

## THE THREE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM (22)

The fact that Jesus was to be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world "was known before the creation of the world" (1 Peter 1:18-20). At first it was a mystery known only to God (Romans 16:25-26). However, through the prophecies and promises made to the nation of Israel this mystery was gradually made known to the world. Even with all the clues that God had given during several thousand years of history, the good news remained a mystery until Jesus Christ actually rose from the dead.

Listen to Paul, a person who saw the resurrected Jesus,

*"Now to him (God) who is able to strengthen you, as promised in the Good News entrusted to me and in the proclamation of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the revelation of that hidden purpose, which in past ages was kept secret but now has been revealed (Romans 16:25)."*

Remember, unlike other faiths and religions, faith in Jesus is rooted in history. Christians believe that God has acted in history, just as He acts in our lives today to accomplish His purposes. In the next few lessons we are going to show evidence in several thousand years of history, that God planned everything we now know about Jesus before it actually happened. This historical evidence will be a strong reason to have confidence that the God of the Bible is the true God. Remember, no one wrote books predicting Mohammed or Buddha before their coming. Yet 39 books in the Bible cover over 2000 years of history that precede the coming of Jesus. They tell about his ancestors and contain detail predictions about what Jesus would do for all mankind.

Let us begin this series of lessons by going to three verses that are actually an outline of the entire Bible story. God, in about 2000 B.C., made three promises to a man named Abram or Abraham.

Now the Lord God said to Abram,

*"Get out of your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to (1) **the land** that I will show you. I will make of you (2) **a great nation**. I will bless you, and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. (3) In you will **all of the families of the earth be blessed**." (Genesis 12:1-3)*

**Abram**, or **Abraham** as he was later called, came from a family who were worshipers of idols in the city of Ur in the land of Babylon. Babylon was where the present nation of Iraq is and near the Persian Gulf. Abraham became a believer in the one true God who created the world. He was told to leave his home and travel to a land called "Canaan" which is now controlled by the people of Israel and Palestine. This was about a 1000-mile walk for Abraham. Let's summarize the three promises that outline the rest of the Bible story.

- 1) A GREAT NATION would come into existence through him.
- 2) Abraham was to be given a LAND.
- 3) ALL NATIONS would eventually be made happy through his offspring or descendants.

The promise of a Great Nation coming from Abraham was the first promise to be fulfilled. This story is told in the book of Genesis and the first part of Exodus. This nation, with God's help, eventually took the Promised Land around 1400 B.C. and the LAND promise was fulfilled. However, the most important promise was the last one concerning ALL NATIONS. God's working through Abraham's people in a special way was for the purpose of sending a descendant of Abraham (Jesus) to save ALL NATIONS.

God's promises to Abraham over 4000 years ago, though focused on one nation at the time, looked to the future when one citizen of that nation would bless the whole world.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus died on the cross 2000 years ago. When did God decide to allow his Son to die on the cross?
2. In times past Jesus' death was kept \_\_\_\_\_ but was later revealed by the apostles.
3. Please give the exact chapter and verses where the three promises to Abraham are listed in the Bible.
4. List the three promises to Abraham.
5. Were these promises related only to Abraham's people?