



# **NEW LIFE**

## **BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: [newlifeplondon@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:newlifeplondon@yahoo.co.uk)

Website: [www.newlifebpc.org.uk](http://www.newlifebpc.org.uk)

Preacher & Church Administrator: Mok Chee Cheong 07921 929515

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*"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)*

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## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROMISES IN GENESIS 12:1-3**

### **Introduction**

When God made His appearance to Abram to give him the command to leave his country and kindred, it marks a new beginning in human history. From the time of Adam's fall, the human race appeared to be left to its own destiny and never again to recover or to have any hope of restoration until we come to chapter 12 where it burst forth with a ray of hope.

Even though there were two promises made, one to the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15) and the other, the covenant with Noah (Gen 6:18), there after it was long period of silence. In fact based on rough calculation, it seems that the silent was for about 420 years since He last spoke to Noah. It was also during these silent years, when men are left to himself, that corruption and violence mushroom and the whole creation degenerates into hopelessness. So it is of great significant when that message came to Abram in chapter 12 because it is a message of joy, of blessings and of hope, not only for Abram, but through him it flows to all the nations of the world. It is from this point that God gradually unfolds His plan in fulfilling His promises made earlier in Genesis.

This plan comes in a covenant presented to Abram in the form of a fourfold promise that summarises the entire message of the gospel:

1. He will be a father with my descendants.
2. They will possess the Promised Land.
3. God will identify Himself with them and be their God.
4. Through him all the nations of the world will be blessed.

### **The Beginning of a New Creation**

#### **The Call of God (v.1)**

There was no special reason as to why God called Abram among some many people and among all his family members. Abram like any other ordinary people was to face the prospect of hell and eternal damnation without exception, for he too was part of the fallen race and therefore cannot escape the judgement of God. We cannot fathom the reason or reasons of God's choice of him, only to conclude that it was according to the "good pleasure of His will" (Eph 1:5) and for His own glory.

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It is beyond human rationality; in fact it is supra-knowledge to find out how God can chose undeserving sinners to be recipients of His gift and blessings. Yet God is gracious and merciful to set His love upon Abram and upon those whom He willed to call. We can gather from here that the call of Abram is the same call extended to many who are born again in the Lord. None came to Jesus by their own choice, neither in their own terms, but it is God Himself who called and draws men unto His Son (John 6:44).

The command is to leave the place of all his old and fond associations, for a land which he had not yet seen, and therefore did not know. Three very close ties are to be severed in complying with this command - his country, in the widest range of his affections; his place of birth and kindred comes closer to his heart; his father's house is the inmost circle of all his tender emotions. All these are to be resigned; not, however, without reason. The reason may not be entirely obvious to the mind of Abram. But he has entire faith in the reasonableness of what God proposes. So with reason and faith he is willing to go to the unknown land. It is enough that God will show him the land to which he is now sent.

Those of us who heard the gospel are receiving the call to renounce all and to follow the Lord Jesus. Nobody can heed that call on our behalf because that calls is given to that individual whom the heavenly Father will draw through the work of His Holy Spirit.

#### The Promises (vv.2-3)

The **1<sup>st</sup> promise** – *“I will make of thee a great nation”* refers indeed to a community of people, a physical nation that can be seen. In other words, God will make sure the Abram will have many descendants and they will in the future become a nation to be reckoned. A nation cannot be said to be great if it is small in numbers and so therefore it is only logical also to conclude that a large physical land is require to contain such a large population of people. This promise is already implied in verse 1, when Abram was commanded to go *“unto a land that I will shew thee”* On May 14, 1948, when Israel official became nation, this promise was thus fulfilled. Since then, many of her enemies tried and are still trying to snuff out this nation from the map of the world but God kept His promise to Abram right till this days.

But embody in this 1<sup>st</sup> promise is the spiritual Promised Land which will far outweighs the physical. It is a promise of a new heaven and new earth which is to come in the future to be fulfilled in Christ, who is the seed of Abram. So Abram looked forward not only to the formation of this great physical nation, he was also looking forward to the Beulah Land where it is not only for the physical descendents of Abram but also his spiritual descendents, that of the Gentile nations. The promise to Abram is also for those who are in the Lord, that they too can look forward to the glorious eternal home land. This 1<sup>st</sup> promise will encompass all the spiritual, temporal and eternal blessings.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> promise** – *“and make thy name great”* entails Abram becoming a popular figure. His name will be a household name, not so much that Abram will be famous but rather that at the mention of Abram, it will draw attention to Abram's God who had made his name great. So this points to the one, Jesus Christ, who is coming after Abram, whose name is above every name, and at His name *“every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth”* (Php 2:10).

The **3<sup>rd</sup> promise** – *“and thou shalt be a blessing”* which indicates that the nation, Israel will be associated with blessing instead of curses. Out of Abram's descendents will flow...

