

Promise

A Christmas Promise • Message 1

Perry Duggar

November 30, 2025

Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Ask God to help you obey his call, just as Abraham did.
- Pray to hear His voice and follow where He leads.
- Pray that Brookwood is a place where all people see His love.

Scripture Reading:

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 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."

Genesis 12:1-3 (NLT)

A. Introduction: We have reached the Christmas season; this message series is named *Promise*.

1. Today's message is titled, **A Christmas Promise**.
2. The promise of a miraculous child was not made first to a teenage girl named Mary.
3. The first Christmas Promise would be made 2000 years earlier to another childless elderly couple - a 75-year-old man named Abram and his 65-year-old wife named Sarai; God promised them a miraculous child - and many other descendants.
4. Focus: **Genesis 12:3 (NLT)** - *"All the families on earth will be blessed through you."*

The first promise was presented as an...

B. Old Testament PROMISE.

(Genesis 12:1-3; C/R: Genesis 11:31; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; Acts 7:2-5; Romans 4:3)

1. God shocked an idol worshipper [Joshua 24:2-3] named Abram in Mesopotamia (Iraq) by speaking to him and telling him something surprising and wonderful.
2. Andy Morris just read what is called the Abrahamic Covenant from Genesis 12:1–3.
3. In this brief, startling message, God disclosed Himself as loving and compassionate, aware of people's predicaments and willing to provide for their concerns.
4. The word *covenant* (Heb. **b^erîyth**, *ber-eeth*) refers to an agreement between two parties, a pledge or binding oath of promise.

5. This covenant with Abraham is an everlasting covenant because it has no ending point.
Abrahamic Covenant includes:
 - 1) **LAND.**
 - 2) **DESCENDANTS.** (or *seed*, growing into a great nation, sometimes listed separately)
 - 3) **BLESSING to ALL.** (sometimes includes protection, verse 3).
6. Covenants can be conditional (bilateral, requiring both parties to fulfill certain requirements) or unconditional (unilateral).
7. God did not begin fulfilling His promises to Abram immediately. (Acts 7:5)
8. **Genesis 15:1-2a,5-6 (NLT)** - *Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great." But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son?"*
Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous [imputed to him] because of his faith.
[Justification by faith; Abram did nothing to deserve it, he merely believed God's promises; God credited righteousness to him - and He does to us.]
9. Abraham had no law to obey; it would be given through Moses over 500 years later.
10. This covenant, introduced in Genesis 12:1-3, was actually created in Genesis 15.
11. **Genesis 15:7-12, 17-21 (NLT)** *Then the LORD told him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans [by speaking to him] to give you this land as your possession." But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?" [Then God created the covenant with Abram by a cutting ceremony.] The LORD told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away. [Details are confirmation of description.] As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him.*
After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."
12. A covenant is formed by *cutting* flesh, dividing an animal's body, then passing between the *pieces* of flesh, symbolizing the punishment for failure to keep the covenant.
13. God's agreement with Abram on behalf of the world was an unconditional, unilateral *covenant*, because only God passed through the divided pieces of flesh, binding Himself to His promises, declaring His own destruction if He failed to fulfill this covenant.

14. A covenant may include penalties for breaking the agreement, but unlike a contract, it is considered immoral to break a covenant - it is a betrayal of trust.
15. EX.: Marriage is a covenant entered with God and the community as witnesses (Proverbs 2:17); divorce separates (tears) the “one flesh” created by the marriage (Mark 10:6-9).
16. God reaffirmed the covenant in Genesis 17:1-21, when Abram was 99 years old, and Sarai was 90 - and no children had been born to them yet. (Delay of 25 years from first call.)
17. He memorialized this event by changing Abram’s name (“exalted father”) to Abraham (“father of many;” 17:1-8; many nations and even kings would come from him; 17:5-6).
18. God changed Sarai’s name to Sarah (both mean *Princess*, change represented her relocation because the spelling of her name differed in Ur and Canaan; 17:15-16).
19. God also required every male to be circumcised as the mark of the covenant (17:9-14).
20. The covenant was renewed with Isaac (26:2-5), (born when Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90 (21:5), name means he laughs); renewed also with his grandson Jacob (28:10-17).
21. The unconditional covenant did require for Abraham to *believe* God’s promises - not merely to accept facts about God - to *trust* what God said, which *changed* his life. [Abraham’s faith is reported in Romans 4:3, 9, 22; Galatians 3:6; James.2:23; it is like ours!]
22. APP.: Do you have faith like Abraham? How has your belief affected your life?
23. God’s covenant promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3) is a Christmas blessing that extends to us.

The Christmas Promise was...

C. Fulfilled through Jesus’ BIRTH. (1st Coming)

(Acts 3:24-26; C/R: Romans 4:20-25; 9:6-8; 11:17-30; 15:8-9; Galatians 3:8-16)

1. **Acts 3:24–26 (NLT)** - [Peter preaching at the Temple in Jerusalem after Jesus’ return to heaven.]
“Starting with Samuel, every prophet spoke about what is happening today. You are the children [literally seed, quoted from Genesis 22:18;26:4] of those prophets, and you are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For God said to Abraham, ‘Through your descendants all the families on earth will be blessed.’ When God raised up his servant, Jesus [approval of Christ’s work on the cross], he sent him first to you people of Israel, to bless you by turning each of you back from your sinful ways.”
2. Jesus came first to Israel, but the promise of blessing through faith was also offered to Gentiles - us! [God’s mercy to Gentiles in the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 18:49; 117:1; Isaiah 11:10]

3. Paul stated at **Galatians 3:8 (NLT)** - *...the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you."*
4. Paul declared something that would have been shocking and insulting to Jews of his day.
5. **Galatians 3:28–29 (NLT)** - *There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.* [Ephesians 2:12-13]
6. In fact, Abraham's physical descendants are not necessarily children of God; they must become children of the promise by faith. (Romans 9:6-8)
7. **Romans 9:6,8 (NLT)** - *Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, for not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God's people! This means that Abraham's physical descendants are not necessarily children of God. Only the children of the promise are considered to be Abraham's children.*
8. Gentiles are referred to as branches from a wild olive tree, grafted in because of belief in Christ, but God's call still includes Israel! (Romans 11:17-30)
9. **Romans 11:23,28-29 (NLT)** - *And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree. Many of the people of Israel are now enemies of the Good News, and this benefits you Gentiles. Yet they are still the people he loves because he chose their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn.*

The Christmas Promise will be...

D. Ultimately Fulfilled in Jesus' RETURN. (2nd Coming) **(Revelation 5:6-10; C/R: Revelation 1:1-20)**

1. Jesus will return again to gather all of His children - Jews and Gentiles - everyone who has believed God's promise of forgiveness by faith.
2. God revealed the future to Jesus, who sent an angel to present this revelation to John in a vision; John who faithfully reported what he saw in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:1-20)
3. **Revelation 5:6–10 (NLT)** - *Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing [Jesus, our sacrificial lamb, now alive in heaven] between the throne and the four living beings [angels in God's Presence] and among the twenty-four elders. [representing the redeemed church] He had seven horns [seven symbolizes complete or perfection, horn represents power, animals use horns to battle] and seven eyes, which represent the sevenfold [perfect, complete] Spirit of God that is sent out into every part of the earth. He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new*

song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign on the earth." [with Christ]

4. The Christmas Promise to Abraham, contained in a covenant cut by God, was fulfilled in the arrival of Jesus and will ultimately be fulfilled when He returns to gather us all.
5. APP.: Will you be gathered? You will if you believe the LORD and receive forgiveness.