

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

The first eleven chapters in the book of Genesis give us an overview of human history from creation to the dawn of the new age after God's global judgment wiped out the wicked age before the flood.

Now, the book of Genesis takes a turn in revealing God's dealing with mankind as it now zeroes in on a single man – a single man through whom God will work out His tremendous plan of redemption.

That man, Abram or Abraham.

In today's study, we will see God's calling of Abraham, I plan on showing you the significance of the covenant that God makes with Abraham and how it affects us and we will also see Abraham's struggles with faith.

Let's pray...

[Gen 12:1-20 NKJV] 1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram [was] seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites [were] then in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent [with] Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. 9 So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South. 10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine [was] severe in the land.

11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you [are] a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This [is] his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 "Please say you [are] my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." 14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she [was] very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. 17 But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What [is] this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she [was] your wife? 19 "Why did you say, 'She [is] my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take [her] and go your way." 20 So Pharaoh commanded [his] men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

Let's take a look at Abram's calling first.

At the end last week's study we were introduced to Abram.

Let's revisit the last two verses in chapter 11,

[Gen 11:31-32 NKJV] 31 And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. 32 So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

Terah was the father of Abram.

Lot was Abram's nephew and we will see more of him in the next few chapters.

And of course, Sarai is Abram's wife and also his half-sister (Genesis 20:12) **this comes into play at the end of the chapter today.**

So even before we start chapter 12, it appears that Abram was already struggling with his faith. We start seeing a few missteps on his parts.

You see God told Abram, get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house.

Whose tagging along with Abram on the way to Haran, his father and his nephew.

You might say, well that not a big deal, it was his father and his nephew.

It is a big deal because there was a reason that God told Abram to flee his family.

In the book of Joshua (Joshua 24:2) it reveals that Terah and his family worshipped other Gods.

So it was Terah that leads Abram and the bunch out of Ur and the scriptures tell us that they settled in Haran – Haran is about the midpoint between Ur and Canaan.

God didn't tell Abram to settle in Haran – God told Abram to go to a land that He alone was going to show him.

The name Terah in Hebrew means delay – so even though we are not told how long Abram and the rest of them dwelt in Haran, we know that they were delayed there until the death of Terah. Many people believe that they were in Haran between 15-20 years.

One of the things that we have to always remember is that when God calls to do something, partial obedience is disobedience.

And disobedience is sin.

And of course sin always have consequences, we might not see them at first – but our sins have consequences.

Keep that in mind as we continue studying the life of Abram.

So how did Abram get this call from God?

Verse one simply states that the Lord had said to Abram:

In the New Testament, listen to Stephen's account of Abraham's calling, **[Act 7:2-4 NKJV] 2 And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 "and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' 4 "Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.**

So in Stephen's account it tells us that God actually appeared and revealed this to Abram – it wasn't simply a voice that Abram heard or a dream that he had.

This is not the only time that God will physically appear to Abraham, God will appear before Abraham in the next few chapters.

However in scripture we are told the following,

Apostle John tells us in his epistle in 1 John 4:12 -

[1Jo 4:12a NKJV] 12 No one has seen God at any time.

And then God tells Moses in the book of Exodus – 33:20

[Exo 33:20 NKJV] 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

So what's going on here? Did Abram see God or not?

Turn with me to the gospel of John -

[Jhn 14:8-9 NKJV] 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

[Jhn 8:52-58 NKJV] 52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' 53 "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?" 54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of

whom you say that He is your God. 55 "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. 56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw [it] and was glad." 57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" 58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

So what we have here in the Genesis 12 is an example of a theophany or a Christophany.

It is the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

And we see these events throughout the Old Testament, we saw it in the Garden of Eden – remember Adam and Eve hear the footsteps of God walking in the Garden of Eden? That was Jesus Christ.

We will see it a few times with Abraham, We will see it when we get to Jacob as it says that he wrestled with God.

We see this theophany with Joshua and Moses as well.

So God calls Abram to simply go – he doesn't tell him where, God just tells him to pack his bags and go and that He will show Abram the land.

Now, this takes a tremendous amount of faith on Abram's part.

And this is the same faith that God calls upon each and every one of us. When I felt that God placed it on my heart to come down here, God didn't say, I want you to go down there and wait for that Starbucks to open up and start having bible studies there and two years later you are going to be having church services in a Fire Dept. training Center.

That is not how it works.

Many times, God simply says go. You don't need to know all the details.

If we did know the details, we probably wouldn't go.

However, God only tells us a little bit at a time so that way, we can continue to depend upon Him in every step that we make.

So that we can continue to seek Him for guidance and direction.

This is how it works – just like Abram. Go!

We are going to see another example later on in Gen 22 when God tells Abraham the following, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

As they get to the mountain Isaac tells Abraham, I see the wood, I see the fire but where is the lamb for the burnt offering and Abraham tells Isaac that God would provide the lamb.

And when they get to the top of Mt. Moriah, Abraham prepares the alter and then he bounds Isaac and he grabs the knife and as he is ready to kill Isaac, the Angel of the Lord stops Abraham.

Abraham didn't know that the Angel of the Lord was going to stop him. The only thing that he was certain about was the Word of God and the promises that God made to him.

