

The Promises of God

The Promise to Abraham: Blessing to the Nations

I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, so that all the families of the earth may receive blessing through you.
(Genesis 12:3)

<http://tinyurl.com/GodOfPromises>

Core Theme

God's covenant with Abraham sets the stage for the entire biblical story of redemption. Through Abraham, God promises land, descendants, and blessing — promises that extend beyond Israel to every nation through Christ.

The New Testament consistently portrays **Abraham's promise as the seed of the gospel:**

Its basis – God's faithfulness (Heb. 6:13).

Its condition – Faith, not works (Rom. 4:5).

Its fulfillment – Christ, the true Seed (Gal. 3:16).

Its scope – All nations (Acts 3:25).

Its goal – Eternal inheritance (Rom. 4:13; Heb. 11:10).

The promise to Abraham is not a relic of ancient history but the root of the New Covenant. The New Testament writers unanimously teach that the same God who called Abraham by faith now calls every believer, Jew and Gentile alike, to share in that promise through Jesus Christ, the true Seed and everlasting fulfillment of God's covenant.

Heb 6:13-15 Now when God made his promise to Abraham, since he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, (14) saying, "Surely I will bless you greatly and multiply your descendants abundantly." (15) And so by persevering, Abraham inherited the promise.

Act 3:25-26 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.’ (26) God raised up his servant and sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each one of you from your iniquities.”

Rom 4:1-8 What then shall we say that Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh, has discovered regarding this matter? (2) For if Abraham was declared righteous by works, he has something to boast about – but not before God. (3) For what does the scripture say? ***“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*** (4) Now to the one who works, his pay is not credited due to grace but due to obligation. (5) But to the one who does not work, but believes in the one who declares the ungodly righteous, his faith is credited as righteousness. (6) So even David himself speaks regarding the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: (7) ***“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; (8) blessed is the one against whom the Lord will never count sin.”***

Gal 3:15-19 Brothers and sisters, I offer an example from everyday life: When a covenant has been ratified, even though it is only a human contract, no one can set it aside or add anything to it. (16) Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his descendant. Scripture does not say, “and to the descendants,” referring to many, but ***“and to your descendant,”*** referring to one, who is Christ. (17) What I am saying is this: The law that came four hundred thirty years later does not cancel a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to invalidate the promise. (18) For if the inheritance is based on the law, it is no longer based on the promise, but God graciously gave it to Abraham through the promise. (19) Why then was the law given? It was added because of transgressions, until the arrival of the descendant to whom the promise had been made. It was administered through angels by an intermediary.

Rom 4:13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not fulfilled through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

Heb 11:8-10 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went out without understanding where he was going. (9) By faith he lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

God's Character Revealed

The Promises to Abraham

Initiator of the Covenant

- **Genesis 12:1-3** God calls Abraham to leave his homeland, initiating the promise.
- God's promises are grounded in His initiative, not Abraham's worthiness.

Covenant Keeper

- **Genesis 15:1-6** God ratifies the covenant by passing between the pieces, showing He alone carries the responsibility of fulfillment.
- **Genesis 17:7** God calls it an "everlasting covenant."

Faithfulness Across Generations

- God reiterates His promise to Isaac (**Genesis 26:3-4**) and Jacob (**Genesis 28:13-15**).
- God's character is revealed in His unilateral commitment to Abraham; He binds Himself to His promises with no possibility of failure.
- **Romans 1:17** *For the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, just as it is written, "The righteous by faith will live."*

God's Character in the Promise to Abraham

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Teaching Point: God's character is revealed in His unilateral commitment to Abraham - He binds Himself to His promises with no possibility of failure.

Overview: God's covenant with Abraham (land, descendants, blessing) sets the redemptive trajectory.

Teaching Notes:

Genesis 12:1–3 → Call and promise.

Genesis 15 → Covenant ratified by God alone.

Galatians 3:7–9 → Fulfilled in Christ for all nations.

Cross-References: Romans 4:20–21; Hebrews 11:8–12.

Discussion Guidance: Highlight Abraham's faith response; How did Abraham's respond?

READ: Romans 4:20–21; Hebrews 11:8–12.

God's Character in History

The Nature of God Revealed

Patriarchs

- God multiplied Abraham's descendants despite Sarah's barrenness, proving His faithfulness against human impossibility.

Exodus

- Israel's deliverance from Egypt fulfills God's promise to Abraham (**Genesis 15:13-14**).

Possession of the Land

- **Joshua 21:43-45** affirms God kept His word, giving Israel the land He promised.

Exile and Return

- Though Israel broke covenant, God's promise to Abraham remained a foundation for restoration (**Nehemiah 9:7-8**).

Observation

- History bears witness that God always advances His promises, even when His people stumble.

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Discussion Questions

Why did God's promise to Abraham matter so much in the biblical storyline?

God's Character Revealed in Christ

Abraham's Seed

Jesus, the Fulfillment of the Promise

- **Galatians 3:16** The promises were ultimately to Abraham's "seed," Christ.
- **Luke 3:34** Jesus is in Abraham's line, the heir of the covenant.

Blessing to the Nations

- **Galatians 3:8** The gospel was announced beforehand to Abraham: all nations blessed in Christ.
- **Matthew 28:19** Fulfillment in the Great Commission to the nations.

Faith as the Response

- **Romans 4:20-21** Abraham's faith in God's promise models how we trust in Christ.

Observation

- The covenant blessing reaches its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who brings salvation to every nation.

