

## ABRAHAM AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE – GENESIS 12

November 7, 2021

We're going through the 1<sup>st</sup> part of Genesis, and we're doing this because it contains basic truths essential for Christians to understand. If we don't know these truths, then we can't properly understand the rest of the Bible. Let me sum up what we've already talked about: We talked about how God created the world and created mankind. We talked about how God created man in His image, which means that mankind is very special to God, by far, His most important creation. Psalm 8:4-5

We talked about how God created humans as male and female. Now there has been a lot of recent talk in the world about how there are all these different genders, and that you can be one gender one day and another gender the next day. But that's not true. On this subject, we need to believe what God says, that there's just male and female.

- We talked about how man is to marry another woman, which eliminates this idea that it's alright for man to marry a man, or for a woman to marry a woman.

We talked about God wants man and woman to populate the entire earth – and so all these present ideas of depopulating the earth are just plain nonsense.

We learn that Adam and Eve sinned, and their sin was passed on to all mankind. We see that God punishes sinners, and that He punished Cain because he murdered his brother, and he punished the whole world with the flood because of its great sin. And there was the tower of Babel, and God scattered the world because of her sin, and this resulted in God creating all these nations, and all these languages.

- But God promised man a redeemer who'd defeat sin, death, and the devil, and enable man to be righteous before God. And so from the seed of the woman there'd be all these descendants, finally resulting in the Messiah being born, one who'd save man from his sin.

We learn that God always had a remnant of people who were believers, who were saved, and God would work through this remnant to fulfill His purposes. For example, there was Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah and Shem. And today we come to Gen. 11, and learn about Abram, a key figure in God's historical and spiritual working with man, in bringing redemption to people in this world.

And of all the people who had lived in the world up to that time, it now comes down, all funnels down, all points to one man, one chosen by God, a man called Abram. Abram, also called Abraham, is very important in all of God's plans, in His plans for the Jews, in His plans for the coming of the Messiah, and in His plans for the church.

Gen. 11:26-32. God gives these details about Abram's life. And God wants you to know that He has planned out what's going on, and is going to carry out His purpose for planet earth, and for His people, and for each one of you.

And throughout the Bible, we read how God works through individual people, that God works at a specific time, and over the course of time, carrying out His plans through His people, and for His purposes and glory. God's plan of working is historical. He works through people over time, step by step, day by day, His plans unfolding, His plans being fulfilled through the years, through the centuries, and through the millennia. Isaiah 46:9-11

And God's working through Abraham and his descendants starts in Genesis, and goes clear to the end of the OT, and to Malachi 4. And it's amazing and wonderful to see God's working, and God's purposes and plans being fulfilled. - Psalm. 92:4, Ps 145:3-8, Ps 111 - We read about God's works, and His greatest work is that of redemption. And there's this word covenant, and what we'll see is that God makes a covenant with Abraham, a promise to him about how He's going to work through him and bless him, and carry out His plan of redemption through Abraham's descendants.

Gen. 12:1-3. God communicates to Abram, and this is what He often does when He wants to carry out His work on earth. And God usually communicates to a very godly person, to one who is His spokesman. Amos 3:7 - *"Surely the Lord does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets."* - God tells Abram to move, to leave his hometown, his country, to go to another place that God would show him. This wouldn't have been easy, for we get used to where we live, where we work, where we shop and where we have family and friends. Heb. 11:8

God then makes these extremely important promises to Abram, ones that are foundational for much of what God does in the future, in the OT time, the NT time, and in the ages to come. And these promises are also called the Abrahamic Covenant, and this word covenant is another word for promise. And so what is this promise?

First, God will make Abram into a great nation, that through his descendants, his lineage, there will come a great nation, called Israel, and we saw that during the Old Testament time. And we're seeing it again in our day, for indeed, Israel is again a nation. But we'll see the greatness and glory of this nation much more so in the future, for that's when this promise will truly be fulfilled, during the millennial kingdom age. And this status of being a great nation is speaking of both physical and spiritual greatness. Hab. 2:14, Psalm 72

Second, God will bless Abram. He will cause good things, positive things, important things, wonderful things to happen to Abram through his descendants. And again, these blessings are both physical and spiritual. And these blessings are long lasting, not just for a few years, but for thousands and thousands of years, and for all eternity.