Now, let's look at the promise God gave Abram, notice first that the promise is unconditional – meaning that Abram didn't have to do anything on his part.

- **I will make you a great nation**; this is the promise of the Hebrew nation – the Jewish people today. The great nation is not only the amount of people in the nation but also the land that they would have. In Chapter 15, God tells Abraham that He is giving them the land from the Egypt to Euphrates River.

- I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. Not only is Abraham the Father of Hebrews but also the Ishmaelite's. After Sarah dies Abraham has other children as well.
- I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; We see example after example in scripture regarding this. But we also see examples of this today.

I believe that our country has been blessed tremendously as we stand with the nation of Israel.

We saw last week an example of God cursing a nation when we looked at the prophesy regarding Gog and Magog in the book of Ezekiel.

- And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

How are all the families of the earth to be blessed??? How are we included in this blessing?

Let's look at the book of Galatians

[Gal 3:7-9 NKJV] 7 Therefore know that [only] those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, [saying], "In you all the nations shall be

blessed." 9 So then those who [are] of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Abraham's faith foreshadowed the gospel.

In the same way that Abram, by faith, had to believe the promises of God, we obtain salvation also through faith.

Faith in what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross.

[Gal 3:14-16, 29 NKJV] 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15 Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though [it is] only a man's covenant, yet [if it is] confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 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. ... 29 And if you [are] Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We are all blessed because the promise goes beyond the Jewish nation, we are blessed because of the promise of the Seed – our redeemer came through Abraham.

Let's continue in verse 6 now,

6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites [were] then in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent [with] Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and **called on the name of the LORD**.

Abram builds an alter in verse seven as God tells him that He is giving him the land that the Canaanites dwell in and Abram also builds another alter east of Bethel.

But I want you to notice that we have Abram calling on the name of the Lord at the end of verse 8

Here, Abram is making a stance on who he will worship. Unlike his father and family members back in Ur – or the Canaanites that lived there in Canaan as they worshipped other Gods.

From verse 10-20 we have Abram and Sarai going down to Egypt.

Notice that God never told them to go down to Egypt -

Egypt in scripture is always a type of the world.

So when there is a famine in the land, Abram is seeking refuge in the world instead of calling upon the Lord.

Here we have a series of missteps that Abram makes.

It all started with the decision to go down to Egypt.

So, the first thing that happens is that Abram now tries to get Sarai to lie as he wants her to say that she is her sister instead of his wife.

He does it for two reasons,

The first reason is that he wants to protect himself. Abram was afraid that the Egyptians would kill him in order to get Sarai – this is after the fact that God had made that tremendous promise to him.

No longer is he walking by faith in the promises of God, now, he is attempting to use deception to save his own skin.

The second reason that he is doing it is because in those times, women were treated as property. If you wanted to marry someone, you had to negotiate with the woman's father. If the father was not alive, you negotiated with the brother.

And so what happened was that when Abram arrives into Egypt, Pharaoh takes Sarai and Abram is rewarded with flocks, and herds as well as donkeys, camels and servants.

Then the Lord strikes Pharaoh and his household with plagues because of this.

Now, most likely these plagues could have been boils that were on the skin of Pharaoh and his household and many believe that Sarai didn't have these boils on her and that this is the way that Pharaoh was able to discern the reason for the plagues.

So Pharaoh rebukes Abram –

What are you doing to me?

Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?

Why did you tell me it was your sister?

There is nothing worse than an unbeliever rebuking a believer.

And here we have an example of how other people are affected by the sin in our lives.

Because Abram was being selfish and not holding to the promises of God, he jeopardizes the defilement of Sarai. This is why this misstep is so significant.

There was someone in the home bible study that I taught and he was brought up in the church and every time that I pointed to one of Abraham's missteps, he would try and argue that it wasn't a misstep.

He would argue that Abram was technically correct in stating that Sarai was his sister because she was his half-sister.

His other argument was that Abram was blessed because of the events that happened in Egypt – the last verse in our text states that he was sent out with all he had. Meaning everything that was given to him in Egypt.

First of all, a half truth is still a lie. There is no such thing as a half-truth or a white lie.

Secondly, as I had mentioned earlier that there are always consequences to sin.

Even though Abram and Sarai left Egypt with all these animals and slaves, the consequences will start to come up in the next chapter as Abram's people and Lot's people start fighting over the grazing land and soon after we will see that Sarai offers Abram her Egyptian slave as a wife and that simply leads to bigger problems.

All because they failed to place their trust in God.

We should be encouraged that our God continues to use us despite our missteps – just like Abram. It doesn't matter how mature we are in the Lord, we will all suffer missteps along the way – now, we should be suffering them less frequently. But we will still suffer them.

It all goes back to walking in obedience to His calling and placing our trust in Him.

Let's pray...

Dear Jesus,

Please forgive me of all of my sins.

I know that my sin has separated me from You and I am deserving of death.

I believe that you died for my sins and rose again.

I turn from my sins and I am asking that You come into my life.

Show me how to live my life that is right and pleasing to You.

I accept You as my Lord and Savior.

In Jesus name I pray.