

# "God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

## Section 2: The Basis of Faith: Promise (Genesis Chapters 12-36)

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; <sup>2</sup> And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; <sup>3</sup> And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

The Hebrew writer referred to this as the great promise of God. *Hebrews 11:8-10 "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise...for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."*

The word used for promise was ἐπαγγελία **ēpaggēlia**, *ep-ang-el-ee'-ah*, meaning an *announcement* (for information, assent or pledge; especially a divine *assurance* of good). A promise is something that has not yet occurred, but most certainly will. God was making a conditional pledge to Abraham to find what He wanted for his life. Even though that had not yet occurred, Abraham could know it was for sure because ALL promises have conditions. The conditions are there for not only to know what is to come, but also to assure us that they will come because they are tied to tangible actions on our behalf.

Abraham was to carry out four commands in order to know he had the promise from God.

1. Get out of your home country

- a. He was from Ur of the Chaldeans, what we refer to today as modern-day Iraq. He suffered the terrible premature loss of a brother named Haran while there (Gen 11:28).
- b. It appears that they attempted to leave the past behind shortly thereafter. Abraham moved to an area about 660 miles northwest from Ur with his wife Sarah, his father's household and the rest of the extended family. It is likely they named this ancient settlement Haran after their departed loved one.
- c. It was likely here that Abraham received the word of the LORD to move on. He thought this new location was going to be the spot where they would start over, but God had different plans. To move again after traveling by foot over the desert for months was really quite a test of faith.

2. Get away from your father's household

- a. God told him that he was going to have to leave his father behind on this trip. This was something that would be very difficult to do, since his father was very aged.
- b. The decision was ultimately made by God, for his father would die (Gen 11:32) and be buried prior to departure. It was now time to go to Canaan.

3. Get away from the other relatives

- a. Abraham and his household headed out to the land that God was calling him to. Along with him was his nephew Lot and his household (Gen 12:4).
- b. They would not separate the families for a few more years so the promise could be yet be confirmed.

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4. Get into the land of Canaan
  - a. They made the 500+ mile trip southwest to the land of Canaan. It was considerably different from the prior lands he had lived. The people were different culturally, the land was different geographically and he was now the patriarch of his family.
  - b. A famine hit and they decided to leave the land of Canaan for Egypt. Perhaps they would prosper better economically at that location, but never mind they were not in Canaan like God commanded. Now he was only fulfilling 2 for 4 in the commands of the promise, but God requires 4 for 4. Surely he did not yet fully accept the terms and conditions of the promise!

After a mix-up with Pharaoh in Egypt, they were asked to leave. The two families headed back to Canaan, so they were once again 3 for 4 in the commands of the promise. The only one left was to get out away from the family of Lot. God was working on this. They went to the Negev beyond Bethel and herded livestock. Both Abraham's and Lot's operations grew too large for the land to sustain. Abraham offered Lot the first pick of any of the land for himself and he chose the plains of Sodom, departing immediately. This was the first time that all four commands of the promise of God were fulfilled. It was at this time God kicked in the full assurance of the promise by saying the following.

Genesis 13:14-17 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; <sup>15</sup> for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. <sup>16</sup> "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. <sup>17</sup> "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

Now all the assurances of God's promise to Abraham had kicked in. If Abraham did so, which he did, then he could also have assurance that God would be good on the promises. What were the promises?

1. He will become a great nation.
  - a. This is the first of the seven promises made to Abraham. It was also a key promise since he had no children with his wife Sarah since she was barren. In chapter 15, God addressed this promise.
    - i. Genesis 15:5-6 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." <sup>6</sup> Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.
    - ii. He believed God because he had done what God asked him to do to get from God what he was promised.
    - iii. Even though he believed God, he still needed something tangent in order to know for sure. Therefore God set up a sacrifice of covenant to affirm it.
  - b. All Israelites were the decedents of Abraham. It did not matter that Sarah his wife was barren (Gen 16:1), for God made the womb in the woman. He could just as

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easily open the womb for a baby. They had a child together in their old age, whose name was Isaac (Gen 15).

