

The Promise

Scripture Reading — Genesis 15:1-6

Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them. . . . So shall your offspring be.
— Genesis 15:5

Where we live, cloud cover and urban light obscure all but a few stars at night. But I remember being in a desert once where the night sky was totally clear, dark, and filled with stars beyond number.

God tells Abram to look up at such a sky and count the stars, knowing of course that it's impossible. What is God's point?

God has promised to do what Abram now believes is impossible: to make him, an old man, the father of a great nation (Genesis 12:2). But Abram knows it's humanly impossible for him to father one child, let alone a nation! Yet God points to the stars as if to say, "The maker of those can certainly make you into a father."

Later God changed Abram's name to *Abraham*, which means "father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5). And through Christ, a descendant of Abraham, God's promise now includes people from every tribe and nation (Romans 4; Revelation 5).

And what heralds the birth of Christ? A star (Matthew 2:1-12).

No matter how many stars you can see where you live, look up and rejoice at their beauty. Then remember these signs of God's promises fulfilled: the stars of Abraham, and the star of Jesus over Bethlehem.

Prayer

The heavens declare your glory, O God, and the stars, your handiwork! We give you thanks for your promise to Abraham that, through Jesus, extends to us all. Help us to radiate your glory to the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Printed on December 9, 2018

