



# TODAY IN GOD'S WORD

Promises Promises, *The Relational Imperative Part 9*

June 25, 2006

## PRELUDE

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*Av Avraham shanah beniyim*

*Beniyim Av Avraham shanah*

These Hebrew words have a deep theological use. They are the words: "Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham..."

Whether you are a Muslim and call him the Prophet Ivrahim and consider him the first monotheist or a Christian reading Paul's statement: "What then shall we say that our father Abraham has found according to the flesh?" (Romans 4:1) and see him as the first Hebrew—no matter who you are in the western world, you know the name of Abraham.

## TEXT - GENESIS 11:27-12:9

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*Now the Lord had said to Abram:*

*"Get out of your country,*

*From your family*

*And from your father's house,*

*To a land that I will show you.*

*I will make you a great nation;*

*I will bless you*

*And make your name great;*

*And you shall be a blessing.*

*I will bless those who bless you,*

*And I will curse him who curses you;*

*And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* (Genesis 12:1-3)

## INTRODUCTION

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We have come to the fourth great covenant between God and man – the next stage of the relational righteousness.

- ÿ In the Garden – a covenant of fellowship
- ÿ After the Fall – a covenant of consequences
- ÿ After the Flood – a covenant of responsibility

This is a covenant of **distinction** (new word?). Why did God choose to "call out" the Father Abraham? What had changed about the world that YHWH now felt it was necessary to call out someone special?

## PREACHING OUTLINE

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What God says to Abraham – this great covenant – is a poem. It is a divine idea conveyed in human language.

### 1. I WILL SHOW YOU: GOD WORKS IN GOOD THINGS

- a. The term *show* (Heb. *ra'ah*) implies providing a pleasurable view. In other words, you might translate this: "I have something good I want you to see!"
- b. God's promises with us are for *good things*, but we blind ourselves to them through reliance on our own ability to see rather than his ability to show.
- c. You and I have sin – not bad things we do, but simply part of our being in this world – that is going to *redirect* our thinking and control our vision.

### 2. I WILL MAKE YOU: GOD WORKS IN THE LONG TERM

- a. God makes this phenomenal promise. "I'm gonna make you into a great nation." The Hebrew word *gowm* (nation) comes from the same root as their word for *body*.
- b. It took *35 years* for Abraham to have his son Isaac. And then, Isaac didn't get married until he was 40! During those years Abraham...
  - i. Almost lost his wife to pharaoh in Egypt and then AGAIN to the king of the Philistines!
  - ii. Tried to adopt his servant as heir and had to be reprimanded by God.
  - iii. Had a child with another woman who he had to then abandon because of his jealous wife
  - iv. Lost his relationship with his nephew Lot
  - v. God tells him to offer his son as a sacrifice...
  - vi. Lost his wife to whom he was married for probably close to a century!
- c. If we look at it from Abraham's point of view, it seems like God didn't fulfill his promise, wasn't going to fulfill his promise.

ILL: *Norm and This Old House versus Ty and Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*

### 3. I WILL BLESS THEM: GOD WORKS THROUGH PEOPLE

- a. Make you a blessing - If Christians are somehow "special" it is only to benefit others. We are the ministry of the Holy Spirit to one another – "building up one another"
- b. There are few POOF! Moments when God directly zaps people to accomplish things. It does happen, in fact it happens a little in the Bible, but these moments are significantly fewer than the moments when God works directly.

ILL: Moses and the 70 elders. In one account, God tells him to do it, but in another his father-in-law does. Which one is it? BOTH!

### APPLICATION/INVITATION

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If you're looking for God to ZAP your life and make things better, or you're looking for a quick fix, you're not looking to God for the remedy.