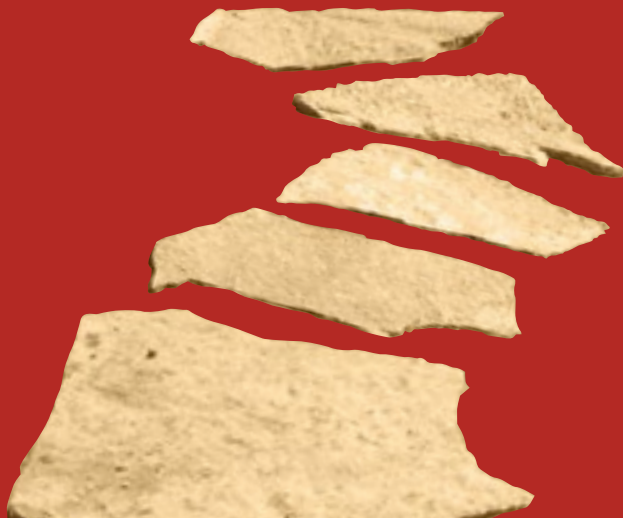


Pronouncement OF A Destiny

4

BIBLICAL BASIS
Genesis 12: 1-3



THE BETHEL SERIES
OLD TESTAMENT

Pronouncement OF A Destiny

PICTURE FOUR AND ITS SYMBOLISM

God takes the initiative and introduces a plan designed to save his world from the dilemma imposed by sin and evil. The plan begins in human history with a covenant made between God and Abraham:

"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.'" (Gen. 12:1-3)

THE DESTINY

"...I will bless you..."

Shaft of light strikes prism.

"...so that you will be a blessing."

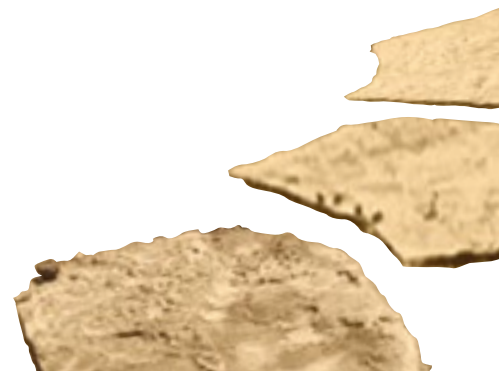
Light diffuses and passes through kneeling figure.

"...by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

Rays of light pass through kneeling figure and extend over the whole earth.



*Nancy
Morgan*



Pronouncement OF A Destiny

4

God's Plan for Triumph Began With a Covenant

Gen. 12:1-3

The Focal Point

Interlocking Themes

Israel's First-Drawn Breath

God declared that the tide would change. Triumph was somewhere out beyond the horizon. It was hastening its coming.

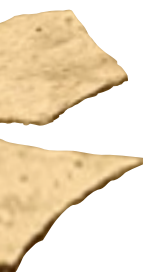
"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.'"

The cited covenant between God and Abram of Haran is of profound significance to the serious student of the Bible. If there is such a thing as an interpretive key which opens doors of understanding in both the Old and New Testament narratives, then certainly that key is precisely here. As we relate the conditions of that covenant, the promises entailed in it, and the obligations which accompanied it, we are provided with a unifying theme which permits us to see parts of God's message as they relate to the whole; and the whole of that message as it relates to the part.

The seed concept (Gen. 13:16), the complex separation motif (Gen. 12:1; 25:23; 28:1; 46:33-34), the experiences of God's people at Sinai (Ex. 20:1-24), the institution of atonement (Lev. 16:1-34), the burden of the Prophet's message (Amos 5:21-24), the coming of Christ (Lk. 2:1-14), the distorted ideas which faced Christ (Mt. 5:17), the establishment of Christ's church (Mt. 28:16-20) all take on a deeper and more understandable meaning when seen in their relationship to the ancient Abrahamic covenant.

Let us underscore it then. History gave birth to one of its greatest moments on that ancient day when God sought out a trusted servant called Abram and placed in his hands a destiny which was designed to change the course of events in heaven and on earth.

The moment the covenant was born, triumph was on the march and the stage was set for a plan which would culminate in a reconciliation between God and the **scattered** of the earth who were estranged from God.



In the current study and in a number of succeeding ones, we shall refer to this covenant as the **pronouncement of a destiny**.

THE DESTINY IS COMPOSED OF THREE PARTS:

1. A Promise **"...I will bless you..."**
2. An Obligation **"...so that you will be a blessing."**
3. A Prophetic Note **"...by you all the families of the earth shall
bless themselves."**

"I Will Bless You"

God's promises have been and continue to be the foundation blocks on which the world can safely build its hopes. God taunts no one with promises which the Creator doesn't plan to fulfill. God's words and faithfulness are sure and unchangeable.

"I will bless you." The lilting promise that Abram heard from the lips of the heavenly Father gave this nomad the right to dream big dreams. Divine favor was to come his way. All the resources of heaven which belong to humankind were to be his. God's gifts would be at his fingertips and heaven's treasures at his feet. A rich inheritance awaited Abram and his seed.

"So That You Will Be a Blessing"

Gen. 22:17-18

Yet all good things received from God's hand must be turned into blessings for others. That which God invested in Abram, God expected Abram to invest in others. No gift was to be hoarded. No treasure was meant to be claimed for self alone. God promised to bless Abram so that he might be a blessing.