Third, Abram will have a great name, Abram will become a famous person. We know this was true in the OT times among the Jews and it's true today. And we know this is true among Christians, for Abraham is our spiritual father.

Fourth, God will be a blessing to others. Now this relates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this promise. That is, God blesses Abraham, and through him, billions of people will be blessed, in both physical and spiritual ways. And God is the One who is the source of all these blessings. But God works through people, and that's what we see here, for God is working through the life of Abraham.

God wants to bless your life so you can be a blessing to others. That is, God wants you to be a means of His blessing, primarily in spiritual ways. God wants His goodness, mercy, kindness, love, forgiveness, and truth to be seen in your life by others, with the result that their lives are spiritually and eternally affected by your life. Psalm 67:7. You're God's child and are His representative on this earth. And you need to think about how God wants to work through your life so you can be a blessing to others.

This promise that God gives to Abraham is extremely and eternally important, so important that God expands on it and repeats it in many other passages.

- Gen. 13:14-17. From Gen. 12 we know Abraham's descendants will become a great nation, but if they're to be a great nation, then they'll need this land to live on. And so God promises Abraham all this land, and says that it will be for him and his descendants, and forever. And that's quite the promise. And in the OT times, Israel lived on this land, but it is still true today, as we can now see, and it is still true in the future, for God does not go back on his promises.

Genesis 15:1-3. God told Abram that He'd protect him and bless him. But Abram is questioning this because he doesn't have any children - all he has is Eliezer, this servant.

God then promises to Abram that he'll have his own child who will be his own heir.

- Gen. 15:5. And so God has Abram look at all the stars as an illustration of the fact that he will be blessed and have many descendants and become a great nation.

Gen. 15:6. And Abram believes God, that is, Abram has faith in God that God will be true to His word, will come through on his promise. And God sees that Abram has faith and God reckons it to him as righteousness. Abraham was saved, for by his faith, he was forgiven and became a child of God. Eph 2:8-9. And because of Abram's faith, God blesses him both spiritually and physically.

- Gen. 15:6-8. Now Abram had believed God, but he also wants some assurance from God that He would come through for him on His promise.

Gen. 15:9-15. We read about a covenant God made with Abram, and the fact that Abram was in a deep sleep means this was a unilateral covenant for Abram couldn't do anything – it was what God did for Abram and for mankind and it wasn't dependent at on what Abram or man did. It was a unilateral, unconditional covenant, a treaty ratified by God alone.

Gen. 15:13-16. God tells Abram that his descendants would be strangers in a land for 400 years, and this is what happened in Egypt. And we see that God judges nations. Vs. 14 says that God would judge Egypt, and we know that happened during the plagues. And vs. 16 says that God would judge the Amorites in the future, in the 4<sup>th</sup> generation, And that happened after these 400 years. But it says something very instructive – that God wouldn't judge them until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete, or full.

An illustration is fruit - you don't pick fruit until it's ripe, and God doesn't judge this nation until its sin is ripe, is complete. So we see that God judged Egypt so Israel could escape, and God judged the Amorites so Israel could enter their country. Lev. 18:24-25  
- Throughout history we see that God is very patient with people and their sin, and nations and their sin, but at the right time, at the time their sin is ripe, that's when God judges them. And this is happening in our country as well. We are being judged for our sin, but are not yet fully judged, and that's because our sin is not yet complete, not yet ripe.

Genesis 17:1-8. God now reaffirms His covenant with Abram. He tells Abram that He will multiply him, that is, give Him many descendants, like the stars in the sky. God tells Abram that he'll be "*the father of a multitude of nations,*" that He'll make him exceedingly fruitful, which is referring to being physically and spiritually blessed. And it's a spiritual blessing in that God would bless him with spiritual descendants, ones who also had faith in God, and who were made righteous by God. And God then commands Abraham that he and all his male descendants need to be circumcised, which is a sign of his faith in God, his relationship with God.

Rom. 4:1-5. This talks about the faith of Abraham that resulted in righteousness.  
- Rom. 4:9-13. This tells us about the sign of circumcision, and it is emphasized that it's not circumcision on man's part that saves him, but his faith that saves him. And so, spiritually speaking, Christians are descendants of Abraham.  
- Gal. 3:6-14, 3:26-29. As Christians, we're sons of God and descendants of Abraham.  
- We'll talk more about the Jews next week and their future, and how they relate to the Christians and their future.