

Whispers of the Messiah: Promise of Blessing through Abraham: Genesis 12:1-3

Whispers of the Messiah came to Abram, whose name means “Exalted Father” in Genesis 12.

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Here in Genesis 12, God announces his special promise to Abram—ALL the peoples on earth will be blessed through him. He probably had no idea the scope and scale of the blessing, but nonetheless he believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:22). In Genesis 17, God changes his name to Abraham, expanding on the promise—“I will make you very fruitful, I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you” (Gen. 17:6). Abraham now knows that the blessing will involve a family line of authority and rulership. Further on in Abraham’s story, God continues to reiterate the idea of blessing all people through Abraham. God communicates that Abraham is to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22). He obediently follows God, and God provides a ram to offer in place of his son. After he passed the test of being willing to surrender the logical means through which the promise of blessing would come, his son Isaac, Genesis 22:18 states, “through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed . . .” (Genesis 22:18, NIV).

What is this blessing? For sure it had personal blessing for Abraham. It also had nationalistic blessing for the Jewish people and the future people of Israel. For all humankind, it has spiritual implications. Let’s look at Acts 3:24-26 to get the New Testament perspective on how God blessed the world through Abraham.

²⁴And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. ²⁵You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be **blessed**.’ ²⁶God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to **bless** you by turning every one of you from your wickedness” (ESV).

The blessing can be traced to a culminating event in the coming of Jesus, God’s Messiah. Here are the important concepts revealed in Genesis and Acts:

- God is a blessing God.
- The blessing is for all people on earth.
- The blessing would come through Abram, later named Abraham.
- God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, through no effort of his own—he just believed and allowed God to do His work through him.

- One of the ways he showed his belief was by obediently putting Isaac on the altar, thus becoming the father of faith.
- Kings would come from Abraham.
- A king and kingdom that is not of this world came through the LORD's servant (Messiah), who was sent first to the Jews to "bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness" (Acts 3:26).

The blessing of the Messiah that Peter points out in his public address in Acts 3 is not just for the forgiveness of sins (justification), and not just for the blessing of heaven (glorification). While these are all wonderful promises of God, the blessing is attached to a servant king who is able to change our wicked hearts (sanctification). King Jesus, God's Messiah, is able to release us from the bondage of being enslaved to sin: "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves to sin, have become obedient from the heart . . . (Romans 6:17). He has the power to put a new heart in us—one that recognizes Jesus as King and can now love God the Father in return. We are free! Here's a small list of the blessing of being free from wickedness:

- We are free to give and receive love (John 15:9-12).
- We are free to come boldly into the throne room of grace (Hebrews 4:16).
- We are free from guilt and shame that is caused by living as orphans (Romans 8:15).
- We are free from condemnation (Romans 8:1).
- We are free from fear, for perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18).

We are free from the domination of sin and demoralizing ways of wickedness. This is the blessing that was whispered in Genesis. And we are the recipients of God's grace, announced in fullness by Jesus, our Messiah. Hallelujah!

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