

## BLESSINGS

*" May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham."* Genesis 28:3-4

Look carefully at the blessing, for it is a central theme of both the Old Testament and the New. This is the same blessing that God gave Abraham more than a century before Jacob's departure for Haran.

| <b>GENESIS</b>                          | <b>Descendants</b> | <b>Land</b> | <b>Blessing of nations</b> |
|---|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| God to Abraham in Haran (12:2-3)        | x                  |             | x                          |
| God to Abraham at Hebron (15:1-21)      | x                  | x           |                            |
| God to Abraham at Hebron (17:1-21)      | x                  | x           |                            |
| God to Abraham at Hebron (18:17)        | x                  |             | x                          |
| God to Abraham at Mt. Moriah (22:15-18) | x                  |             | x                          |
| God to Isaac at Gerar (26:2-5)          | x                  | x           | x                          |
| God to Isaac at Beersheba (26:24)       | x                  |             | x                          |
| Isaac to Jacob at Beersheba (27:27-29)  |                    |             | x                          |
| Isaac to Jacob at Beersheba (28:3-4)    | x                  | x           |                            |
| God to Jacob at Bethel (28:13-15)       | x                  | x           | x                          |
| God to Jacob at Bethel (35:11-12)       | x                  | x           |                            |

In the chart overleaf, you can see the various forms of this blessing. There are at least three elements woven again and again through these blessings:

1. Fruitfulness -- numerous descendants,
2. Land -- the land of Canaan, and
3. World -- the nations of the world will be blessed.

This series of blessings introduces concepts that anchor themselves in Genesis and carry on throughout the Bible: covenant -- blessings and cursings, oaths and promises.

The blessing of Abraham is mentioned in the New Testament also: *"[Christ] redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."* Galatians 3:14

*"If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Galatians 3:29

Paul's argument is that Jesus is the Seed of Abraham, and if we belong to Jesus, then we, too, are descendants and heirs of Abraham.

So what of Abraham's promise is left for us to inherit?

- 1. Land.** Christ will reign on earth from Jerusalem, we are told.
- 2. Descendants.** For us, probably spiritual descendants are most prominent.
- 3. World.** Abraham's spiritual descendants are the salt of the earth who bring the message of Abraham's Seed -- the Messiah -- to the world. We are to be a blessing to the world. Through us, Christ's blessings are to flow out to others.