

Genesis 12:1-3

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In Genesis 12:1-3, God made one of the most amazing promises to the most unlikely person. God promised Abram (aged, pagan man with a barren wife) that he would make him into a great nation and that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And Abram believed it. Now certainly we know that God fulfilled this promise to Abram. The nation of Israel ultimately comes from the line of Abram, but the promise God made here to Abram is so much more than that.

This promise points us back to the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve, human beings created in God's own image, were living in a perfect world and God had blessed them (Genesis 1:28). It's important that we don't miss this. They were blessed by God - dwelling with him in a perfectly created world. Yet, this perfect setting was so quickly ruined as Adam and Eve sinned. The world fell into chaos and they were cast out of the garden. The blessing was gone.

This is where we see the beauty and ultimate fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham. It points us forward to the gospel. It points us toward the fact that through Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, those who have faith would be rescued from their sin and made right with the holy God of the universe. They would once again be blessed! Paul seems to clearly state this in his explanation of salvation by faith to the Galatians. He states in Galatians 3:8:

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”

God didn't just make a promise of blessing to Abram in his own life; He promised the salvation of all the people of God through Jesus! Even if Abram didn't know it.

Here in Genesis 12:1-3, the entire story of redemption seems to shift when God makes this promise to Abram. God is building upon his previous promise in Genesis 3:15 that He is going to deal with our problem of sin. As New Testament readers, we feel the weight behind these verses. We know that God has kept the promise he made to Abram. The one who was promised to come and crush the head of the serpent is the same one who will come through the line of Abram and make salvation possible for all who might believe. We know this promise to be just as impactful for us today as it was for Abram then, because if we are believing and trusting in Jesus, then we are part of the families of the earth who have been blessed.