

The Promise of Blessing

✖ Although the entire civilized world recognizes the teaching of Messiah, His promise of blessing extends beyond the spiritual realm into everyday life. In fact, if you have a cell phone, a huge company in Israel probably made your antenna.

In the reading this week drawn from Genesis 12: 1 17: 27, the Creator tells Abram He is going to bless the world through his descendants. In case you're thinking He's talking about all people, including biological and even spiritual descendants, He's really not. He's talking about Jews.

The same covenant was repeated to both Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs of the Jewish people. Because Abram was willing to trust God enough to leave his home, family, occupation, and his comfort zone and go to an unknown land, God knew he could trust Abram with the privilege of being Abraham, the Father of Nations.

The promise reads, "Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3, Complete Jewish Bible).

Together, we call this the Abrahamic covenant or Abrahamic promise. These seven succinct statements lay the foundation for the rest of the Bible.

I will make of you a great nation.

Even though Jews are in the minority of the world's population (less than .02 percent), there was a time when the Nation was great. Deuteronomy 4:6 says that when Israel followed the

Torah, people would say, "This great nation is surely a wise and understanding people." I think people would say this about Jews today. Jews are few in number, spread throughout the world; yet, there is something great about my people.

I will bless you.

God gave to Abraham's descendents a magnificent legal code, the Torah. It wasn't just a bunch of rules and regulations. It was a wonderful way (the real meaning of "torah") of life. It promised incalculable blessings if followed, which it often was.

I will make your name great.

Who hasn't heard of Abraham? Who hasn't heard of Abraham's descendents? Even though he lived 4,000 years ago, he is the paragon of a man of faith, setting the standard for billions of people throughout the years.

You are to be a blessing.

Jewish people have contributed disproportionately in nearly every area of life, from science to the arts, from philanthropy to religion. God's promise did come to pass. New York Times reporter McCandlish Phillips, who wrote *The Bible, The Supernatural and the Jews* (available through) said that the Jews were disproportionately influential in the world. This was so that Abraham's descendents could fulfill God's promise to him.

I will bless those who bless you.

In every nation where Jewish people have been allowed to be contributing members of society, the countries have prospered. In order to bring this blessing, God enabled Jews to achieve success. Deuteronomy 8:18 reminds the people, "You are to remember Adonai your God, because it is he who is giving you the power to get wealth, in order to confirm his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors ..." Jewish people contribute financially the most, per capita, of any other people in the

world.

I will curse anyone who curses you.

Where are the countries that have cursed Israel? Most are gone or at least have diminished in power and influence. At one time, Spain was a dominant world power. Jews were flourishing in what was called the Golden Age. Yet, after the Spanish Inquisition, after Jews were forced to convert to Catholicism or be killed, and after Jews were expelled from the land, Spain lost much of its power, wealth and influence in the world. The same is true for Germany and other countries. I can only hope that the U.S. doesn't make the same mistake. God's promises do come to pass.

By you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Is there any greater blessing than to know the Messiah of Israel, who came from the Jewish world? Even the practical blessings brought to the world by God's chosen people confirm the fact that God chose to bless the world through his people.

So, this seminal verse in Scripture lays the groundwork, provides the promise, from which the rest of the Bible unfolds. As part of the portion read this Sabbath, called Lekh L'kha (Get yourself out...), we can only be grateful that our father, Abram, was willing to "get out" for God's sake, and become Abraham.

Rabbi Baruch Rubin is president of Messianic Jewish Communications () and Rabbi of Emmanuel Messianic Jewish Congregation () both in Clarksville, Maryland.