

Promised

SESSION 10

Genesis 12:1-5a; 13:11-18

Memory Verse: Genesis 12:3

God's blessing is seen in the promises He keeps.

Every journey begins with a first step. Whether it is a vacation trip, starting a new job or marriage, schooling, or a hobby project, there is an initial move to begin the journey. Today's session chronicles the opening of Abram's (Abraham's) journey that set in motion God's redemptive plan and culminated in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without Abram's first step of faith, this world would probably be a much different place. As with any journey, his pilgrimage of faith took many twists and turns. There were sad detours of disobedience and great acts of trust. Nonetheless, Abram's example has stood the test of time—not just in Scripture, but also across Christian history.

As you reflect on Abram's faith in today's verses, think about your own faith journey and that of the adults in your group. How obedient have you been on your spiritual adventure? Ask God to strengthen your faith, as well as the faith of those doing life with you in Bible study.



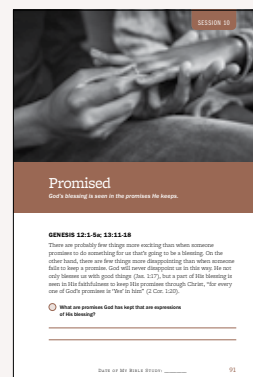
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There are probably few things more exciting than when someone promises to do something for us that's going to be a blessing. On the other hand, there are few things more disappointing than when someone fails to keep a promise. God will never disappoint us in this way. He not only blesses us with good things (Jas. 1:17), but a part of His blessing is seen in His faithfulness to keep His promises through Christ, "for every one of God's promises is 'Yes' in him" (2 Cor. 1:20). (PSG, p. 91)

What are promises God has kept that are expressions of His blessing?



Understand the Context (Genesis 12:1–14:24)

So far in our study of Genesis, the focus has been on monumental events in the history of the world. These events include the creation of the world and of humanity. They also include the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their subsequent removal from the garden of Eden. Next came the first murder by Cain, followed by the worldwide flood and the division of all people into various clans and nations based on shared specific languages.

With chapter 12, Genesis shifts from the description of global events to the stories of individual people who interacted with God. Most notably, the focus falls on a single family: The family of Abram (who would later be known as Abraham).

Genesis 3–11 (a period of approximately 2,000 years) emphasized the problem of humanity's sin. People were created for fellowship with God. However, these opening chapters recount how people consistently moved away from God. Throughout these chapters, human beings constantly failed in their relationship with God.

Thankfully, God chose not to give up on His created ones and set into motion His plan to pursue us and draw us back to Himself. To do this, God selected Abram and his descendants as His chosen people. Through these chosen people, who would eventually become the nation of Israel, God sent His ultimate solution for sin: Jesus, the promised Messiah.

With Genesis 12:1, the entire story of Genesis slows down considerably. The swift panorama of history is replaced with the steady, ongoing narrative of

Abram's family. The focus eventually narrows to four different people from that family (Abram/Abraham, Isaac, Jacob/Israel, and Joseph).

We first encounter Abram as a part of the family tree of Shem (Gen. 11:10–32). Abram accompanied his father, Terah, on a journey from the Mesopotamian city of Ur that was supposed to end up in Canaan. However, when they reach the city of Haran, the text tells us that Terah settled there and died there. Abram was still living in Haran when God called him and directed him to complete the trip that his father had started.

Genesis 12–14 sets the stage for Abram's story, highlighting God's covenant relationship with Abraham, his deception in Egypt, his relationship with his nephew Lot, and his encounter with a mysterious priest/king named Melchizedek. Central in this narrative are the obedience of Abram to God's call and the covenant of blessing promised by God. Although Abram left his home in Mesopotamia, God promised an even greater homeland in Canaan. Eventually, his descendants would create a nation that would bless the world.

As you read Genesis 12:1–5a; 13:11–18, consider our personal responsibilities to God in response to His promises. (PSG, p. 92)



INTRODUCE: Write the following on the board: *If I had known then what I know now . . .* As the group arrives, show them the prompt on the board and direct them to discuss the following question with a partner: **What is something you did that, in hindsight, you would have done differently now that you have more life experience?** After a few minutes, allow some volunteers to share their conversations.

