

REVIEW

Covenant Theology: the unity of the Bible; God's plan of redemption for humankind.

Gen. 1-2 : Creation, **Covenant of Works** (obey and be blessed; follow my word and live!)

Creation Ordinances: ☞ Fellowship ☞ procreation ☞ work/dominion ☞ rest

Make my glory known and therein lies your richest blessings!

Gen. 3 : **Man sins**; failure to keep the covenant. The **Covenant of Grace** is promised.

Gen. 4-5 : Genealogies

Gen. 6 : Increasing sin and corruption on earth

Gen. 8 : **God's Covenant with Noah**

Gen. 9 : **Noah sins, Ham sins**

Gen. 10 : Genealogies

Gen. 11 : Tower of Babel: **more sin**. Genealogies

Gen. 12 : **God's Covenant with Abraham**

Genesis 12:1-9
The Sovereign Call
1. **God Calls Abram** (1-3)
2. **Abram Responds** (4-9)

God Calls Abram (vv. 1-3)

Who was Abram? A nobody! A pagan worshipper!

Jos. 24:2-3 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.'

Abram becomes somebody because **God** calls Abram.

Who is God? **Yahweh!** The Only Creator and Redeemer.

Why Abram? The free good pleasure of his will, for his glory, but also to bless humankind!

God's call to Abram consists of **2 commands** with **3 promises** attached to each command.

Command: Go!
From your country, family, father's house
To the land that I will show you
Promises:
- I will make of you a great nation
- I will bless you
- Make your name great

Command: Be a blessing!
Promises:
- I will bless those who bless you
- Him who dishonors you I will curse
- In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed

In these three verses, the word "**ble**ss" is used 5x.

From Genesis chapters 3 to 11, the word "**cu**rse" is used 5x.

God is on a mission to reverse the curse and bless his people.

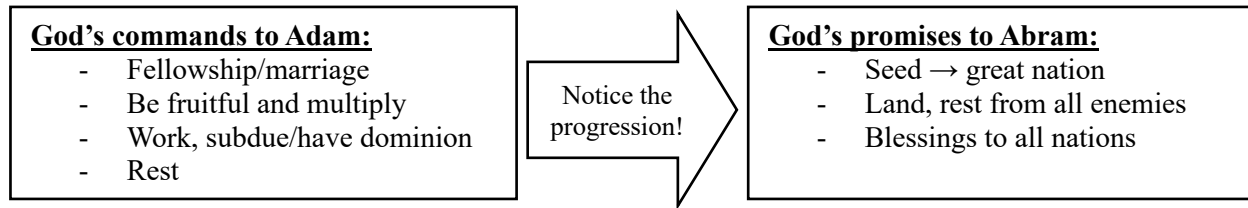
God will bless **THOSE** (plural) who bless you.

God will curse **HIM** (singular) who curses you.

God loves to bless!
But a sinful heart:
• Never realizes how merciful God is.
• Blames God for the curses they deserve.

Exodus 20:5-6 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Like the **creation ordinances**, Abram's blessings would come through obedience to God's word!



[Abram Responds to God \(vv. 4-9\)](#)

Gen. 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

<p>It was not easy for Abram to trust and obey!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Abram already lived 43% of his life. For Canadians, it's roughly age 35. ☞ To leave your father's house = to forsake your identity! ☞ Abram did not know where he was going. <p>Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And <u>he went out, not knowing where he was going.</u></p>
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- ☞ Abram was promised a great nation while in reality he has no offspring (verse 5).
- ☞ Abram was promised a land while in reality the Canaanites were in that land (verse 6).

Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, let him **deny** himself and **take up** his cross and **follow** me." The moment we believe his word and obey, we see God working in us!

<p><u>Behind-the-scenes:</u> God played an active role!</p>	<p>Jos. 24:3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac.</p>
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John 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. **God calls us and he walks with us, even before us!**

<p>God actively causes his commands to be fulfilled in Abram.</p>	<p>Command: leave your country, his family, and his father's house. But Abram left his country with his father's house and his family.</p> <p>Gen. 11:31 Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together <u>from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan</u>, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.</p>
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So God brings about the separation which he called Abram to. Terah died in Haran.

Gen. 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan.

Gen. 13 tells us that Abram is finally separated from Lot as well. We are often **sluggish** in our obedience, but **God works** in our lives to fulfill his decree.

As we walk in obedience,
We see Him more clearly,
We see His promises fulfilled,
We long even more to worship Him!

Gen. 12:6-7 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

There are literal and spiritual aspects of God's promise to Abram. **Literally:**

Shechem is where Jacob came back safely from Laban (Gen. 33:18).

It is where the bones of Joseph were finally buried (Jos. 24:32).

It is where Joshua and Israel renewed their commitment to God (Jos. 24).

In the NT, **Shechem** is ca **Sychar**, where Jesus met and saved the Samaritan woman (Joh 4).

Spiritually: Everyone who **calls** upon the name of the LORD is called the children of Abraham. These people of God are to inherit the whole world, with Christ as the King!

The world is our temporary tents.
We "build altars" and call on Him as we journey through.

Gen. 12:8-9 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

An altar is more permanent than a tent.

Heb. 11:9-10 By faith [Abraham] went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

God is calling you today: to **GO** and **BE A BLESSING!**

What is your response?

Go away from your sins and misery, from the earthly and temporary pleasure.

Go run to Jesus where you find eternal life, the fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore!

Live to be a blessing for everyone, especially the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).

This is what genuine repentance/conversion is, as described in the **Heidelberg Catechism Q88:**

Q. What is involved in genuine repentance or conversion?

A. Two things:

the dying-away of the old self,

and the rising-to-life of the new.

Churches will be strong if we faithfully live up **our calling: to call upon the Lord and call the world to call on Christ!**

Will you die to your old self and rise to your new life? Though the journey will be hard and messy. Gen. 12, 15, 16, 17 show Abram's weak faith and sin. But God is faithful through and through.

Call upon Jesus, **whose yoke is easy, whose burden is light** (Mat. 11:30).

God will never "hang up" on those who call on Him!

Respond to His call! Call upon His Holy Name!