

Series: God & Abraham #1140

Title: Genesis 12.2

The Seven Promises of God to Abram

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Thus far, at Genesis 12, verses 2 and 3 we have identified seven promises for blessing that holy God makes to the one man Abram. We learned that God is present in His promises not only within these two verses but likewise as we followed the reiteration of each of these promises throughout Abraham's life. God is the self-giving God. He gives completely of Himself to Abram. As Abram sojourns with the Lord He finds the presence of God is always with him. We have used a lot of Scripture to support this.

And we had this warning: sometimes we are guilty of separating the promises of God (which we like) from the presence of God (which we are not as keen on, especially if we are living in sin). It can be said of many Christians, they like to get *from* God without giving themselves *to* God. They like to get *from* God without giving themselves *to* God.

So, they are happy to read of the many ways in which God blessed Abraham. For example, they like to hear about how God made Abraham a rich man. But what they like much less is reading about the ways in which Abraham gave *himself to* God. So that when the presence of God with Abraham convicted him of sin, and Abraham burdened by his unrighteousness – how he repented of his wrong before God – ah, there is less there to like!

The reasoning goes like this: can't I just get from God what I want, without the hassle of having to develop an intimate and personal, a living and dynamic relationship, *with* God. For example, why can't God just bless my finances without Him having to get too involved in my life? In this mentality, the promises resulting in blessing are the presents under the tree on Christmas morning. And God is like Santa. It is great when we can rip open all those gifts having left nothing more for Santa than an old cookie and a small glass of warm milk. God gets so little of us, but we get so much from him! I tell you: many professing Christians have this exact mentality, and live like it.

But that really is not how it works with God. And do not be fooled by these slick, hot shot, and personally wealthy so-called preachers on radio and on podcasts, on TV, You Tube that tell you how God exists to make us rich. And how blessed they are and you too can be blessed. I'm so sick of that nonsense! Aren't you? God does *not* exist to make you prosper financially! God *does* exist to invade every orifice of your being with His presence such that you will become totally consumed by *Him*, by the *person* of God, and not by the good gifts He gives you.

That is not to say there are not good gifts. That is not to say God does not supply for all our daily needs. He does. But using God as a get-rich-quick-scheme this is a serious violation of who God is. And so, I encourage you, my friends, be careful who you listen to and who you believe. Be careful not to separate the promises of God from the presence of God. Yearn far more for His presence, then temporary blessings.

Speaking of which, let's pivot now and look at each one of the seven promises of God for Abram given in Genesis 12, verses 2 and 3. We will see that these are not temporary blessings, but eternal ones. And **first up is this: God says, "I will make you a great nation."** Genesis 12, verse 2: "I (God) will make you (Abram) a great nation." Nation here has reference to Israel, and Israel is a great nation, not just by the number of people, but great in God's plans and purposes. From where we sit today this is true of the past, the present, and the future.

God has committed Himself to the nation of Israel and to the Hebrew people. He lives amidst their presence and He is their promise for a bright and eternal future. This is said best by God Himself in Genesis chapter 17, verses 7 and 8. I am reading Genesis 17.7 and 8,

“7 I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

You see, Israel is great because God is their God. God will be God to Israel. What makes Israel great is God. I want to say that again: Israel is great because God is their God. God will be God to Israel. What makes Israel great is God. (Genesis 17.7 and 8.)

And notice the emphasis God puts on “everlasting.” This is not temporary. Despite wilful disobedience and rampant sinfulness among many Jews personally, that in no way means God has abandoned and forgotten about this great nation. No! The Lord turned one man into an entire nation and Israel is a great nation. As the Scripture progresses, and in particular, when we come to the prophecies about the future, in both the Old and New Testaments (read Romans 9-11 for example), when we get there we see how blessed Israel is. God is fulfilling His promise to Abram in Genesis 12.

What other nation has experienced the presence of God in the promise of God as Israel has? Remember them back in the Book of the Exodus? Do you recall their long journey? And how the presence of God was with them, leading, guiding, and directing? Let me read for us on this Friday Exodus chapter 40, verses 34-38. This is the very end of the Book of Exodus. I am in chapter 40, verses 34-38.

“34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 36 Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; 37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. 38 For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.”

Talk about how the presence of God is in the promise of God. Wow! Isn't this marvellous? What other nation has ever experienced this? Answer: no other nation. With all due respect to those of you who think of America as a Christian nation, God has never shown up like this in our presence!

So that is the first promise for blessing God gives to Abram in Genesis 12, verse 2, and here is the **second**. **God says, “I will bless you.”** I (God) will bless you (Abram). This blessing refers to Abram alone. Abram is a blessed man. And we see the fulfilment of this promise in Genesis (in his life's story) and the spiritual fulfilment of this promise in the New Testament. Let's take up two examples, *briefly*.

In Genesis chapter 24, and we saw this the other day, Abraham's servant has gone to find a bride for Abraham's son Isaac and listen to what the servant says. This is verses 34 and 35 of Genesis chapter 24, **“He said, ‘I am Abraham's servant. 35 The Lord has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and [the Lord] has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys.”** This reflects the way in which God blessed Abraham in his life. And it is entirely true that Abraham was a very rich man. God has surely blessed him.

And there is the spiritual element to this same promise. Listen, for example, to the Apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 14, **“...that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”** There is a lot there, but I am just able to highlight this: the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles, through Christ Jesus giving believing Gentiles the promise of the Holy Spirit through *faith*. Abraham was a man of great faith in God, and we are the spiritual descendants of him, because like Abraham we believe in God by our faith.

What an *awesome* verse, Gentiles! “The blessing of Abraham...” There it is, the spiritual element to God's blessing upon his life. I have to go. Join us again on Monday for God Is!

---END---