EXPLAIN: Point out that we all wish we had some “do-overs” in life. Share that this session explores choices made by both Abram and Lot, as well as the huge impact of those choices.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 91 of the PSG. Share that the passage is also grounded in some promises God made to Abram.

ASK: **What are promises God has kept that are expressions of His blessings?** (PSG, p. 91)

TRANSITION: *This session represents a transition in the Genesis narrative. It moves us from the history of the world in general to the history of one particular family. God placed His call on Abram, and Abram obeyed even when it didn't make sense. That kind of obedience is our challenge as children of God, as well.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Music

Play the song (or show the music lyric video) “Evidence” by Josh Baldwin. Ask: **What is the main theme of this song? What evidence do you see of God's work in your life? How have you seen Him fulfill promises in your life?** Share that today's session opens the story of God's relationship with Abram. *His call and His promises to Abram set the stage for the rest of Genesis—and really the rest of the Old Testament until the coming of the Messiah.*

Move (Genesis 12:1-5a)

1 The LORD said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you. **4** So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. **5a** He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan.

Key Concept

Abram's Covenant

In the "Abrahamic covenant" God made seven promises to Abram:

- He would lead Abram to a new land. This, of course, was Canaan, later referred to as the promised land.
- He would make Abram a great nation. Several nations eventually came from him. (See Gen. 25.)
- He would bless Abram. God bestowed favor upon Abram with material possessions and people that were a part of his clan.
- He would make Abram's name great. Even today, all three of the world's major religions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—claim a relationship with him.
- He would make Abram a blessing to others. Through Abram and his descendants, others would receive favor from God.
- He would bless or curse others based on how they treated Abram. This promise indicates that God ("I will") is the source of the blessings or curses.
- He would bless all people on earth through Abram. This foreshadowed Jesus, the Messiah.

(v. 1) The LORD said: Several hundred years had passed since God had announced His covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:17). When God spoke to **•Abram**, He announced another covenant. This covenant included the command for Abram to leave his home and to resettle in a land that God would show him.

According to Acts 7:2-4, Abram was living in Ur when he received God's call. Genesis 11:31 indicates that Terah, as head of the family, would only go as far as **•Haran**. After his death, Abram continued the journey to Canaan in obedience to God.

(v. 1) Go: Most ancient covenants were bi-lateral. Each party agreed to their assigned responsibilities



Aerial view of the Euphrates River. Abram followed the river when he headed north out of Ur.

and benefits. However, God's covenant with Abram was one-sided. Abram's role was simply to obey. God said **go** and that's precisely what Abram did (see v. 4).

(v. 4) Abram went: This was Abram's first step on the journey of obedience. This act of faith likely included a new allegiance to God, since Joshua 24:2 indicates that Abram's father, Terah, had worshiped idols.

(v. 4) Seventy-five years old: This was the first of two obstacles facing Abram. His age and his wife's barrenness seemed like roadblocks to God's promises. The second obstacle was the presence of the clans and tribes already living in the promised land.

(v. 5) •Sarai: This name means "princess." Later God would change her name to "Sarah" (Gen. 17:15). While the meaning is generally the same, the name change highlighted the new destiny God had planned for Sarah. Rather than staying childless, she would give birth to a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.

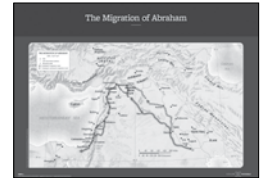
(v. 5) People they had acquired: These were male and female servants that Abram and his nephew, Lot, had **acquired** over the years. This would have formed a large retinue of people and possessions.

EXPLORE Genesis 12:1-5a



APPLICATION POINT: Believers demonstrate trust in God through obedience.

CONTEXT: Explain that the final four sessions in this quarter focus on the life of Abram/Abraham. Use Understand the Context (PSG, p. 92) to provide the background for this session. Draw attention to **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Migration of Abraham*) to set the geographical context and to point out where Abram’s narrative starts.



READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Genesis 12:1-5a**, as the group listens for what God called Abram to do.

