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Lent 2 • Genesis 12:1–9 • March 16, 2014

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Preliminary Comments

Three small word combinations in the Hebrew provided direction for this sermon study: 1. *lek-leka* (v. 1). *lek* is an imperative followed by *leka* a preposition with the second person masculine singular pronoun. “Go, as far as you are concerned” is a suggested translation. 2. *weheyeh berakah* (v. 2). *weheyeh* is a conjunction followed by the imperative of the verb “to be.” *berakah* is the word for “blessing” and “be a blessing.” (The ESV translation is “you will be a blessing.”) 3. *beka* (v. 3) is a preposition with the second person masculine singular pronoun, “by you/in you/through you.” (The ESV translation is “in you.”)

“Abram” (exalted father) is the patriarch’s name that appears in Genesis 11:26 through Genesis 17:5 and in 1 Chronicles 1:27. YHWH (Gn 17:5) changed the name from “Abram” to “Abraham” (father of a multitude).

Sermon Notes

YHWH (LORD), the covenant God, said to Abram, “Go, as far as you are concerned from your homeland, your relatives, from your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” Abram obeyed the directive of YHWH and went where YHWH told him to go. He took with him Sarai, his wife, the members of his household (possibly including slaves), his accumulated possessions, and his nephew Lot. They formed a community and dwelt and slept in tents.

YHWH promised to make Abram into a great nation and to make his name great. YHWH promised, “I will bless you.” YHWH commanded Abram, “Be a blessing!” Abram testified to his faith in YHWH and was a blessing by erecting altars to YHWH (vv. 7–8). “He called on the name of YHWH” (v. 8).

YHWH had also promised Abram that “in/by/through you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” YHWH indicated that the messianic line begun according to Genesis 3:15 would be transmitted through Abram (Cf. Mt 1:1ff; Gal 3:8).

The Holy Spirit has called us in baptism to “Go!” and to “Be” his people in our world today. As it was true in Saint Paul’s day, so it is true in our day. We live “in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation” (Phil 2:15 ESV). God has not chosen to remove us from this world at the moment that the Holy Spirit brought us to faith. God has permitted us to live on. God in/through/by Jesus Christ has called us to BE a blessing (Mt 28:19, 20).

Saint Paul counseled, “Do not be conformed to this world” (Rom 12:2). Do not allow this world to mold you into sin and corruption. The world values money, property, possessions, and social media.

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have received the blessings of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life, we have the call to “*be* a blessing.”

We have been called to bear witness to our faith directly (Mt 28:18, 19). We bear witness to our faith indirectly when we leave for church on Sunday morning. We testify to our faith in Jesus Christ when we commune at his altar; “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26 ESV).

Jesus Christ described the Christian life in the Beatitudes (Mt 5:1–11) and John 3:1–16, the Gospel for the Day, can provide the basis for responding to God’s command to “be a blessing.”