

22T16e Abraham's Promises- Bless or Curse

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table In recent years, I've heard a lot about the promises to the nation of Israel. These are the promises in the Bible, I mean. When I started doing a little research on these claims, it appeared all the claims seemed to believe that the promises made to Abraham in the Bible applied today to the nation of Israel or the Jewish people as a whole. This seemed logical to me, but my questions were many. What are these promises? Why do we believe they apply to modern Israel? And so on.

People argue about exactly how many promises were made to Abraham, and I don't wish to enter that debate. Instead, I want to focus on a few only. Today, the promise to bless or curse. The promise to bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who curse Abraham.

The promise that Abraham is being given the land of Canaan. Let's read Genesis 12:1- 4 (NIV) ***1The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*** *4So Abram went, as the Lord had told him*

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Lord use me to share your message. If I say something in error, please let them remember what you wanted them to hear, not my errand words. Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on your word Lord. Guide our discussion. We pay in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Okay, ***"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse"***. Right here in the middle of the call of Abram out of Ur there is this promise. Oddly enough this promise is not repeated any place else in Genesis. Not in Genesis 13 or 17 to Abraham when the other promises are reconfirmed or as part of the everlasting covenant of circumcision. Not to Isaac in Genesis 26 when the promises are reconfirmed to Isaac, not in Genesis 28 when the promises are reconfirmed to Jacob.

So, okay. The promise to bless those who bless Israel or curse those who curse Israel is not included in the promises to Isaac or Jacob. It is never mentioned again to Abraham. So let's take a closer look at the promises given to Abram in Genesis 12. Let's read Genesis 12:1- 4 (NIV) ***1The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2"I will make you into a great nation,*** This promise is obviously about his descendants and in fact this promise is even bigger in Genesis 17 when God promises that Abraham will be the father of many nations and many kings. And Abraham is, today.

and I will bless you; This promise is pretty non-specific, but Abraham was blessed by God. He amassed great earthly riches, his household was quite large at his death many sons more than ten, unnumbered daughters from at least a couple of wives and many concubines. This seems specific to Abraham.

I will make your name great, This promise is pretty specific to Abraham himself.

and you will be a blessing. This promise is again pretty specific to Abraham himself.

³I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; This promise is again pretty specific to Abraham himself.

and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” This promise all about Abraham’s descendants, the phrase blessed through you inferred through Abraham’s family.

So at least two of these are beyond the person of Abraham, meaning for his descendants. Several of these promises have to be specific to Abraham the person and not for all his descendants after.

Regardless of how you interpret these promises, one thing is certain, this promise of blessing and cursing is not part of the everlasting covenant.

So how do we reconcile this? Well this shows up in one other story in the Bible Numbers 24. This is the story of Balaam a prophet of God and Balak king of Moab. Balak calls Balaam to come and curse Israel. Balak is scared of the hoard which is Israel. Israel has come out of Egypt is a mighty way, Israel has been wandering in the wilderness of forty years and is now of the borders of Moab. Israel is actually about to cross the Jordan at Jericho but the king of Moab wants God to help him defeat Israel. Well, it does not go very good for Balak. In fact Balaam blesses Israel over and over. Balaam’s donkey talks and saves Balaam from the angel of the Lord who is about to kill him. Then Balaam blesses Israel on last time in Numbers 24:1-9 (NIV) *¹Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not resort to divination as at other times, but turned his face toward the wilderness. ²When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him ³and he spoke his message: “The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor, the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly, ⁴the prophecy of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened: ⁵“How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, your dwelling places, Israel! ⁶“Like valleys they spread out, like gardens beside a river, like aloes planted by the Lord, like cedars beside the waters. ⁷Water will flow from their buckets; their seed will have abundant water. “Their king will be greater than Agag; their kingdom will be exalted. ⁸“God brought them out of Egypt; they have the strength of a wild ox. They devour hostile nations and break their bones in pieces; with their arrows they pierce them. ⁹Like a lion they crouch and lie down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse them? “**May those who bless you be blessed and those who curse you be cursed!**”*

This appears to be a very similar blessing to Genesis 12 but this time for the Israelis wandering in the wilderness. Now there is no everlasting context. This is a blessing on those people or even the people of Israel. It is a bit of a reach to believe this applies to all descendants of Jacob for all time. Especially since most the of rest of the Old Testament is about these same descendants breaking the covenant with God over and over again. Until God says enough is enough and destroys the nation of Israel and Judah. Only a remnant is preserved. So not all descendants of Jacob receive this promise forever or all time.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father. Thank you for you. You only are worthy of praise. You alone are king of kings. Help us to recognize you as the king of our lives. Help us to live like we know it. As your followers I pray that we act like it. Every day in every moment. Thank you, Jesus, for what you did for me or all of us. We pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Okay, let me leave you with this today. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. I just can’t see how this can possibly apply to modern national Israel or even to the modern Jewish people as

a whole. It is always a bad idea to curse anyone. It is always better to bless people. But I do not think we get special points from God because we overtly bless the nation of Israel or Jewish people. As Christians we are supposed to be a blessing to the world. When we let our lives be a blessing to others, God blesses us. There is no excuse to ever curse anyone. Jesus told us to bless those who curse us, that is the Way. This is how Christians are supposed to be. So when someone tells you, “you will be blessed if you bless Israel and cursed if you don’t support Israel”. Tell them yes, We should bless all peoples and curse none. We should bless our enemies not just our friends and we should never be worried about what is in it for us. Just allow yourself to be used by our Lord Jesus to bless the world.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope you will join me as we study more about the promises God made to Abraham. Next time we are going to look at what we have learned about Abraham’s promises.

If you liked the message, please click like. And please share the link with a friend to our channel. Send me comments to my email on the screen.

Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.