EXPLAIN: Direct attention to **Pack Item 6** (*Poster: Life of Abraham*) and **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Genesis Time Line*). Share how this was a massive life change for Abram. Note that he was seventy-five years old when God called. Affirm that we are never too old to be used by God.



RESEARCH: Instruct the group to work in pairs. Direct half the pairs to review pages 93-94 of the PSG to learn about God’s promise in verse 2. Instruct the other pairs to review pages 93-94 of the PSG to learn about God’s promise in verse 3. After several minutes, call for volunteers to share their findings.



ASK: What role did Abram’s trust in God play in his response to the blessing? (PSG, p. 95)

MEMORIZE: Direct the group to read aloud Genesis 12:3. Share that this is the memory verse for this session. Challenge adults to commit it to memory in the days to come.

Group Activity Options

Bible Skill

Take time to read Genesis 12:1-5a. Then use Hebrews 11:8-19 to gain additional insights into Abraham’s faith journey. Abraham’s faith was tied directly to the promises that God gave Him in the covenant relationship defined in Genesis 12. Centuries later, Paul used Abraham’s response to these promises as a definition of true faith. Read, and perhaps memorize, Romans 4:20-21. Note that genuine faith is believing that what God has promised He is well able to deliver.

Separate (Genesis 13:11-13)

11 So Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other. **12** Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot lived in the cities on the plain and set up his tent near Sodom. **13** (Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning immensely against the LORD.)

(v. 11) •Lot: Lot was Abram’s nephew, the son of Abram’s brother, Haran. Evidently, Haran died in Ur sometime before Terah led his family to the city of Haran. When Genesis 12:5 referred to all of Abram’s people and possessions, this same would have been true for Lot. He also had many possessions and livestock. No doubt God’s blessings on Abram had fallen on Lot, as well. In addition, Abram (and likely Lot) picked up more animals during his disappointing experience in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20).

Soon the size of their combined flocks and herds became too much for the land to support. In addition, their herdsmen began arguing over grazing rights. This would be the first of many disputes between the clans of Abram and Lot. Lot’s descendants became the Moabites and the Ammonites, nations that often were at odds with the Israelites (19:36-38).

(v. 11) Plain of the Jordan: In the decision to separate, Lot rejected the land of promise in favor of the Jordan Valley. He chose the more “exotic” portion of the land. This would be the region of Canaan east of the Jordan River.

The text describes this as a lush green area and likens it to the beauty of Eden (13:10). This comparison may also have been an allusion to the coming disaster that awaited Lot’s family. In just a short while, this lush land would become scorched earth with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Key Place

Sodom

The wickedness of **Sodom** was so famous that its name has been equated with evil for centuries. The location of this city, as well as the other cities of the plain, is uncertain, but evidence suggests that they could have been near the Dead Sea. The wickedness of this city wasn’t limited to unnatural lust (see 19:4-5), but also the sins of pride and social injustice. These are mentioned in Ezekiel 16:49-50, along with the fact that the people committed “detestable acts.”

(v. 11) Journeyed eastward: This is another example of moving **eastward** as a symbol of separation in the book of Genesis. For more examples, see Genesis 3:24; 4:16; and 11:2.

(v. 12) Abram lived in the land of •Canaan: As the elder of the traveling families, Abram had every right to choose the fertile plains of the Jordan for himself. However, God had promised him **the land of Canaan**, which was far more important to Abram (12:7). Abram had already traversed the land, building altars for worshiping God along the way.

(v. 12) Cities on the plain: Five cities in this region had formed a political unit: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar (Bela). These cities and their kings are referenced in Genesis 14:2 in a description of their war against three opposing kings—a war Abram would be pulled into so he could rescue Lot.

Sodom was the chief city among the group, but all five cities were condemned by God because of their wickedness. The parenthetical statement in verse 13 describing the wickedness of the cities is a foreshadowing of judgment to come. This entire lush green valley would be burned with the fire of God’s wrath (19:27-29).

(v. 13) Immensely: The Hebrew wording describes more than the nature of the sin. It reflects the degree or magnitude of their sin. The word suggests “force,” “might,” or “abundance.” The same word (translated “very”) was used earlier in the chapter to describe Abram’s vast wealth (13:2). In a sense, the residents of Sodom were setting the standard for evil. Wickedness was a powerful presence in the city and that influence filtered out to the other cities in the region.