A question arises

Why was Abram chosen for this magnificent mission and not some other? For such a question there is no certain answer. The reasons for God's choice are locked in the Creator's heart.

This much we do know. Abram was not perfect. This man, destined to be the father of a nation, on a number of occasions demonstrated that he was less than he ought to have been (Gen. 12:11-19; 17:17-18).

Abram, like Moses (Num. 20:10-12) and Saul (1 Sam. 18:6-9), and David (2 Sam. 11:2-5), and Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-3), and Peter (Mk. 14:66-71) and Paul (Acts 7:57-8:1) bore the marks of imperfection and weakness upon his person. Perfection, then, was not the measuring stick by which God's leaders were chosen.

Spiritual discernment!

Yet, even among the imperfect, God found those who won his special favor (Gen. 5:21-24; Gen. 6:7-9; 7:1). The Scriptures suggest that the positions of leadership went to those persons who in spite of their weaknesses, demonstrated spiritual discernment which permitted God to depend upon them to carry the destiny forward.

QUESTIONS

1. What major differences marked the persons of:
Abram and Lot (Note: Gen. 13:1-13)
Jacob and Esau (Note: Gen. 26:34; 27:41; 28:1-9, 16-17)
2. To whom did the role of leadership go in each instance cited?
3. Please note in Genesis 49 the intimate relationship between the prognosis of the father and the individual histories of the various sons.
4. On the evidence of the cited examples, would it not be possible to suggest that roles and functions given to various persons in the divine plan were somehow related to the actual history of those persons in everyday situations?

With those questions considered, let us move on now to an evaluation of the qualities of character that marked the person of Abram. (See picture.)

PREREQUISITES FOR BEING A BLESSING

A proper posture

Abram knew his proper place as over against that of the Creator. Aware of the great difference between Sovereign and subject, he came into the presence of God on his knees (Gen. 17:1-3a). He recognized the existence of a higher authority than that which came from his own person (Gen. 17:18-23). He paid homage to that authority with his hands, his heart, and his mind (Gen. 12:7-8; 13:2-4, 18).

A childlike trust

Abram took God at his word. He lived constantly with an air of expectancy in his heart, because he knew the Creator to be faithful to his promises. He became a giant on the earth, because he often had his head in the heavens listening for the sound of God's voice. That which he heard, he believed, and his childlike trust led him on paths of obedience. By trusting and believing, he became the beneficiary of all the good things which God wanted to give (Gen. 15:1-6; Gal. 3:6; Heb. 11:8-10).

Action!

Abram knew that if he was **to be a blessing**, he must act upon the things which he had heard from God. His hearing took him far beyond costless talk, and lazy, undisciplined dreaming. He moved far beyond good intentions and involved himself in the work of the Kingdom. He heard and he obeyed (Gen. 12:4; 17:22-23; 22:15-18).

The aspects of Abram's character that have been denoted could well be labeled the **prerequisites for being a blessing**.

Persons who first put themselves in a position to hear God, and who then trust in what they hear and act upon it, will be the blessings which they have been called to be. Like Abram, they will spend life in a giveaway program of self, investing the good things which they have received from God's hands in the lives of others around them.

**Blessings Come
in Different
Modes and Media**
(The spectrum)

**“By You All the
Families of the
Earth Shall Bless
Themselves”**

All people are not blessed in the same way. Insofar as God endows people with different abilities, different talents, different interests and, indeed, different histories, it follows that members of the chosen family became blessings in different ways.

Joseph, as an example, became a blessing as he used his administrative abilities in Egypt (Gen. 41:55-57); Aaron as he acted as a spokesman (Ex. 4:10-16); Bezalel as he used his God-given endowments toward the construction of the tabernacle (Ex. 31:1-6); Deborah as she acted as an astute counselor (Judg. 4:5), prophetess (Judg. 4:4), and leader (Judg. 4:6-9); Esther as she played the role of an effective interceder (Esth. 4:1-17); and Ruth as she spent her energies in the role of a devoted wife and mother (Ruth 4:13-17).

Whatever the mode or medium through which the blessings would come, one thing was inevitable. The covenant God initiated with Abram, would end in triumph, for there was a prophetic note in that covenant.

The outcome of Abram’s destiny was as sure as the promise. Plans which are fashioned in God’s mind will be fulfilled. Once God had set the wheel of triumph rolling on its way, nothing could stop it. Century by century it would roll on toward its inevitable rendezvous with fulfillment. The day would come when the estranged of the earth would be brought back into the waiting arms of a loving God. **“By you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.”** Triumph was hastening its coming.

QUESTIONS

1. From the Christian vantage point, in what significant way did the Jews fulfill their destiny to be a blessing? (Note: Rom. 9:1-5)
2. How does the destiny given to Abram and his seed compare to the destiny given to the church of Jesus Christ?
3. What evidences are there in the New Testament that some of the people had failed to see the Covenant at Sinai in its proper relationship to the Covenant at Ur? (Note: Mk. 2:23-28)
4. What indications are there in the New Testament that people within the chosen family became blessings in different ways? (Note: 1 Cor. 12:1-31)
5. The destiny concept makes it evident that God uses the human lot to carry out his ministry upon the earth. How does this theme harmonize with:
 - a. The way in which the Scriptures came to us?
 - b. The way in which salvation came to the world?
 - c. The way in which the Church has acted as an authoritative voice on such matters as canonizing the Scriptures?