Abram was 99 years old God prepared a contract between the two of them that promised multitudes of nations from Abram's descendants. Abram immediately worshiped God. How would you feel if God appeared to you and said, "When you get married, I'll give you a son that will have so many descendants who will form many nations"? What a promise!

God changed Abram's name to Abraham (Father of Nations), and Sarai to Sarah (Princess). God said, "I will give you millions of descendants who will form many nations! Kings shall be among your descendants! And I will continue this agreement between us generation after generation, forever, for it shall be between me and your children as well. . .”

“Your part of the contract,’ God told him, 'is to obey its terms. You personally and all your posterity have this continual responsibility: that every male among you shall be circumcised. . .”

God promised to give 90 year-old Sarah a son. Abraham was 100. As he worshiped God, he laughed inside with disbelief. He said to God, "Yes, do bless Ishmael!" Ishmael was the son Abraham had with Hagar. But this wasn't what God had in mind at all. He never intended that his ultimate blessings flow through an illegitimate son. God is not limited by a man or woman's

age when He sets out to do something. He had found his man with whom to make this National Contract that would last forever. God was ready to take a very important step and nothing is too difficult for Him. He promised to bless Ishmael with 12 princes but assured Abraham that his National Contract would be with a son, born to him and Sarah, whose name would be Isaac.

That very day Abraham took Ishmael and every other male who was born in his household and circumcised them. This was a painful necessity for Abraham to complete his part of this National Contract.

While Sarah prepared a meal she listened to what this important guest was telling Abraham. The Lord said, "Next year I will give you and Sarah a son!" Sarah was way past childbearing years so she laughed silently. And then she denied that she had laughed. Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to Isaac, which means laughter.

God was ready to test Abraham. He said, "Take with you your only son - yes, Isaac whom you love so much - and go to the land of Moriah and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I'll point out to you!" This is the greatest test a father can have. What do you think went through Abraham's mind? He had waited 100 years to have this promised son and now God wanted him to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. How could God make of him "many nations" if Abraham killed him? What would you have done?

"The next morning Abraham got up early, chopped wood for a fire upon the altar, saddled his donkey, and took with him his son Isaac and two young men who were his servants, and started off to the place where God had told him to go. On the third day of the journey Abraham saw the place in the distance.

"Stay here with the donkey,' Abraham told the young men, 'and the lad and I will travel yonder and worship, and then come right back.' Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering upon Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the knife and the flint for striking a fire" (Genesis 22:3-6, TLB). Isaac knew that lambs were generally used for sacrificing. They had everything but a lamb. So he asked his father where it was, and he said, "God will see to it, my son." Abraham built an altar, placed the wood on it, and then tied his son and laid him on the altar. Then he took the knife and had it ready to slay his son of promise.

"At that moment the Angel of God shouted to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham! Lay down the knife; don't hurt the lad.' Then Abraham noticed a ram caught in the bushes and he offered it as a sacrifice rather than his only son. This was high drama! Can you comprehend how Abraham and Isaac must have felt? What a remarkable man Abraham was! He trusted God completely. Why was he willing to do this? He knew God is a God of love and mercy and One who keeps His promises. "He believed that if Isaac died, God would bring him back to life again .

.. " (Hebrews 11:19). What a relationship Abraham had with God! Think of the benefits from truly knowing God.

Where are those descendants - those many nations today that God promised Abraham would come from Isaac? They are somewhere on this earth today. Are you one of them? What kind of responsibility does that place on you to be like your father Abraham in faith and obedience? What difference will that kind of faith and obedience make in your life? Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am the Lord - I do not change." He promises to be swift and certain to punish wicked men, adulterers, liars, those who cheat their hired help, or oppress widows and orphans, or defraud strangers. He also promises to bless those who obey Him as He blessed Abraham. Do you want punishment or blessings? The choice is yours.

STUDENT PRAYER

Most Righteous Father,

Thank you for giving me such an example as Abraham. You took him to the brink of sacrificing the son of promise, yet He was willing to follow your commands. Because of his obedience he has kings, presidents, prime ministers, and millions of people in this world today who are his descendants. Help me to follow his example and trust you regardless of the test.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Genesis 17:21-22

Monday - Genesis 21:1-6

Tuesday - Genesis 21:14-19

Wednesday - Genesis 22:9-18

Thursday - Malachi 3:5-6

Friday - Jeremiah 32:17-20

Saturday - Hebrews 8:8

Activity

It is easy for us to learn Bible stories and draw lessons from them without applying them directly to our own lives. This is not what Abraham did. Nor is it what God expects of you. Complete the following sentences and find out if you're learning to be an obedient, committed, servant of God as our father Abraham was.

Complete the following statements:

1. If I was absolutely sure that God asked me to sacrifice my son, I would

2. If God asked me to attend the Feast of Tabernacles my first year in college, I would

3. If God asked me to give Him back one tenth of everything He gives me, I would

4. If God asked me to save one tenth of my income to pay my expenses for going to the Feast,

5. If God asked me to remain sexually pure until I am married, I would

6. If God asked me not to work or seek my own pleasure from sunset Friday night until sunset Saturday night, I would

7. If God asked me to find a private place and kneel and pray every day, I would

8. If God asked me to read the Scripture verses laid out on the back of my YEA book as Daily Devotionals every day, I would

9. If God asked me to not use bad language or His name in vain, I would

10. If God asked me to obey my parents by letting them know who I'm with, where I am, and what I'm doing at all times, I would

A Love Story

MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 11:16-17 - "Honor goes to kind and gracious women, mere money to cruel men. Your own soul is nourished when you are kind; it is destroyed when you are cruel" (TLB).