EXPLORE Genesis 13:11-13



APPLICATION POINT: Believers must seek God when making decisions.

SUMMARIZE: Present a brief overview of Genesis 12:10–13:10. Point out that Abram wasn't perfect and was still growing in his faith. Explain the conflict with Lot that led them to part company.

READ: **Call for a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 13:11-13**, directing the group to listen for where Lot chose to live.

ASK: **Why did Lot choose that portion of land?** (*It was fertile and appealing. See verse 10.*)

MINI-LECTURE: Provide some context for the choice Abram gave Lot. Refer to **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Migration of Abraham*) as necessary. Using the information on pages 95-96 of the PSG, explain the contrast between where Abram and Lot settled. Encourage the group to suggest things that can move people—even believers—farther from God and His blessings.



ASK: **What role did Abram's faith in God's promises play in the way he treated Lot?** (PSG, p. 96)

TRANSITION: *Believers must seek God when making decisions, especially decisions that will affect their future and the future of their descendants.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Physical

Explain that you will read two options. *To choose the first option, move to the right side of the room. To choose the second option, move to the left.* Read the following:

- Steak or chicken
- Mountains or beach
- Cars or trucks
- Yankees or Red Sox (or another sports rivalry)

For each round, call on volunteers to explain their choice. After you have finished the list, share that these choices don't have the same consequences as Lot's choice, but they can remind us to trust God and to lean into His guidance and promises.

Claim (Genesis 13:14-18)

14 After Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, “Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, **15** for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see. **16** I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. **17** Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you.” **18** So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

(v. 14) Look: As Lot had looked on the valley around the Jordan, God told Abram to **look** around at the land He was giving him and his descendants. The contrast is stark here. Lot chose the valley for himself, while God chose Canaan for Abram.

(v. 14) North and south, east and west: Everything Abram could see eventually would belong to his descendants. Nothing was left out. Of course, the possession of this inheritance would not permanently take place for many years. The children of Israel would first be slaves in Egypt and then conquer the promised land under Joshua.

For Abram, though, mentally and spiritually taking possession of the land was a step of faith as he trusted God’s promises. This is especially true since at the time he had no offspring and, because of Sarai’s barrenness, the prospects of an heir were quite dim.

(v. 15) Forever: This land would be a permanent bestowal on Abraham and his descendants (see Gen. 17:8.) Prophecies throughout the Old Testament pointed to the permanency of this gift from God. This permanent bestowal continues to be a sticking point for modern-day Israel in her relationship with surrounding nations.

(vv. 15-16) Offspring: Three different times God used pictures from nature to illustrate the extent of Abram’s **offspring**. Here, God compared his descendants to the **dust of the earth**. Later, in Genesis 15:5, God likened their number to the stars in the sky. Finally, in Genesis 22:17, God promised that the number would be as vast as the sand on the seashore. In each case, the emphasis was on the inability of a person to place a number on how many descendants Abram would have.

(v. 17) Get up and walk: God had commanded Abram to look so he could visually take in all the land that God was giving to him and his offspring. Now, he was instructed to **walk** throughout the land and to claim it as his inheritance from God.

Key Doctrine:

The Church

The New Testament speaks of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. (See 1 Chronicles 16:23-24; Psalm 67:1-2; Revelation 7:9.)

(v. 18) Oaks of •Mamre: In light of the controversy over grazing rights, it is interesting to note that **Mamre** means “grazing land.” Despite their seminomadic existence, this became the primary dwelling place for Abram and his immediate family for years to come.

Known for its many oak trees, Mamre was located about two miles north of the village of **Hebron** or about 19 miles south of Jerusalem. This was the area in which Abram later purchased a cave for a family burial site. For centuries, that was the only spot of Canaan actually owned by Abram and his descendants.

(v. 18) Built an altar: After this second affirmation of the covenant from the Lord (see 12:1-4), Abram worshiped God, thanking Him for His favor. Building altars was a regular part of Abram’s life. Genesis mentions Abram building altars at Shechem (12:6-7), near Bethel (12:8), and at Mount Moriah (22:9). Worship was also an integral part of his life, as He expressed gratitude for the intimate relationship he had with God.

