

THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM

“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” (Gal 3:14)

It is indeed remarkable that a wondering shepherd who lived 4,000 years ago would dream of blessing all the families of the earth. Please consider! Genesis chapter 10 lists 70 nations, all of whom were descendants of Noah, but none of whom dreamed of blessing the whole earth. The Scriptures teach that when they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful. In fact, they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things (Rom. 1:21 - 25) Thus, all these nations were not only idolatrous, they were also self centered. The gods they fashioned were tribal deities from whom they sought power to defeat other nations. So we read about the gods of Egyptians) (Ex. 12:12), the gods of the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, and Canaanites, etc. (Deut. 7:1)

Since Abraham lived in the midst of these idolaters, conventional wisdom would have him share their narrow, parochial views. He did not! Abraham had a world view. His family members were idolaters, but he was not (Josh. 24:2). He believed in the One True God Who created the heavens and the earth. The difference between the God of Abraham, and other gods, is both dramatic and unmistakable. Perhaps to help preserve the purity of his faith, God commanded Abraham to get away from his country, his kindred, and his father's house. Such separation was not selfish, it was a means to an end. The ultimate goal of God's dealing with Abraham, was that “all the families of the earth” might be blessed through him (Gen. 12:1 - 3). Honesty compels us to acknowledge the dramatic difference between the faith of Abraham and that of the idolaters around him.

The “blessing of Abraham” is mentioned at least five times in the book of Genesis, and each time it encompasses all the people of the earth.

- **“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen 12:3)**
- **“Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?” (Gen 18:18)**
- **“That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Gen 22:17-18)**
- **“And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;” (Gen 26:4)**
- **“And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen 28:14)**

Paul knew that the blessing of Abraham involved the gentiles, but most had missed that message. Take, for example, Paul's reference to the gentiles in Acts 22:21. His Jewish audience listened patiently until he dared to mention that God sent him to the gentiles. At that point the people shouted that Paul was not fit to live. They dramatized their anger by taking off their coats and throwing dust into the air (vss.22 - 23). Even today many Christians are offended by the mere mention of missions. The late Carl Ketcherside highlighted the problem with this biting sarcasm: “Don't talk to me about world evangelism, what I want to know is - who got my parking place?”

May the blessing of Abraham expand your vision and enlarge your dreams. In short, may our attitude be the same as that of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5).