- c. Isaac would have a son named Jacob. Jacob would have twelve sons.
  - d. Going into Egypt and staying for four hundred thirty years, they multiplied into millions. Yes, they became a great nation through the promise of God, just as He said.
2. He will be blessed of God.
    - a. God caused Abraham to grow economically through trade and livestock (Gen 24:1).
    - b. God caused Abraham to be blessed by Melchizadek, the King of Salem, the location of Jerusalem, the future holy city of God (Gen 14:17-24).
    - c. God blessed Abraham to live to a ripe old age (Gen 25:8).
  3. His name will become great.
    - a. Abraham became well-known to all in the region. From Pharaohs of Egypt to the neighbors down the street, everyone knew who he was.
    - b. He had hundreds of workers and a large estate.
    - c. He had a good name among most of these people.
    - d. The mere fact that we are talking about him thousands of years later boasts of this promise becoming reality.
  4. He will be a blessing to others.
    - a. He was the one that brought the messengers of God into his home for hospitality during the curse on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18).
    - b. He was the one whom worried about Lot's well-being when the cities would be destroyed (Gen 18).
    - c. He made a covenant with Abimelech in Genesis 21:22 to get along together when things were tough.
    - d. He was concerned that his son Isaac find a good woman to carry on the promise (Gen 24:7).
  5. He will lead righteous people to the blessings of God.
    - a. Those who sided with him in the battle of the kings in chapter 14 were blessed with the spoil.
    - b. God passed these blessings onto Isaac in Genesis 26:4.
    - c. He reiterated the promise to Jacob in Genesis 32:12.
  6. He will lead evil people to the cursings of God.
    - a. The kings that went up against him paid the price with their lives.
    - b. When Pharaoh dare made attempts to take Abraham's wife, his nation was stricken with sickness (Gen 12:17).
    - c. When Abimelech did the same in Genesis 20:3, God told him, "You are a dead man!"
    - d. It was revealed to Abraham that the curse of brimstone be upon the dwellers of ungodly Sodom (19).

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7. In him all the families of the earth will be blessed.
  - a. In Genesis chapter 22, God tested Abraham's faith in the promise. He asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac. This would be a horrible thing to do with such a "promised" child from God. He truly believed that through Isaac his son that all the nations of the earth would be blessed.
    - i. Hebrews 11:19 states that he believed so much in the promise of God that he incorporated into the belief that God would raise him from the dead. At the spot where God spared Abraham's only begotten son, a ram was caught in the thicket by the horns. That ram was the replacement for Isaac.
  - b. *Genesis 22:14 Abraham called the name of that place "The LORD Will Provide", as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."* And yes, if we wait long enough at that very location, we would see that the "LORD will provide" in the form of His only begotten son Jesus.
    - i. This would be the place that God spared a punishment plague from 2 Samuel 24.
    - ii. It was there that David would build an altar unto God.
    - iii. It was at this site where the temple would be built in Jerusalem (2 Chr 3:1).
    - iv. It was at that location that a twelve year old Jesus would impressively reason the scriptures with the educated elite (Luke 2:46-47).
    - v. It was at that site that Jesus would eventually show up with zeal in response to the money changers and dove sellers (John 2:17).
    - vi. It near that very spot that Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the people (John 1:29), would die on the cross.
    - vii. It was that very spot that Jesus from the spirit world would split the veil, symbolically entering the Holy of Holies as High Priest and high sacrifice once for all for the sins of all mankind (Mt 27:51; Hebrews 10:20).
  - c. It is in this fact of history that Jesus became salvation to all who believe in Him. Romans 4:3 states *For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."*
    - i. Abraham had faith in the promise of God because he knew he truly believed it. It was this faith in a promise that Abraham became a blessing to all the nations of the earth.
    - ii. Romans 2:29 confirms that a true Jew is not from birthright outwardly, but he who is inwardly circumcised of the heart by the Spirit. If a person shares faith in a promise of God like Abraham, then they are descendants of Abraham. It is through the promises of Christ in God that all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Galatians 3:6; James 2:23).
    - iii. That promise is to enter covenant with God through Jesus and live a faithful life unto God.

## Closing Summary:

There would not be "God's Love Story" without the word PROMISE. God makes a promise; the promise is love and that is the story. In the next lesson we will cover the life of Joseph and the power of having a dream.