

Messiah in the Books of Moses: Lesson 4 – Genesis 12

NOTES: The Introduction

The promise of Messiah progressively unfolds throughout the Old Testament. *Messiah* became the proper name associated with the promised Anointed One of Yahweh Who would come to deliver, redeem, and restore Israel. Since the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, God has kept the hope of His people alive through the promise of Messiah. The Hebrew term *Mashiach* (מָשִׁיחַ) literally translates *Anointed One*. The Greek equivalent of *Mashiach/Messiah* appearing in the New Testament is *Christos* (χριστός). Each time the word *Christ* appears in the New Testament, it is a reference to the office of Jesus as the Messiah.

In the study of *Messiah in the Books of Moses*, six Old Testament prophetic predictions will be explored: *The Edenic Prediction* (Gen. 3:15); *The Noahic Prediction* (Gen 9:25-27); *The Abrahamic Prediction* (Gen 12:1-3); *The Judaic Prediction* (Gen 49:8-12); *The Balaamic Prediction* (Num 24:15-19); and, *The Mosaic Prediction* (Deut 18:15, 18). Each prophecy will be studied within its historical context and in light of its fulfillment in the Person and work of Messiah Jesus as recorded in the New Testament.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples, opening their minds to understand all that was written concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. “Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). A study of Luke 24 introduces *Messiah in the Books of Moses*, establishing the primary importance of studying messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. This study focuses on the first six predictions of Messiah in the Pentateuch.

Genesis 3 – The Edenic Prediction (Gen 3:15): Humanity of Messiah

Genesis 3 records the fall of Adam and Eve into sin. Before casting the man and the woman from the garden of Eden, God gives the woman a promise that includes the first predictive prophecy of Messiah in the Bible. Genesis 3:15 has commonly been called the *protoevangelium* (“the first gospel”) because it is the first prophecy in the Bible, revealing the promise of a future Redeemer Who will crush the head of Satan.

Genesis 3:15 is the “mother prophecy” that launches the promise of redemption for fallen humanity through the Messiah Who is the “seed/offspring” of the woman. The Edenic Prediction establishes the humanity of Messiah, the promised “seed/offspring” Who becomes the central figure of God’s unfolding kingdom plan.

Genesis 9 – The Noahic Prediction (Gen 9:25–27): Divinity of Messiah

Based on the genealogies in Genesis 5, at least 1500 years pass between creation and the great flood in the days of Noah. With the assumption that the seven days of creation took place around 6000 BC, some biblical scholars tentatively propose, and evidence supports, 3800 BC as the estimated time of the flood.

In the millenniums that follow the entrance of sin into the world through Adam and Eve, wickedness multiplies exponentially until the whole earth becomes corrupt in God’s eyes. “God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth” (Gen 6:12). Genesis 6–9 records God’s execution of judgment on the earth by a flood that destroys all living things except for Noah, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, their wives, and the animals God preserved on the ark.

When Noah and his household disembark after the flood waters receded, God blesses them and commands them to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 9:1). Genesis 9 records the sin of Ham, Noah’s son, against his father, resulting in the blessing of Shem and Japheth, and in the cursing of Canaan, the son of Ham. Within this prophetic passage of blessing and cursing, the second prediction of Messiah occurs in Genesis 9:25-27, predicting God’s dwelling in the tents of Shem.

As Genesis 3:15 establishes the humanity of Messiah, Genesis 9:25-27 establishes the divinity of Messiah. The human and divine converge for the first time in the advent of Messiah Jesus, the unique God-Man, the Word of God Who became flesh and made His dwelling among humanity (cf John 1:1-18).

Genesis 12 – The Abrahamic Prediction (Gen 12:1-3): Seed of Blessing

From among the *Shemitic* or *Semitic* people, who are descendants of Noah’s son Shem with whom God had promised to dwell (Gen 9:27), Yahweh selects a single man, Abram, from whom Messiah would descend. Yahweh calls Abram to depart from his native country and to go to a land that Yahweh would show him. Abram then goes out of Ur with his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot to go to the land of Canaan.

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When Yahweh calls Abram to the land of Canaan, He enters into an everlasting, unconditional covenant that initially included seven promises (Gen 12:2-3): (1) “I will make you a great nation” (2) “I will bless you” (3) “make your name great” (4) “you shall be a blessing” (5) “I will bless those who bless you” (6) “the one who curses you I will curse” (7) “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” After Abram’s arrival in the land of Canaan, Yahweh changes Abram’s name to Abraham, and He covenants an eighth everlasting promise: (8) “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” (Gen 17:8).

