

# ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

## Never-to-Be-Forgotten Promises

Genesis 12:1–6; 15:1–6



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

God never forgets His promises. He doesn't back out of agreements. He never breaks covenants. Though He may not fulfill His promises according to human timetables, we can always count on this: *God keeps His word.*

Some of God's covenants were *conditional*, such as the Mosaic covenant in which God promised the Israelites security and blessings in the land if they kept the whole Law (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1–29:1). The formula was “If you will, then I will.”

Other covenants were *unconditional*, like God's promises to Abraham. God guaranteed the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant with a pledge in three parts: “I will, I will, I will.” No *ifs* in this formula.

We saw in the previous study God's command to Abraham: “Leave your native country . . . and go to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). In faith, Abraham “departed as the LORD had instructed . . . and headed for the land of Canaan” (12:4–5). What motivated Abraham to launch into a perilous journey that would take him a thousand miles from his homeland, never to return? He obeyed because *He trusted God* to keep His irrevocable, unconditional promises.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Let's study God's covenant with Abraham using our *Searching the Scriptures* skills of observation, interpretation, correlation, and application. Observation is the necessary beginning point of any Bible study, and we'll start with examining the covenant up close.



### Observation: Viewing the Covenant Up Close

Imagine yourself as Abraham receiving God's command to take his family to a faraway and unfamiliar land. Your natural curiosity might wonder, *Why should I go? What is waiting for me there?* God answered Abraham's curiosity by listing the blessings in store for Abraham. Let's open this covenantal pot of gold and *observe* what the Lord had awaiting Abraham at his rainbow's end.

## Quotable

*If you're  
sitting in God's  
waiting room,  
the message today  
is to trust Him.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Read Genesis 12:2–3 below, and use your cursor to highlight the phrase “I will.” In the space that follows, write out God’s promises.

I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

“I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

“I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

“I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

What else do you observe about these “I will” statements?

The promise contained in each blessing is unconditional. God most certainly will do as He says . . . but not right away. And there’s the rub! Abraham was to wait for God to fulfill His promises, and as he waited, his faith was tested. Let’s examine the *meaning* of each blessing as well as the *obstacles* that challenged Abraham’s faith.



### Interpretation: Explaining the Covenant

The first blessing is “I will make you into a great nation” (Genesis 12:2)—the national blessing.

#### National Blessing—Genesis 12:2

This blessing means that Abraham’s family tree will grow into a mighty race of people who, like limbs and branches connected to a single trunk, can trace their origin to one set of parents, Abraham and Sarah.



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What did God say to Abraham to affirm this promise (see Genesis 13:14–17)? And what promise did God add regarding land for Abraham's descendants to inhabit?

### *Obstacle One*

What obstacle stood in the way of this blessing coming to pass? Read Genesis 11:30 for the answer.

According to Genesis 15:1–6, God reaffirmed His promise. How did Abraham respond? He believed God, even though he and his wife were advanced in age and had no children. In what remarkable way did God honor Abraham's faith (15:6)?



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### Correlation: A New Testament Truth

Abraham's faith would bear more than the fruit of family. It would bear *the fruit of redemption*. Abraham's spiritual lineage includes all those whose faith God counts as righteousness. How did the apostle Paul describe Abraham's faith and link it to our faith in Christ? Read Romans 4:20–25.

What a wonderful legacy for which we can all be grateful!

### Personal Blessing—Genesis 12:2

In addition to generations of descendants, God promised personal blessings. Based on Genesis 13:2; 23:6; and 24:1, what blessings did Abraham enjoy regarding wealth and acclaim?



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### Obstacle Two

The fulfillment of the second blessing was jeopardized when “a severe famine struck the land of Canaan” (Genesis 12:10), threatening Abraham’s livelihood and forcing him to flee to Egypt. In the next study, we’ll examine Genesis 12:7–20 and see how God provided for Abraham while in Egypt, despite Abraham’s failures.

### International Blessing—Genesis 12:3

God’s final promise included blessing the whole world through Abraham and cursing nations who disdain him. As a result, “all the families on earth will be blessed through you,” God assured Abraham (Genesis 12:3).

What does this verse mean?

By promising to protect Abraham and his family, God will safeguard His plan to redeem the world through Abraham’s messianic line. Through Christ, the whole world will be blessed! Those who are not Abraham’s offspring will be grafted in to Abraham’s spiritual family tree, so that we “receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children” (Romans 11:17). Along with Abraham’s offspring, hope is born for every person!



### Application: We Thank God, Trust God, and Wait for God

Three reminders from Abraham’s example emerge from our study.

*We thank God for His promises to us.* Just as Abraham and Sarah must have thanked God for the promise of a son, we also can thank Him for the promises we claim in Christ. Thank God for these blessings right now—just as the apostle Paul wrote:

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)



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*We trust God to keep His promises.* What good is a promise if we can't trust the giver to keep it? In this moment, declare your trust in God as you read the following promises.

Hebrews 4:14–16

Hebrews 6:10

*We wait on God to fulfill His promises.* Promises, like seeds in the ground, don't produce fruit in an instant. Abraham was 75 years old when God promised him an heir, but Isaac wasn't born until 25 years later! Are you waiting for a seed to sprout—perhaps a prayer that hasn't been answered yet? What prayer are you waiting on God to answer?

Sometimes, God uses periods of waiting as opportunities for us to change and mature. During this waiting period, how have you grown? How can you grow?



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As you conclude this study, take a moment to give thanks, declare your trust, and resolve to wait as you pause in prayer.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for the Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, who bore our sin on the cross and bloomed eternal when He rose from the dead. I trust in Him as my Guide and Protector, who will lead me home to You. Soothe my anxious mind and help me to rest . . . and wait. Give me the faith and patience of Abraham and Sarah, and until You fulfill all Your promises, fill my heart with joy for the journey. Amen.*



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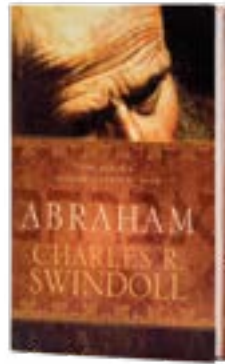
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### Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2017 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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