God's Character Revealed in Christ (Abraham's Seed)

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Discussion Questions

Why did God's promise to Abraham matter so much in the biblical storyline?

How does Abraham's faith model the way we are to trust God today?

In what ways are you personally living as an heir of Abraham's promise?

How does this covenant shape our mission to bless the nations?

God's Invitation to Know Him

Through His Promise to Abraham

Invitation to Faith

- Abraham “believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness” (**Genesis 15:6**).

Invitation to a Covenant Relationship

- God calls His people into covenant, rooted in His initiative.

Invitation to a Global Vision

- Believers share in the mission of blessing the nations (**Galatians 3:29**).

Observation

- God's invitation is to trust Him as Abraham did, to live as heirs of the promise, and to participate in His mission to the nations.

God's Invitation to Know Him through the Promise

Invitation to Faith: Abraham “believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

Invitation to Covenant Relationship: God calls His people into covenant, rooted in His initiative.

Invitation to Global Vision: Believers share in the mission of blessing the nations (Galatians 3:29).

Teaching Point: God's invitation is to trust Him as Abraham did, to live as heirs of the promise, and to participate in His mission to the nations.

Discussion Questions

Why did God's promise to Abraham matter so much in the biblical storyline?

How does Abraham's faith model the way we are to trust God today?

**In what ways are you personally living as an heir of Abraham's promise?
How does this covenant shape our mission to bless the nations?**

References to the Promise of Abraham

In the NT – Promise Quoted or Paraphrased

Luke 1:54-55 Mary's *Magnificat* praises God for remembering His promise to Abraham and his offspring.

Luke 1:68-73 Zechariah rejoices that God has "remembered His holy covenant, the oath that He swore to Abraham."

Acts 3:25 Peter cites Genesis 12:3: "*In your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*"

Acts 7:2-8 Stephen recounts the covenant with Abraham, including the promise of land and descendants.

Romans 4:3 Paul quotes Genesis 15:6: "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.*"

Romans 4:17-18 References God's word in Genesis 17:5, "*I have made you the father of many nations.*"

Galatians 3:6-9 Cites Genesis 15:6 and 12:3 to show that the gospel was proclaimed beforehand to Abraham.

Galatians 3:16 Interprets "seed/offspring" in Genesis 12:7 as singular—fulfilled in Christ.

Hebrews 6:13-15 Mentions God swearing by Himself when He promised to bless and multiply Abraham (Genesis 22:16-17).

Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19 Recounts Abraham's faith in God's promise of land, descendants, and resurrection hope.

James 2:21-23 Quotes Genesis 15:6, showing faith and works united in Abraham's obedience.

These passages explicitly **quote or allude** to God's words in Genesis 12:1-3, 15:5-6, or 17:7.

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Theology of the Promise

Covenant Fulfillment in Christ and Believers

John 8:39-40, 56 Jesus claims Abraham rejoiced to see His day, revealing Abraham's faith in the coming Messiah.

Romans 4:9-25 Paul argues that Abraham was justified by faith before circumcision, making him the father of all who believe.

Romans 9:6-8 "Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel"; true children of Abraham are those of the promise.

Galatians 3:14, 29 Believers in Christ receive *the blessing of Abraham*—the Spirit and inclusion as heirs.

Galatians 4:21-31 The allegory of Sarah and Hagar contrasts promise vs. law.

Ephesians 2:11-19 Gentiles are brought near and made fellow citizens, heirs of the promises once given to Israel.

Hebrews 11:13-16 Abraham looked for a heavenly city, showing the spiritual dimension of the promise.

Hebrews 13:20 Refers to the *eternal covenant* that fulfills God's promises through Christ's blood.

The Promise Interpreted Theologically

These passages **explain the covenant's fulfillment in Christ and believers.**

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Promise Extended to the Nations

Abraham's Blessing & the Global Mission of the Church

Matthew 8:11-12 Jesus says many from east and west will recline with Abraham in the kingdom.

Luke 13:28-29 Echoes the same image of Gentiles included with the patriarchs.

Acts 13:32-33 Paul calls the resurrection “the good news that God promised to the fathers.”

Romans 15:8-12 Paul teaches that Christ confirmed the promises to the patriarchs so the Gentiles might glorify God.

Galatians 3:7-9 Those of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Galatians 3:28-29 In Christ, all are one; Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female; and heirs according to promise.

Ephesians 3:6 Gentiles are “fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

The Promise Extended to the Nations

These passages **apply Abraham's blessing to the global mission of the church.**

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Promise as our Destiny in Hope

Our Final Inheritance and Eternal Life

Romans 4:13 Abraham and his offspring receive “the promise that he would be heir of the world.”

Hebrews 6:18-20 The hope set before us is anchored in God’s unchangeable promise to Abraham.

Hebrews 11:39-40 The faithful, including Abraham, did not receive the promise in full, anticipating perfection in Christ.

2 Peter 3:13 The ultimate inheritance of the new heavens and new earth fulfills the faith of Abraham, the “heir of the world.”

The Promise as Eschatological Hope

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Summary Application Points

Trust God’s Promises: Identify one area in life that feels impossible (like Abraham’s childlessness) and bring it before God in faith.

Embrace Identity: Reflect on Galatians 3:29 - “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”

Be a Blessing: Look for one practical way to bless someone outside your immediate circle (an unbeliever, a neighbor, someone from another culture).

Global Vision: Pray for one nation each day to receive the blessing of the gospel.