

Theme: God promised to bless Abram and his seed abundantly, and He called Abram and His seed to be a blessing to the whole world.

I. Intro - A Key Moment In History

- A. There are some “hinge” moments in history
 - 1. Fall of Rome; discovery of electricity
 - 2. These have an impact which changes things
- B. The same thing is true in redemptive history
 - 1. Creation and the flood are clearly important like that
 - 2. Genesis 1-11 covers more time than Genesis 12-Revelation
 - 3. Genesis 12 is a key moment - everything shifts
 - 4. The covenant will be ratified 2 more times, but it all begins here
- C. What is God’s covenant with Abram? How does it apply to me?

II. God’s Covenant With Abram

- A. The structure of Genesis 12:1-3
 - Get up and go (command; v1)
 - I will make you into a great nation (promise; v2)
 - I will bless you (promise; v2)
 - I will make your name great (promise; v2)
 - You shall be a blessing (command; v2)
 - I will bless those blessing you (promise; v3)
 - I will curse the one cursing you (promise; v3)
 - All peoples will be blessed through you (promise; v3)
- 1. Two commands, each followed by three promises

- 2. The promises flow from the commands; to receive the promised blessings Abram must do as God commands
 - a. Leave your nation – I will make you a nation
 - b. Leave all you know behind – I will bless you
 - c. Don’t be like Babel – I will give you a name!
 - d. Bless others - I will take care of you
 - 3. The second command (be a blessing) shows the purpose of the first three promises
 - 4. The central idea in this covenant is blessing
I will make you into a great nation and I will **bless** you; I will make your name great, and you will be a **blessing**. ³ I will **bless** those who **bless** you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be **blessed** through you. Genesis 12:2–3
 - a. Bless, blessed, blessing - 5x in 2 verses
 - b. Only 6x in all of Genesis 1-11 (creation; Noah)
 - 5. Clearly, the promise to bless is the very heart of God’s covenant with Abram!
 - 6. The blessings God intended at creation and renewed after the flood are now focused on Abram.
- B. The promised blessings
“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”.. ⁷ The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” Gen. 12:2–3, 7
 - 1. There are four basic promised covenant blessings

- a. Posterity - a great nation/offspring (v2;7)
- b. Provision - I will bless you (v2)
- c. Prominence - I will make your name great (v2)
- d. Protection - I will bless and curse (v3)

2. This covers all of life, now and in the future

3. This is abundant, rich, overflowing blessing!

4. This blessing is given to Abram and to his offspring

C. The nature of the blessing

1. The blessing includes every area of life

- a. Every previous mention of blessing is fruitfulness and multiplication for creation and humanity
- b. Nothing would indicate that these areas are not included here as well
- c. God specifically extends the blessing to multiple areas - posterity, provision, prominence, protection
- d. God certainly blessed Abram in every area of life

2. The primary blessing is the Gospel

The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." Galatians 3:8

- a. The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul tells us that Genesis 12:3 is about the Gospel!
- b. The ultimate blessing given to Abram is the Gospel!
- c. Abram is blessed because the Redeemer, the Seed of the Woman, will also be the Seed of Abram. The Gospel will pass through Abram!

d. The **primary** focus in this covenant is not common grace but saving grace.

e. All other blessings pale in comparison to the blessing of the Gospel!

III. The Call: Blessed To Be A Blessing

A. This is a command: you must be a blessing

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, **and you will be a blessing.** Genesis 12:2

1. This is not a prediction but rather a command
2. God will bless Abram; then Abram must be a blessing to others
3. The blessing is not given for Abram to hoard, but to pass on to others
4. Abram's vision must always be outward
5. The blessing given to Abram is huge, and so must be Abram's heart to bless others!
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:3
 - a. Not just Abram and his family - all peoples
 - b. Not just those close to Abram - all peoples
 - c. Not just those Abram like - all peoples!
 - d. Abram is called to spread the blessing throughout creation!
6. The blessing includes every area of life, and so Abram must be a channel of blessing to others in every area of life

7. The blessing is centered on the Gospel, so Abram must primarily be a channel of blessing in spreading the Gospel on to others.
8. Like Abram, God's people are called to be a blessing in every area of life, but the primary blessing we have to share is the Good News of Jesus Christ!

B. Trusting God's promise in the face of opposition

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. Genesis 12:3

1. Some will respond positively to Abram as a source of blessing, and others will oppose him
2. This is an echo of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent in Genesis 3:15 - the conflict will continue
3. Abram does not need to curse those who curse him - God will protect Abram.
4. Abram simply needs to be a channel of blessing and let God deal with those who oppose him.
5. Jesus and Paul teach us this same principle
But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Romans 12:17
6. Abram and his offspring can seek to bless others with abandon, never fearing the consequences, for God is their Source and their Protector.

IV. Applying the Word

A. Do I see God's rich covenant promises to me?

1. God's covenant to Abram is rich in blessings!
2. God's covenant promises belong to Abram's seed
3. All Christians are Abram's seed in Christ and heirs of these covenant promises!

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed...²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:16, 29

- a. All Christians, Jew and Gentile, are Abram's seed
- b. All Christians are heirs of all God's promises to Abram
4. As with Abram, the primary blessing is the Gospel!
5. In Christ, we have been raised from the dead, justified, brought into God's family, filled with the Holy Spirit, and are invited to walk with God each day.
6. But God's blessings touch every realm of our life - family, relationships, finances, work, etc.
7. We need to look to God in faith knowing that He is our unending source of blessing
8. Do I see and meditate on this?
9. Does the reality of God's promised blessings permeate every aspect of my thought and lifestyle?

B. How am I being a channel of blessing to others?

1. God never blesses so we can consume it on ourselves
2. Like Abram, we are blessed to be a blessing
3. This is a deep principle woven in the universe
A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25
 - a. Literally “the soul that blesses”
 - b. If it feels like blessings have stopped - start being a blessing to others!
4. This applies to every area of life: the riches of the Gospel, relationships, finances, work - the more we bless others, the more we are blessed
5. Am I blessing others with the Gospel?
6. Am I a blessing to others relationally?
7. Am I a blessing to others in service?
8. Am I a consumer or a giver of blessing?
9. Am I the Dead Sea or the Sea of Galilee?

C. Closing prayer

The Covenant of Promise

Genesis 12:2-3
February 23, 2020
Prayer
Genesis 12:2-3

Teaching keywords: Covenant; blessing; evangelism and missions; Gospel; saving grace; biblical characters

“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Genesis 12:2–3

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. ² “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

⁴ So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

⁶ Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. Genesis 12:1–7