

# Abraham, My Friend: 08 Beachheads and Blessings

by Ron Bailey

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*God chooses individuals as beachheads for his campaign of reclamation, and our blessings are intended to be a point of contact for others to experience God's love.*

**Duration:** 11:41

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:2, Psalm 139:7, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Abraham"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the life of Abraham and how he became a praying man and a friend of God. The speaker emphasizes the unique revelation of God in the Bible, where God is both transcendent and imminent. Unlike other religions, where God is either distant or constantly underfoot, the Bible teaches that God is able to focus on and bless individual people. Abraham was chosen by God to be a beachhead, a point of contact for God's blessings to reach others. The ultimate purpose of Abraham's blessings was not for his own benefit, but for him to become a blessing to all the families of the earth.

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## Transcript

Well, hello again. You're listening to a Bible Base podcast, and I'm your host, Ron Bailey. These 60 or so meditations on the life of Abraham were first published on the Sermonindex.net website, where you can still find the original text versions.

The aim of the series is to discover the way in which Abraham became a praying man and a friend of God. Number eight, beachheads and blessings. It's wonderful to consider the way in which God, who measures the cosmos with a single span, is able and willing to focus on a single individual.

I sometimes think of it as one of those zooming-in sequences we see in films and adverts. This is one of the wonders of the Bible revelation of God. Some religions have a God who is so transcendent that nothing on earth touches him.

One worldwide religion teaches that if the whole world were saved, it would give God no pleasure, and if the whole world were lost, he would shed no tears. Some religions teach that God is constantly under our feet. He is everywhere, in every stone and stream, and must be placated with careful sacrifice and ritual.

The Bible teaches that God is, at one and the same time, transcendent and imminent. Imminent means permanently, everywhere. Although the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, he holds all things in his hands, and at the same time, he is here.

Go on, speak some truth into your heart, speak the words, he is here. Abraham was a descendant of Shem, and is hence called Semitic. He was also a descendant of Eber, and hence he is known as a Hebrew, as Genesis 11 onwards.

However, there was nothing inherently remarkable about Abraham until God chose him. It seems that when God embarks upon a campaign of reclamation, he always chooses a human beachhead. My dictionary tells me that a beachhead is a military term for a fortified position established on a beach by landing forces.

When God was about to reclaim the human race, in the days of Genesis 6, he chose a fortified position who we know better as Noah. In Noah, God had landed. God repopled the earth from this fortified position, and the immediate danger of a world taken over by a race, graphically described in Genesis 6, was averted.

The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. What a terrible description. Only evil, continually, invariably, unendingly evil.

The flood was an act of mercy for our race. There is an important truth to grasp from the story of Noah and the flood. God's covenant of salvation was made with Noah.

Read Genesis 6-9 again, and, if possible, in an archaic translation, that will let you see that personal pronoun, thou. God's dealings were all with Noah. God's covenant of salvation was with Noah personally.

All those who enjoyed that salvation are defined by their relationship to Noah himself. Noah. Noah's wife.

Noah's sons. The wives of Noah's sons. Everything hinges on Noah.

God's promises are to Noah, but those who are rightly related to Noah benefit from them. God's purpose with Abraham was different, but he too would become God's beachhead. In Abraham, God had landed.

God's promises to Abraham were all made to Abraham personally. I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. That's Genesis chapter 12, reading from the King James Version.

We notice again that the blessings are all personal to Abraham, and the relationship of others to Abraham will determine their destiny and their blessings or otherwise. I wonder what Abraham made of that first part, I will make of thee a great nation. Perhaps we need to put ourselves into Abraham's sandals and ask, what did he understand from this? How did he understand nationhood? How do we? In the third century before Christ, the Old Testament was translated into Greek.

For the Hebrew word nation, the Greek Septuagint, as that translation was called, used the word ethnos. Ethnos can mean a nation state, but it can also mean a people bound together by a culture and history. I doubt that Abraham was thinking in terms of nation states and dynasties, but here was certainly a promise that Abraham would not remain alone.

Others would be added who would share his culture and history and his destiny. Abraham's people ultimately would be identified by their trust in God and their abandonment to him. And what a wonderful word this is, I will bless thee.

People can bless people. Melchizedek will bless Abraham, Jacob will bless Pharaoh, but what a promise this is that God would take personal charge of Abraham's blessing. We shall see Abraham later turning from those who could bless him in earthly ways, lifting his hand and rejecting all riches that did not come from God.

This is a challenge to our day. What do we want? Do we want blessing or do we want God's blessing? In some circles, we hear this kind of language. Have you received the blessing? What are we seeking? The blessing or the blesser? The blessing continues with promises that God will make thy name great.

Literally, I will cause it to grow. With God, growth is always more important than size. Growth, you see, is a sign of life, while size is not.

Consider the lilies. How big they are? No. Consider the lilies, how they grow.

How do they grow, by the way? They abide in the place of their planting and God brings everything necessary to them in the place of their abiding. Strange, isn't it, that some people will cross oceans to get a blessing when all they needed to do was abide in the place of God's choosing. And this last personal word of the blessing, the King James Version says, and thou shalt be a blessing.

But the American Standard Version translators spotted something that they were able to capture in their version. They noticed that the mood of the verb was imperative. That is to say, not a promise, but a commend.

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and be thou a blessing. Genesis 12 verse 2 following. Abraham would be blessed, there was no doubt about it.

But the ultimate purpose of Abraham's blessing was not his own personal benefit, but that he in turn would become a blessing. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. He was to be God's beachhead, a fortified position established on a beach by landing forces.

He was just the starting point for an amazing campaign of reclamation. And so are you. The blessings that God brings into your life are not intended to make you a shining museum trophy.

They are God's point of contact with those men and women around you. In you, God has landed. You are the way in which God has determined to bless men and women around you.

It's the way we faith sons of Abraham, of either gender, do things. It's part of our culture and history. It's the way we do things in our family.

Be thou a blessing. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. If you'd like to find out more about Bible Base, do come and join us on [www.biblebase.com](http://www.biblebase.com). We look forward to seeing you.

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