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blessings to those around them. Everyone will look at the blessings of Abram as representation of their own blessings.

The **4<sup>th</sup> promise** – *“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee”* adds the dimension of divine security. God here is willing to identify Himself in a very intimate relationship with Abram, that of Father-Son relationship. Just as a father will protect his child from harm, so will God protect Abram. Likewise those who befriend the son will also befriend by the father.

The **5<sup>th</sup> promise** – *“and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* is the finale of all the promises. The ultimate plan of God is to bring about a restoration of this family of God’s people and Abram was privileged to be the father of this covenantal family. Abram’s faith in God is a forward-looking faith which enables him to see with spiritual eyesight this final promise fulfilled in his seed, Jesus Christ. It is through Christ that this great family of God’s people, both Jews and Gentiles will come about.

## **Conclusion**

### **Significances of These Promises**

1. As Abram was called of God, so are those who are believers called of God. Those of us in the Lord should be very grateful and humbled that God has called us, undeserving sinners, out of the millions in this sinful world to give us eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ. It was God’s will that we are called and not because of our own choosing.
2. As Abram *“looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Heb 11:10). Those in the Lord can look forward to the Promised Land – the new heaven and the new earth which will be brought about when Christ return to bring us there as He has promised (John 14:2-3).
3. As Abram was promised divine protection, those in the Lord can expect divine protection though not in the complete sense of the promise for we are under the curse of sin, yet we can be assured in the spiritual sense that no one can snatch those who in the Lord out of the Father’s hand (John 10:29).
4. As Abram was a blessing to others, so must those who in the Lord to do likewise. Christians are instructed in Matthew 5:44, to *“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you”*. In so doing we may be light of this world and salt of the earth to lead others to Christ.
5. Those in the Lord can rejoice in the hope that not only will they by God’s grace reach that Promised Land of bliss, even for those who are still outside that Land may still have the chance to come in as Christians seek in prayer for them that the Father will also in His great mercy draws them.

The whole of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of salvation is encapsulates in these 3 verses of Genesis Chapter 12, which was partially fulfilled in the New Testament and will eventually be fulfilled totally by Christ in His return.

**WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON**  
**CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR**  
**AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)**

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME	
<b>Morning</b>	<i>Today: 11/05/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 18/05/2008</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.	
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Jonathan Kim		
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mark Chen	Pr Marc Vambrount		
<i>Message:</i>	Living the Gospel, Promoting the Gospel	The Lord is a Jealous God	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS	
<i>Text:</i>	Philippians 1:27	Ezekiel 39:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Catechism class:</b> There will be Catechism class today after the morning worship service. Those seeking baptism and transfer of membership must attend. Please approach Pr Mok for more information.</li> <li>• <b>School of Theology at Metropolitan Tabernacle:</b> The theme for this year programme is "Stand Fast in the Faith". It will be held from 8th – 10th Jul 2008. For further details, please help yourself to the application form available at the Book Table.</li> <li>• <b>Examinations:</b> Please pray for those who are preparing for their examinations: Grace, Joy, Josiah, Sophia, Hubert, Nicolas, Rachel and Yetta.</li> <li>• <b>Family Worship:</b> For those who would like to open up their homes for family worship, please contact Pr Mok.</li> <li>• <b>Sabbath School:</b> Leaflets are placed on the book table to encourage children of ages 6-12 to attend Sunday School. Please feel free to distribute those leaflets to any child, especially yours, who may be interested in joining in. Please note that class will be held at the Library after the morning worship service.</li> </ul>	
<i>Organist:</i>	Grace	Pr Mark Chen		
<b>Evening</b>				
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Pr Mark Chen		
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mark Chen	Pr Marc Vambrount		
<i>Message:</i>	The Seven Deadly Sins	The Need of a Forgiving Heart		
<i>Text:</i>	Proverbs 6:12-19	Matthew 6:12		
<i>Pianist:</i>	Sophia	Anthony		
Other Duties				
	<i>Today: 11/05/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 18/05/2008</i>		
<i>Ushers</i>	Anthony / Evelyn	Josiah / Yetta		
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Carol	Hui Min		
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance		
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers		
<i>Bible Study:</i>	Catechism Class	Catechism Class		
Appointments of the Week				
Fri 16 May	7:30pm	<b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b> Led by Pr Mark Chen		
Sat 17 May	4.00pm	<b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study:</b> Led by Pr Mok		
Last Week's Worship Service Collections				
	<b>Offering:</b> £720.80	<b>Lunch:</b> £40.50		
<h2 style="margin: 0;"><u>Memory Verse</u></h2>				
<i>Last Week (May 08 Wk 1): Psalm 139:1</i>				
O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.				
<i>This Week (May 08 Wk 2): Psalm 139:2</i>				
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.				