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Genesis 12:1-3 is a key moment in the unfolding of the biblical story: God chooses one family out of the scattered nations from Genesis 11 so that He can rescue all nations.

Yahweh initiates His plan to rescue humanity through His covenant with the family of Abram.*

*His name is changed to Abraham in Genesis 17:5

The promise to Abraham consists of a number of key elements that are developed in chapters 12-22.

- Abraham and Sarah growing into a nation
  - Genesis 12:1, 15:5, 17:1-8

- Inheriting the land of Canaan
  - Genesis 12:7, 15:17-21

- Receiving a great name
  - In contrast to the Babel-builders in 11:4

All nations will find God’s blessing through this family
- Genesis 12:3, 18:18; 22:18
God’s blessing to the nations through Abraham provides the foundational storyline for the rest of the Bible.

**Key Theme**

**God “Blessed” Humanity in the Beginning**

*Genesis 1:26-28*

**Humanity forfeited that blessing through rebellion and sin and brought about the curse of fractured relationships and ultimately death.**

*Genesis 3:14-19*

**God restored the promise of blessing for humanity through the line of Noah and then to Abraham**

*Genesis 9:1; 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18*

**God repeats the promise of blessing to the nations to each generation after Abraham**

**Paul described the church as those who have received the blessing of Abraham in Messiah Jesus and become part of His family**

*Ephesians 1:3, Romans 4*
The drama of Genesis 12-50 consists of the sin and folly of the family of Abraham and how they constantly put God’s promises into jeopardy.

### Key Themes in Genesis 12-50

**Abraham**
- Endangers the promise of a large family by giving away his wife, twice!
  - Genesis 12, 20

**Sarah**
- Tries to force God’s hand to give them a child by having Abraham sleep with Hagar
  - Genesis 16, 21

**Isaac**
- Gives away his wife Rebekah
  - Genesis 26

**Jacob**
- Is a thief and a liar and gains the blessing by stealing
  - Genesis 25, 27

**Joseph’s Brothers**
- Try to kill him
  - Genesis 37

**The Point**
Abraham’s family is so dysfunctional that divine promises will only be fulfilled through God’s faithfulness, not theirs.
God remains committed to this family and His promises, and constantly intervenes to rescue them.

**A**  
**God rescues Sarah (twice) and Rebecca from the folly of their husbands.**  
*Genesis 12:17-20; 20:6-10; 26:8-10*

**B**  
**God provides an heir for Abraham and Sarah.**  
*Genesis 18, 21*

**C**  
**God protects Jacob despite his selfishness and deception.**  
*Genesis 27-35*

**D**  
**God transforms the evil of Joseph’s brothers into something that saves the lives of people from many nations.**  
*Genesis 50:20*

This is the theme verse of the entire book.
The pattern of how God works in the world begins in Genesis and continues through the Bible: He works through people of low status who are weak or marginalized.

A. God does not make the firstborn sons the vehicles of His promise, but rather the unexpected children.

B. God moves towards those who are rejected.

- Abel
- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joseph
- Instead of
- Cain
- Ishmael
- Esau
- Reuben

- Hagar and Ishmael
  - Genesis 21:8-20
- Leah the Unloved Wife
  - Genesis 29:31-35
- Joseph the Despised Brother
  - Genesis 37:50
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