

Is God really interested in all the peoples of the world?

"In you all the families of the earth will be blessed."



When thinking about proclaiming the Messiah to all the world's ethnic groups most people will often think of Matthew 28:18-20. That text is important but actually the Biblical basis of God's desire to reach the nations goes back much further.

Many might be surprised that we find it in the book of Genesis. God speaks of blessing all the nations through Abraham's seed and the promise is repeated several times. God always had a plan which included all the nations (in some texts the phrase "all the families of the earth" is used). Look at the following passages:

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; 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; 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" (Genesis 12:1-3; See also Genesis 18:18 and 22:18).

The same promise was passed on to Abraham's descendants. God spoke to Isaac: *"I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"* (Gen. 26:4). God also spoke to Jacob (Israel): *"Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen. 28:14).

The early Christians saw that Jesus also carried the blessing of Abraham. We read after Pentecost: *"Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities"* (Acts 3:24-26). Certainly God

has fulfilled his word concerning Abraham's physical descendants, but there is more. The Gentiles who believe in the Messiah are also included in God's 4,000 year old promises to Abraham.

In Galatians 3:16 and 3:28-29 we read, *"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

Those who are in Christ are Abraham's seed, we are in the seed of Abraham, the Messiah. We are blessed and we are to be a blessing. **Our prayers during this month of Ramadan are part of God's ancient desire to bless all the nations, even all the families of the earth. Do we share his heart? Are we willing to go beyond our own comfort to bless the nations? Let us pray with faith knowing that God wants to bless the nations.**