

CGYG / LIFE Bible Study Series 2006-07: Genesis**Genesis 12 – Jesus Christ: Fulfillment of God’s Blessing through Abraham****Sept 21, 2007**

Many Christians today wrongly de-emphasize the importance of the Old Testament, and many churches in North America have seemed to altogether throw out the Old Testament from their pulpits and Sunday school classes. In its place has come superficial preaching and teaching, cursory glances at parts of the New Testament (which, they say, are more ‘relevant’ to the times), or topical studies where the focus is not on Christ, but on what the Bible means ‘to me’ and how its moral and ethical teachings can apply to ‘my’ life. But Christianity is **all** about the person of Jesus Christ – who He was (and is), what He did (and continues to do) and what He taught (and still teaches us through His Word today). But the truth of Christ lies not only in the New Testament. The entire Old Testament, as well, was written to point sinners to Jesus Christ – the great Redeemer whom God would send to take away the sin of the world. In Genesis 12 we see the beginning of how God was going bring forth this Messiah, through one man Abram (whom God would later rename Abraham) and his descendants.

Read Genesis 12:1-9

1. What were God’s promises to Abraham as He called him to leave his familiar surroundings and journey out? How did God’s personal promises of blessing to Abraham play out in his life (e.g. 15:1-5; 17:3-9; 21:1-2; 25: 7-8)?

2. What further promise does God make to Abraham in the final part of verse 3? From the follow Scriptures, how would God one day bring about blessing to every nation through Abraham?
 - Matthew 1:1-17 →

 - Acts 3:17-26 →

 - Galatians 3:7-9 →

 - Galatians 3:14-16 (also Gen 22:18) →

3. On what basis does the Bible say that Abraham and his offspring received God’s promise (Romans 4:13-17)? How does this still apply to those who would call themselves Christians today (Galatians 3:26-29)?

In His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12, God begins to reveal how He would fulfill the promise He made back in the Garden of Eden, in Genesis 3:15. Because of Adam & Eve’s sin, creation was alienated (separated) from God, and cursed by God. Amidst judgment, however, God’s mercy was demonstrated in His promise that there would come an ‘offspring’ of the woman who would crush the head of Satan, defeating him and defeating sin. This promised offspring is Jesus Christ, the Saviour through whom God would restore all things back to glory, purge the land of sin, and restore all of humanity and all of creation.

4. Read John 8:31-41, 48-59. In Jesus' time, how did the Jews view Abraham and what were their attitudes as they appealed to his authority? In what way did they mistake the meaning of God's covenant with Abraham, and how did Jesus rebuke them? What did Jesus point out about the object of Abraham's faith that the unbelieving Jews completely missed (v.56)? What remarkable claim was Jesus making in verse 58 (c.f. Exodus 3:14)?

Jews, both historically and today, miss the point of God's promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12 because they believe that 1) God's blessing is reserved only for those who are physical descendants of Abraham – those coming out of the nation of Israel and 2) salvation or a right standing before God can be achieved by obeying the 'laws' that God had given Moses back in the Old Testament. Throughout history, God had revealed to them glimpses of the promise of a Saviour who was to come, through whom all people from all nations (not just Jewish) would receive salvation by *faith*, not through works of obedience. Yet they rejected this truth, choosing instead to cling on in vain to their identities as Jews – physical descendants of Abraham – to save them.

How would Christ be a blessing to people of all nations, and what would some of these blessings be?

5. Read Isaiah 53:3-12. Isaiah was written about 700 B.C., yet gives a vivid description of Jesus Christ, the promised Saviour who was to come through Abraham's lineage. As we've seen, the blessings through Christ would ultimately be extended not only to Jews, but to all other nations as well. These blessings would come at a great cost, however, because they could only come once sin was paid for, and God's judgment was satisfied. What would Christ have to endure, why would He need to endure this, and what blessings would there be for those who believed on Him?
6. As we studied at our retreat this year, there would be many more blessings that would come for those who set their eyes of faith on God, and the Saviour whom He would send. What are some of these great blessings (e.g. Jeremiah 31:33-34, Job 19:25-27, Isaiah 35:1-10)?

Taking every thought captive...

Throughout the Bible, we see God's blueprint of His salvation plan. Central to this plan is the person of Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son whom He would one day send to take on the form of a man; subjecting himself to temptation, yet remaining sinless (Heb 4:15), Christ would suffer and ultimately die on the cross to bear the burden of all of our sin. His resurrection three days later would prove Christ's victory over sin and death once and for all. Abraham looked forward to the day of Christ, and was glad (John 8:56). He understood that God's covenant with him extended beyond the immediate blessings of land, protection and descendants. God would ultimately use Abraham and Israel to bring forth Jesus Christ, and Christ would be the blessing to all nations. This was the hope that Abraham set his sight on. Let us take our example from him, and place our faith in Christ – both in what He did for us on the cross 2 millennia ago, but also looking forward to His imminent return.