The Abrahamic Prediction of Messiah occurs in one of the initial seven promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 12:3, “And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” The pronoun “you” is a singular masculine pronoun that refers to Abraham, representative of his collective offspring through Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the covenant, who carried the Seed in whom all families of the earth would be blessed.

The apostle Paul explains, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations will be blessed in You’” (Gal 3:8). The loins of Abraham carried the human seed of the divine Messiah through Whom salvation comes to bless all nations.

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 12

Gen. 12:1 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;
2 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;
3 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.”

Gen. 12:4 So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5** Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. **6** Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. **7** The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. **8** Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. **9** Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.

Gen. 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. **11** It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; **12** and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. **13** ‘Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you.’ **14** It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. **15** Pharaoh’s officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. **16** Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.

Gen. 12:17 But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. **18** Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? **19** ‘Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go.’” **20** Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

* (A)=Application (C)=Context (D)=Difficult (DOC)=Doctrine (O)=Opinion (OB)=Observation (PER)=Personal (PR)=Principle (P)=Prophecy

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STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Who addresses Abram? From where does He tell Abram to go? From whom does He tell Abram to go? From what house does He tell Abram to go? To what land does He tell Abram to go? (12:1)
2. List seven promises given in the *Abrahamic Covenant* before Abram's arrival in Canaan: (12:2-3)
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
 - (6)
 - (7)
3. (C) What eighth promise is added to the *Abrahamic Covenant* following Abraham's arrival in Canaan? (cf. Gen 17:7-8)
4. (OB) Who are the two parties in this covenant (contract)? (12:1) Are any conditions attached to these promises of the *Abrahamic Covenant*? (12:2-3) Is Abraham commanded to do anything within the seven promises of the covenant? What does this reveal about the nature of the *Abrahamic Covenant*? Is the *Abrahamic Covenant* conditional or unconditional? Is the *Abrahamic Covenant* an everlasting covenant or temporary covenant? (cf. Gen 17:7-8)
5. (C) What additional information is provided about Yahweh's appearing and covenant with Abraham in Stephen's final sermon before his martyrdom? (Acts 7:2-5)
6. (P) **Prophecy: (Abrahamic Prediction – Gen 12:3b)**
Who will be blessed in "you"? (12:3b) (D) To whom is the pronoun "you" referring? (Note: In the Hebrew text, "you" is written as a singular masculine pronoun, indicating that the referent of the pronoun is a singular masculine person.) (cf. Notes, p. 2 for further explanation.)
7. (P) **Prophecy: (Abrahamic Prediction – Gen 12:3b)**
(C) Explain Peter's use of Gen 12:3b in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 3:25).
8. (P) **Prophecy: (Abrahamic Prediction – Gen 12:3b)**
(C) Explain Paul's use of Gen 12:3b in his letter to the Galatians (Gal 3:8).
9. What does Abraham do in response to what the LORD had spoken? How old is Abraham when he departs from Haran? (12:4) Who/what does Abraham take with him to Canaan? (12:5)
10. Where does the LORD first appear to Abraham after he arrives in the land of Canaan? Who is dwelling in the land? (12:6) (C) Who was the father of Canaan/the Canaanites? Why and how was Canaan cursed? (cf. Gen 9:20-27)
11. What does the LORD say when He appears to Abraham upon his arrival in Shechem at the oak of Moreh? What does Abraham build in Shechem after the LORD's appearing? (12:7)
12. Where does Abraham pitch his tent after departing from Shechem? What does he build? Upon Whom does Abraham call? (12:8) Towards what region does Abraham then journey? (12:9)
13. (C) Why is Abraham offered as an example of commendable faith in Hebrews 11:8-18?
14. Why does Abraham go down to sojourn in Egypt? (12:10) Why does Abraham ask Sarah to tell the Egyptians that she is his sister? (12:11-13)
15. (O) Why do you think Abraham feared being killed by the Egyptians? What would have happened to the seed of Messiah if Abraham had died in Egypt?

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(A) How is fear causing you to doubt God’s power to fulfill His purpose for you and to bless you with salvation in Messiah?

- 16. What do the Egyptians do when they see that Sarah is very beautiful? (12:14-15) How is Abraham treated by the Egyptians for the sake of Sarah? (12:16)**
- 17. What does the LORD do to Pharaoh and to his house because of Sarah? (12:17)
What three questions does Pharaoh ask Abraham? What happens to Sarah and Abraham after Pharaoh discovers that Sarah is Abraham’s wife? (12:18-20)**
- 18. What do you learn about God in Genesis 12? What do you learn about Messiah in Gen 12:3b?
How could these truths transform your life?**

Write a prayer response to Gen 12.