EXPLORE Genesis 13:14-18



APPLICATION POINT: Believers should celebrate God's faithfulness to His promises.

READ: Call for the group to read silently **Genesis 13:14-18**, looking for God's covenant promise to Abram, as well as Abram's response.

IDENTIFY: Lead the group to scan pages 97-98 of the PSG to discover details of God's covenant with Abram. Point out the various aspects of the covenant while referring to **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: Covenants in Genesis*) to help the group better understand the Abrahamic covenant. Emphasize how Abram responded to what God shared with him. Encourage adults to think about how they should respond to the blessings of God in their own lives.

ASK: Why was it important for God to remind Abram of His promises after he had separated from Lot? Why was it important for Abram to set up an altar once he settled in the land? (PSG, p. 98)

TRANSITION: God's blessing is seen in the promises He keeps—not just for Abram but also for us.

Covenant	Parties	Location	Significance
Abrahamic	God and Abraham	Genesis 15:1-21	God promises Abraham a son and the land of Canaan.
Mosaic	God and Israel	Exodus 24:1-8	God promises to be God to Israel and to dwell with them.
Davidic	God and David	2 Samuel 7:1-17	God promises David a son and a kingdom.
New	God and all people	Matthew 26:28	God promises forgiveness of sins through Jesus' blood.

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: Stones

Distribute a small stone and a permanent marker to each person in the group. Explain that in the Bible, most altars were built with stones piled up on one another. Share that altars often represented a significant spiritual event in the lives of people and served as a witness of God's faithfulness. Encourage the group to use the permanent markers to write a Scripture verse, word, or phrase that reminds them of a time when God fulfilled a promise in their lives or when God showed Himself faithful to them. Encourage the group to keep their stones in a spot at home that will be a visual reminder of God's faithfulness.

CHALLENGE

- SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from Apply the Text on page 99 of the Personal Study Guide:
- *Believers demonstrate trust in God through obedience.*
 - *Believers must seek God when making decisions.*
 - *Believers should celebrate God's faithfulness to His promises.*
- REFLECT:** Challenge adults to identify how trust, blessings, and faithfulness go together when it comes to God's promises.
- DISCUSS:** Guide the group to discuss the first set of questions on page 99 of the PSG: **Discuss as a group why it is important for believers to celebrate God's faithfulness to His promises. What are ways we should celebrate God's faithfulness to His promises?**
- PRAY:** Close in sentence prayers, encouraging each person to use one sentence to thank God for a blessing in their lives. When everyone has prayed, close the prayer by thanking God for sending Jesus to be our Savior.

After the Session

Reinforce the session by texting the group a couple of times during the week and asking where they have seen God's promises and God's work around them. Follow up with another text that includes a prayer for the group as they move forward into areas God has prepared for them.

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EXPLORE  THE BIBLE.

God's Covenant with Abraham

Robert D. Bergen

The Bible portrays God as a relationship builder. Time and again, the Lord reached out to people, communicating His guidance, promises, and expectations. The God of the Bible shows Himself to be both a promise maker and—more importantly—a promise keeper. Nowhere does the Old Testament present this more powerfully than in God's relationship with Abraham,¹ a man from an idol-worshipping clan in ancient Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) who went on to become the outstanding biblical example of faith in the one true God (see Rom. 4:1-3,9-25).

IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

A formal agreement that defined a relationship between two parties in ancient western Asia was known in ancient Hebrew as a *berith*, that is, a covenant or treaty. An agreement of this type could be used to strengthen a relationship between two close friends (1 Sam. 18:3) or to end a dispute between two unhappy neighbors (Gen. 26:28; 31:44). The agreement could be between a king and his subjects (2 Sam. 5:3), or between two people groups (Josh. 9:15). It could embody God-given instructions that people were obligated to follow (Ex. 34:10) or express a formal commitment to God (2 Kings 11:17).

Archaeologists have unearthed ancient non-Israelite covenants in the form of cuneiform tablets. These documents, especially those of the Hittite culture found at Alalakh (near Syrian Antioch),² provide evidence of formal agreements that were the equivalents of some types of Israelite covenants of the Old Testament period.



