

Series: God & Abraham #1141

Title: Genesis 12.2

The Seven Promises of God to Abram (Part 2)

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. As we get started in a new week let me remind you that on Friday we began a discussion on the seven promises for blessing God makes to Abram in Genesis chapter 12, verses 2 and 3. Thus far we have covered the first two. First God says, "I will make you a great nation." Second, God says, "I will bless you." Today we come to the **third** promised blessing when God says to Abram, "**I will make your name great.**" We read that in Genesis 12, verse 2.

With these words, the Lord guarantees Abram that he will be famous. And sure enough, Abraham has a great name, an awesome reputation. He is known the world over. Certainly, the Bible makes his name great. Now he is not famous like an Alexander the Great or a George Washington or a Winston Churchill, Cleopatra or Catherine the Great, someone like that. Abraham has a strong legacy because he was a man of *faith* in God! Abraham was made eminent *by God*. I love what theologian HC Leupold says (quote), "[Abram's] fame is not a personal achievement of his but a divinely wrought favor (*Exposition of Genesis*, 255)."

That is so true! And we must emphasize this. Leupold again, "[Abram's] fame is not a personal achievement of his but a divinely wrought favor." Abraham has become very well-known because of what holy God did in his life. And you will see this as you follow him along throughout the Bible. Let's follow Leupold again as he points us to the various names for Abraham that put on display his fame. For example, in Genesis 17, verse 5 he is called "**the father of a multitude of nations...**" (Genesis 17.5.)

Over in Genesis chapter 23 and verse 6 Abraham is called, "**a mighty prince among us...**" (That's Genesis 23.6, "a mighty prince.") In chapter 18, verses 17-19, we will come to this, but just for now take note when you read that Abraham is a man in God's confidence. That is, God tells Abraham things He does not tell anyone else. They have a very close, personal relationship that makes Abraham a man with a great name. In Genesis 20, verse 7 Abraham is called a prophet. And in Psalm 105, verse 6 he is called a servant of God. And then, of course, most astonishingly, Abraham is called the friend of God. God and Abraham are friends, according to the Bible.

In 2 Chronicles 20, verse 7 Jehoshaphat prays, "**Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?**" (That was 2 Chronicles chapter 20 and verse 7.) We also read about this most famous of all friendships in Isaiah 41, verse 8. This is *God speaking* in the forty-first chapter of the prophet Isaiah, verse 8. Again, I am quoting God, "**Abraham My friend...**" James picks this up near the end of the New Testament when we read this in James chapter 2 and verse 23, "**[Abraham] was called the friend of God.**" (James 2.23.)

You see, Abraham's great reputation was built upon what God did in his life. In fact, I cannot help but to quote the words of Abimelech to Abraham in Genesis chapter 21, verse 22. "**Now it came about at that time that Abimelech...spoke to Abraham, saying, 'God is with you in all that you do.'**" (Genesis 21.22, "God is with you in all that you do.")

Today we have being famous all wrong. People crave fame. Popularity is a common pursuit. What is called "social media" has made becoming famous an obsession with a multitude of people, especially young people. Through the use of various apps and other kinds of technology someone who lives in a small corner of the wide world can instantly or over a period of time post videos and pictures of themselves such that they become celebrated. But this is all based on some sort of personal achievement. "Look at me! Look at who I am. Look at what I have done." (Me, I.) Athletes, musicians, artists, and of course, politicians. Me, me, me, I, I, I – renown now comes through all that one can achieve by their own skill, beauty, by the breaks they get in life, or in some instances hard work. But where is the glory for *God*?

Notice what Abimelech said, “God is with you in all that you do.” Would that it be said of us, “God is with you in all that you do.” Imagine if that could be said of the world’s most famous people at present? As Christians, if we are well known, may it be because when people look at our lives, when they hear of our reputation, it is because they see that God is with us in all that we do. Let us not be famous for any other reason. Perish our names, and may God’s name be great forever.

And now we come to the **fourth** promise for blessing that God gives to Abram. Just at the end of Genesis 12, verse 2, we read the Lord say to him, “**And so you shall be a blessing.**” It has been accurately said that Abraham is blessed to be a blessing. Or, Abraham is blessed so that he can bless others. And we see that in both Testaments of Scripture. In fact, the reason his name is great (which we just discussed) is so *that* Abraham will be a blessing to others. In other words, his blessing is to be shared.

And in an ultimate sense, from Abraham comes Jesus Christ the Messiah. Talk about being blessed to be a blessing! There is no greater blessing that God has given us than Christ! Galatians 3, verse 16 says it this way: “**16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.**” I am a bit hesitant to quote this powerful verse of Scripture now because I will not be taking the time today to interpret it with the depth it deserves. I do, however, want you to hear it in reference to Abram being blessed so that in turn he will bless others. And the seed of Abraham, eventually, in God’s perfect timing sprouts into the man and God’s Son, the God-Man Jesus Christ. (That is what the Apostle Paul says in Galatians chapter 3, verse 16.)

Dr. Leupold is astute again when he points out that God has a part to play in making Abram a blessing. *And* Abram has a part to play in being a blessing to others. That is, Abraham has a moral responsibility, he has to do his part in blessing other people, in not keeping God’s blessing for himself (not being selfish). There will be no hogging God’s blessings. In other words Abraham should aim to live a life such that others are blessed by him.

And this is also true for all of us who have been blessed by the Living God. Has God blessed you? Then, pass along that blessing to the people you meet this very day and night. One great way to do this will be to share the gospel. Use your words to tell others, in a spirit of love and kindness, about how Christ Jesus has died for their sins, that Jesus was buried, and that He was raised from the dead on the third day. Share with them the resurrection power of the Lord for them if they will repent of their sins, turning to the most Merciful God, and genuinely asking Him to forgive them.

Tell someone the Good News of the gospel at the start of this week. It will do you and this person a ton of good. You have been blessed to have received and believed the gospel. Now do not selfishly hold this blessing for yourself. No. Declare it, by word and in deed, to the people around you. Men and women in your home, at your place of employment, in school, in the supermarket, and through your social media pages. My sincere prayer, and I hope you will pray this along with me, *our* prayer is that Christians will be a blessing in this troubled, dark, and evil world.

At the time I am recording this, there is war between Russia and the Ukraine. I was blessed watching a video of Ukrainian Christians sharing the gospel as bombs are literally being dropped on their heads. The video was of the Ukrainians singing of the goodness of God in a subway station now used as shelter. What a blessing! Let us be like them. Let us be like Abraham.

Blessed to be a blessing! Join us again tomorrow for God Is.

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