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# Great Prophecies of the Bible

How God's Promises to Abraham  
Shape the World Today



One can not overestimate the importance of God's dealing with Abraham. The book of Genesis summarizes the entire history of the world prior to Abraham in eleven short chapters. Beginning in Genesis 12, the remainder of the book is devoted to a detailed history of Abraham and his descendents. The covenant God made with Abraham directs geo-political events in our world today and is a major prophetic predictor of events yet to come.

#### I. God's Spectacular Promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3)

- A. Abram (later changed to Abraham) was a descendent of Shem, Noah's son and progenitor of the Semitic and Middle Eastern peoples.
- B. The promises God made to Abraham are so important that they are repeated to Abraham and his descendents no fewer than 7 times in the book of Genesis. The various repetitions add important details concerning the full extent of the promises.

##### 1. Genesis 12:1-3

- a. Land—the literal, physical land of Canaan—sometimes Called “Palestine” on maps. Israel today occupies part of that land.
- b. Seed—Abraham's descendents would form a “great nation,” now identified as Israel.
- c. Blessing—God would bless Abraham personally as well as bless the world through Abraham, ultimately by the preaching of the Gospel to the whole world (Gal. 3:8, 9).

##### 2. Genesis 13:14-16

- a. God again promised Abraham all the land as far as eye could see. God stated that the land would be for Abraham and his descendents *forever*.
- b. God promised that Abraham's descendents would be innumerable.

##### 3. Genesis 15:12-19

- a. God reiterates the land grant to Abraham's descendents. It is noteworthy that at this time, Abraham had no heir. God expected Abraham to accept the promise of the land and seed by faith (18a).
- b. The borders of the Promised Land run “from the river of Egypt [Nile] unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (18, 19)
  - 1) Israel has not yet actually possessed this entire land tract.
  - 2) The tract includes some 300,000 square miles—approximately 50 times larger than current Israeli occupied territory.

##### 4. Genesis 17:1-8

- a. Adding detail to His promises to Abraham, God reveals that Abraham would be the “father of *many nations*” (4). Not only Israel, but other nations would come from Abraham, such as the Arab states.
- b. Additionally, God emphasizes that His promises to Abraham constitute an “everlasting covenant” (7) and that the land of Canaan would be an “everlasting possession” (8) for Israel.

- 5. The promises are repeated in various forms three additional times to Abraham and his descendents (22:15-18; 26:2-6; 28:13-15). It is important to note that the land promise was given to Isaac (*not Ishmael*) and to Jacob (*not Esau*). Arabs are trespassers and interlopers in the Promised Land.

#### II. God's Fulfillment of the Promises in History

- A. All the Promised Land (Canaan, Palestine, and geographic Israel) belongs to the Jew. God gave it to the Jew as an everlasting possession. While the Jew has not always *occupied* the land, it has always *belonged* to him.
- B. Both Old Testament record and world history attest to the Jew's frequent removal from the land (Assyrian, Babylonian captivities and the Diaspora).
- C. God removed the Jews from their land as punishment for their violating the Mosaic Covenant (Deut. 28:58-68). [Note that the Abrahamic Covenant is a covenant of *grace* and the Mosaic Covenant is a covenant of *works*. Interestingly, Ephesians 2:8, 9 summarize these from a New Testament perspective.]
  - 1. The Jews would be scattered from their land (64).
  - 2. They would adopt strange customs and other gods (64).
  - 3. They would never feel at home in other nations, and they would not receive a warm welcome from them.
  - 4. They would be persecuted unto death (66, 67). Certainly this foreshadows the Nazi holocaust as well as other physical persecutions.
  - 5. They would experience Egyptian captivity—fulfilled literally when Roman general Titus sent 17,000 Jews back to Egypt as manual labor slaves, circa 70 AD.

#### III. God's Future Fulfillment of the Promises—*as literally given to Abraham*

- A. The Jew will again be gathered back to his land (Isa. 14:1-3). Just as he returned after the Babylonian captivity, so shall he return when the final Babylon, depicted as ruler of the whole earth (Rev. 17:17, 18), is destroyed. The “King of Babylon” may have reference to the Antichrist.
- B. Though not occupying his land for many years, the Jew will one day Return both to the land and to the Lord (Hosea 3:4, 5).