

# Abraham: The Father of the Faithful

## Lesson 12: Heirs of Abraham: The Promise Fulfilled in Christ -- Genesis

### 12:1–3; Galatians 3:6–9, 26–29

We end where we began. Twelve lessons ago we stood beside an old man in Haran and heard God make him a promise so large it seemed almost reckless: I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. We have followed that promise through famine and failure, through covenant and laughter, through the knife raised on Moriah and the grave bought at Machpelah. And now we ask the question the whole study has been pointing toward: what ever became of that promise? Did God keep it? And if He did, where do we fit?

The answer the New Testament gives is breathtaking. The apostle Paul, writing to churches full of ordinary people who had never set foot in Canaan and had no drop of Abraham's blood in their veins, tells them this: "Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham." And again: "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." The promise made to one man on a dusty road four thousand years ago reaches across the centuries and lands, astonishingly, on us. The blessing meant for all the families of the earth has come to our family.

How? Through Christ. Paul says the promise was always about a singular Seed, and that Seed is Christ (Galatians 3:16). When Jesus came, lived, died, and rose, the promise to Abraham was not set aside or postponed; it was fulfilled. The blessing to all nations flows out from the cross and the empty tomb to people of every land. And the way we come into that blessing is the way Abraham's faith always worked: not by earning it, and not by merely believing about it, but by a living faith that lays hold of Christ. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ," Paul writes, "and if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring."

So this final lesson is not really about ancient history at all. It is about you. It is about how the God who called Abraham has called you, how the promise that began with one family has swept you in, and how everything Abraham hoped for and never fully saw has come to its yes in Jesus Christ. The friend of God died still holding the promise by faith. We get to live on the other side of its fulfillment, as his heirs. Let us see how we got here, and how we are meant to live as the children of Abraham and the children of God.

**Group Discussion:** Paul tells ordinary Christians with no physical connection to Abraham that they are his true children and heirs of the promise. Many people today still expect God's promises to Abraham to be fulfilled in a future, earthly, political nation. Why does it matter, both for understanding the Bible and for our own faith, to see that these promises are fulfilled instead in Christ and in His church?

**Personal Reflection:** The promise that all the families of the earth would be blessed has reached all the way to you. Stop and consider that the call of one old man in Haran is part of why the gospel ever came to your life. How does it change your sense of who you are and why you are here to know that you are, in Christ, an heir of Abraham and a child of God?

*Read Genesis 12:1–3; Galatians 3:6–9, 26–29*

## Study Questions

1. In Genesis 12:1–3, God promised Abraham a great nation, a great name, and that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed, and Paul says this was God “preaching the gospel beforehand to Abraham” (Galatians 3:8). What were the strands of this promise, and what does it mean that the gospel itself was already present in God’s word to Abraham?
2. You are living inside the third strand of that promise, the blessing meant for all the families of the earth. How does it shape your sense of identity and purpose to know that you are part of a plan God set in motion four thousand years ago, a story far larger than your own life?
3. Paul declares, “it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham,” and they are “blessed along with Abraham” (Galatians 3:7, 9). What does it mean that Abraham’s true children are those who share his faith rather than merely his physical descent (compare Romans 9:6–8; John 8:39), and why is this such good news for people of every nation?
4. Some rest their confidence before God on their background, their family heritage, or their religious upbringing. Is your standing with God based on any such external thing, or on a living, personal faith like Abraham’s? Where do you need to make sure your hope rests on Christ and not on inherited religion?
5. Paul makes the striking point that the promise spoke of a single “offspring,” and “who is Christ” (Galatians 3:16); the blessing to all nations comes through Him. How are the promises to Abraham, descendants, blessing, and inheritance, fulfilled in Jesus Christ rather than left unfulfilled or postponed?
6. The blessing promised to all nations has actually reached you in Christ. How often do you live with gratitude and wonder that you have been included in Abraham’s blessing? What would change this week if you walked through your days conscious of being so richly blessed in Christ?
7. Paul explains how we become Abraham’s offspring: “in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:26–27). How do faith and baptism into Christ bring us into the family of Abraham and the blessing of the promise, and why does this show that we enter by an obedient faith rather than by faith only or by works of merit?
8. Galatians 3:27 speaks of having been baptized into Christ and having put on Christ. Have you responded to the gospel with the obedient faith that brings a person into Christ? And if you have, how fully are you living out your identity as one who has “put on Christ” and belongs to Him?

9. Bringing the whole study to its climax, the promises of land, descendants, and blessing find their fulfillment not in a future earthly, political restoration of national Israel, but spiritually and gloriously in Christ and His church, where believers of every nation become Abraham's offspring and "heirs according to promise" (Galatians 3:29). How does the New Testament teach that the kingdom came with Christ and was established in His church (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13), that Christ reigns now, and that the inheritance is the eternal, heavenly one, so that the whole sweep of Abraham's promise lands on us who are in Christ?
10. Look back across the entire study of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and now see yourself as his heir in Christ. Name one specific way Jesus has formed you through this whole journey. What is the single truth about faith, the promise, or your identity in Christ that you most want to carry forward, and how will you live as a child of Abraham and a child of God?

### **Now or Later**

Reflect on these passages: Galatians 3:16, the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring, who is Christ; Romans 4:16–17, the promise rests on grace so that Abraham is the father of us all who share his faith; Ephesians 2:11–22, in Christ those once far off are brought near and made fellow citizens and one new people; Daniel 2:44 with Acts 2, the kingdom God set up in the days of Christ and His apostles, which shall never be destroyed; Hebrews 12:22–24, we have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city Abraham was looking for