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 23:1-20

Genesis 24:1-67

Proverbs 11:16-17

WORDS TO KNOW

GRACIOUS - marked by kindness and courtesy

IMITATE - copy

INDUSTRIOUS - diligent, active, busy, live, dynamic, persevering, persistent

THE LESSON

Sarah was 127 years old when she died in Canaan. Abraham mourned the death of his beloved wife. As he stood beside her dead body, he said to the men of Heth, "Here I am, a visitor in a foreign land, with no place to bury my wife. Please sell me a piece of ground for this purpose." There was no hesitation about doing this because they looked upon Abraham as an honored prince of God. This was a privilege.

Abraham didn't want Sarah to be buried alone. Since they agreed to do this, he asked to purchase the cave of Machpelah to bury his entire family when the time came. These people not only wanted to give him the cave, but the field as well without any charge. Abraham was not a free loader. He insisted on paying them 400 pieces of silver for this land to bury his family.

God had blessed the aging Abraham in every way. Abraham called his oldest, most trusted servant to him and asked that he swear before God that he wouldn't let his son, Isaac, marry one of the local Canaanite girls. They did not worship the true God. The servant was instructed to go to his relatives and find a wife for Isaac. The servant vowed to follow Abraham's instructions.

The servant loaded the camels with samples of the best of everything Abraham had and started his journey to Iraq, to Nahor's village. He came to a spring at evening at the time when women of the village came to draw water. Realizing what enormous responsibility Abraham had placed on

him to find a suitable wife for Isaac, he knelt down and prayed for God's help. "O Jehovah, the God of my master, show kindness to my master Abraham and help me to accomplish the purpose of my journey. See, here I am, standing beside this spring, and the girls of the village are coming out to draw water. When I ask one of them for a drink and she says, 'Yes, certainly, and I will water your camels too' - let her be the one you have appointed as Isaac's wife. That is how I will know."

The servant hadn't even finished praying when a beautiful young girl named Rebekah showed up with a water jug on her shoulder to fill it with fresh spring water. The servant thought, "Maybe she's the one, I'd better go see." So he ran over to her and asked her for a drink. "Certainly, sir," she said very respectfully. She was willing to do even more than he asked and said, "I'll draw water for your camels, too, until they have enough!" Now that's a fast answer to prayer!

The servant watched the young lady carefully to see if she would finish her job. Then he would know if she was the bride for Isaac. After the camels finished drinking, he gave her a quarter-ounce gold earring and two five-ounce gold bracelets. Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? And would your father have any room to put me up for the night?"

"My father is Bethel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor," she said. "And yes, we have plenty of straw to feed your camels, and a guest room where you can spend the night."

The servant had seen his prayer answered beyond a shadow of a doubt. So he bowed his head worshipping and thanking God for being so kind and true and for leading him straight to the family of his master's relatives.

Rebekah ran home to tell her family about what had just happened. Her brother saw the bracelets and earrings and rushed to the spring where the servant was and invited him to stay with them. He gave him straw for his camels and water for the men with him to wash their feet. Supper was ready for all to eat. Before the servant could eat, he felt a need to explain the purpose of his visit, giving many details about how God had so richly blessed Abraham and Sarah. He continued by telling them how Abraham commissioned him to find a wife for Isaac from among his own people, his prayer, how Rebekah showed up at the well, and did more than he had asked for. Then he asked Laban and Bethuel, "Will you or won't you be kind to my master and do what is right?"

Laban and Bethuel replied, "The Lord has obviously brought you here, so what can we say? Take her and go! Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as Jehovah has directed." The servant was overwhelmed with this good news and fell on his knees and worshiped God. Then he showered Rebekah with jewels set in solid gold and silver and lovely clothing. He gave many valuable presents to her mother and brother. Then they were able to eat their supper. All the good-byes were said and they left with this blessing: "Our sister, may you become the mother of

many millions! May your descendants overcome all your enemies." As they arrived back home Rebekah saw Isaac walking out in the field and immediately got off her camel, covering her face with her veil. They told Isaac the whole story. "And Isaac took Rebekah into his mother's tent, and she became his wife. He loved her very much, and she was a special comfort to him after the loss of his mother."

STUDENT PRAYER

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

What a beautiful and touching story you have given us about our father Abraham and his son Isaac. The graciousness, love, and character that is shown in this story inspires me to be more than I have been. Help me to love, trust and follow you always.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Genesis 24:34-35

Monday - Genesis 24:1-11

Tuesday - Genesis 24:12-24

Wednesday - Genesis 24:25-27

Thursday - Genesis 24:28-29

Friday - Genesis 24:30-60

Saturday - Proverbs 11:16-17

Activity

Go back through this beautiful story and list on the lines below seven admirable character traits you see in Rebekah.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

On the lines below, list seven admirable character traits you see in Abraham's servant.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Turn to Genesis 24:34-35 and list the blessing that God overwhelmed Abraham with.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____