Scholars often divide the Old Testament covenants into two categories. Those established between two people with roughly the same social power were called parity treaties. Agreements where one party was superior to the other was known as a suzerainty treaty.

It's possible to add a third category for formal relationships established between God and people. This third type of biblical *berith* describes formal agreements God made with the nation of Israel, with individuals, and with nature. Though scholars usually place these agreements in the category of suzerainty treaty, putting them in a separate category is useful. Perhaps an appropriate term for this God-initiated relationship is "divine covenant."

Divine covenants differ in three significant ways from a classic suzerainty treaty. First and most

obviously, they include God. Second, their purpose was not to impose demands on a conquered group or individual. Third, the God-sized benefits directed toward the lesser party far exceed what a conqueror offered in any suzerainty treaty.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

God Himself initiated the covenant relationship with Abraham through a series of divine revelations over the course of Abraham's lifetime. Thus, getting a complete view of the divine covenant that God established with Abraham requires examining passages across Genesis.

Genesis 12 does not use the term *berith*, but later passages make clear that events recorded here mark the beginning of one of the most important divine-human relationships in Scripture. The relationship began in Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 15:7; see Acts 7:2), some 220 miles southeast of modern Baghdad.³ In a gracious and sovereign act, the Lord communicated a series of authoritative commands and amazing promises to a man born and raised in an idol-worshipping family (Josh. 24:2).

The Bible gives no indication Abraham had been seeking any special association with God. The Lord initiated it on His own. By the time the divine covenant had been fully developed—a process that took many years—both parties had performed several key actions. First, an initiatory act took place when the Lord summoned Abraham to separate from his idol-worshipping family and go to a place of the Lord's choosing (Gen. 12:1).

Second, a formal covenant ceremony took place. The covenant ritual was solemn, mysterious, and of the utmost significance. As part of the ceremony, Abraham slaughtered ritually clean animals and separated portions of their corpses into two piles. For His part, the Lord caused a smoking firepot and a flaming torch to pass between the divided animals (15:17), thereby obligating Himself to fulfill the terms of the covenant.

Third, Abraham and all males associated with him—his slaves and all future descendants—were required to be circumcised as a sign of submission to the terms of the covenant (17:11-14) and acceptance of the Lord as their God (17:7).

Finally, Abraham had to pass a test confirming his submission to the Lord of the covenant. This test confirmed his willingness to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, the key human link in fulfilling core covenant promises (22:9-12).

GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES

As part of the covenant, the Lord made several outstanding promises to Abraham—promises He later fulfilled. Most prominent among these was that Abraham, a married but childless man, would have many descendants. In fact, he would become the father of many nations (12:2; 17:4,16,20) and his offspring would be as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore (15:5; 22:17). More than that, kings and tribal leaders would be among his descendants (17:6,16,20). Though Abraham would have many sons, Sarah's son Isaac would be the primary expression of the divine covenant relationship.

Second in prominence among the covenant promises was the assurance of a homeland. On five occasions (13:14-15; 15:7,18; 17:8; 22:17), the Lord promised Abraham that the land of Canaan would be the lasting possession of his descendants, though it would not be given to them for centuries (15:13-16).

Finally, the Lord would bless Abraham and his descendants (12:2; 22:17). As part of this divine blessing, the Lord would protect Abraham (12:3; 15:1) and make him famous (12:2).

God's covenant with Abraham brought blessings to the patriarch and his progeny. But more than that, the divine blessing bestowed on Abraham was extended to all peoples (12:2-3) through Abraham's greatest descendant, Jesus Christ (see Matt. 1:1).

Robert D. Bergen served as the associate dean of academic administration and distinguished professor of Old Testament at Hannibal-LaGrange University, Hannibal, Missouri. This article originally appeared in the Fall 2015 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. Used with permission.

1. As a symbol of their covenant relationship, God changed the patriarch's name from Abram to Abraham. For the sake of clarity, the article will use Abraham throughout.

2. J. A. Thompson, *The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1964), 10.

3. David M. Fleming, "Ur" in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, and Archie England (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1640.