

# THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

Genesis 11:27 – 12:8

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## Genesis 11:27 – 12:8

11:27-32 <sup>27</sup>Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. <sup>28</sup>And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. <sup>29</sup>And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. <sup>30</sup>But Sarai was barren; she had no child. <sup>31</sup>And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. <sup>32</sup>And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

12:1-12:8 <sup>1</sup>Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: <sup>2</sup>And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: <sup>3</sup>And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. <sup>4</sup>So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. <sup>5</sup>And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. <sup>6</sup>And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. <sup>8</sup>And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

The life of Abraham is God's example in a history of the world of what real faith looks like, and what God did for him, and through him, because he chose to believe God.

What stands out in the memory of the human race after the millenniums of time have been the great men and women of the Bible who put their futures at risk in the simple promises of God for great things.

The "I will's" of God are His promises to those who will hold to them, regardless of their short-term consequences under test, and what God will do for the man who lives by them.

When God says to a man, "trust Me with your life and let Me have your future", it is not in what a man promises he will do in response to God, but which way his feet go. God always says in His promises, "I will do this if you do this".

The big question is, "Do what?" it is to do what the Bible says in our daily life and to live in obedience in our daily walk. This is Abraham's story.

"<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee <sup>2</sup> and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

God had said unto Abram in the past that I will do these things for you and bless you if you get out from where you are, and walk with Me where I am going to lead you. God is saying I am going to lead you unto a land, a place I have for you and it is in that place I am going to bless you, and work through you, but you're going to have to do what I say.

God promised Abram three things in the "I will's":

1. I will show you a land. God is going to give the land to Abram and his descendants forever. It is the land of the Jewish people today.
2. I will make of thee a great nation. It was from Abram and Sarai who were childless, Sarai being barren, that God would build a great nation forever, a Jewish people.
3. I will bless you with a great name and make you a blessing to all the people of the world.

Abraham stands as a pillar of the greatest name in the world of history. The three greatest religions of the world are Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The entire planet knows and respects the name, Abraham, after 4,000 years of history. God kept His promise and gave Abraham a great name.

God also kept His promise to make Abraham a blessing to all the world.

Through him God gave the world the Jewish people and it has been through the Jews that God gave the world:

- The Bible
- The Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord

What would the world look like without Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible? If anything, the Scriptures are validated as being the Word of God, in God keeping His promises to Abraham, and looking back at history we have witnessed the truth.

- The delay of God's blessing upon Abraham.

“<sup>1</sup> God had said ... ‘Get thee out, and I will lead thee to ...’”

What is it that Abram began to do and then stopped along the way for a time? (11:31,32)

God had called Abram TO GET OUT of the land of the Ur of the Chaldees to go unto the land of Canaan, which today is known as Israel.

We know from chapter 11:31 that Abram, his father Terah, and their household go as far as Haran and that was it until Abram's father died.

He had begun his journey with God but he allowed those in his life who were worshippers of other gods to turn him aside. His life and future were put on hold, he second-guessed himself and thought to himself, “Did God really say?”

He wasted a lot of time in confusion because of those he had surrounded himself with who thought he was being extreme.

There are two things that Abram did that he was not to do in his new walk of faith.

1. He was not to take his father and Lot with him.

2. He was not to stop in Haran but go all the way to the place God had for him.

His father was an idolater and did not know God and his nephew, Lot was indecisive and greedy and would cause Abram a lot of trouble.

Abram was 75 years old when God called him to salvation and for the next hundred years he would learn through his successes and failures how to walk with God by faith. This was his first test of faith and he failed, but God, in His faithfulness, will not let His own alone until they have learned their lessons. (Phil. 1:6)

When Abram's father died in Haran, Abram began his walk of faith again, trusting in the Word of God and went on down to Caanan to where he had been called.

It was there in the place of God's blessing that God spoke to Abram again and reminded Abram of what He had said to do. God never changes His mind.

God spoke to Abram seven times in the book of Genesis and each time he heard from God was when he was walking daily in his life of faith and living in obedience to the will of God. A lot of people wonder why they don't hear from God and get anything out of their Bibles when they try to read them. It is when we are obeying the Word of God and our faith goes into action that the Scriptures come alive. It is then that we find God speaking to us and find His direction.

Abram was saved by faith and lived by faith and his obedience was the evidence of his faith.

Abram obeyed when he did not know where, how, when or why, and we are to obey, too.

I think it is the "why's" that get us into the most trouble, and it is those explanations we insist on having that cause us to stumble and struggle the most. The "why's" are best left alone to let eternity and time explain them. We never can begin to imagine what God might be doing in our lives and how many people we might be saving just through the simple and insignificant things we are doing. It is the people who have to figure it all out and make a sophisticated and logical answer to what God is doing, that will probably never discover what God had for them if only they had trusted Him. The people who we need to be concerned about are those who say, "God doesn't have a specific plan for us, He just wants us to use common sense and make the best of our own choices." Nobody in the Bible

who was God's man ever did that! They may have asked, "Why me, God?", but they did know what God called them to do.

- God had promised Abram a future if he would trust in Him for it. (12:1-3)

If Abram was going to receive the promises that God had given to him, then he was going to have to do what God had told him to do. He was to get out from where he had been living, to leave behind all that was most important to him and to walk where God was going to take him. Anything that meant everything to Abram, any security and comforts of life, anything that Abram had held onto to make himself a future, by faith he would have to walk away from and walk where God was going to take him. Only then, under these conditions would God give Abram what He had promised. The test of faith would be in the God of those promises.

Would the Living God be faithful and trustworthy and powerful enough to give him such promises? Would those promises be worth more to him than this world had to offer? Was Abram willing to risk his whole life for what God had said, when he didn't know where, when, how and why? All he knew was what God had said.

God did not give him reasons or explanations, He simply gave him promises. God had spoken unto him and told him what He would do for him and through him if he would trust Him.

This is what real faith looks like! God had not changed His mind when He had spoken to him in the Ur of the Chaldees, nor was He going to change His mind. God will not be put off by our excuses, nor cave in to our wants and wishes. His promises have to mean more to us than anything or anybody!

When we walk by faith we lean on God alone, His will, His Word, His character, His power. It is simple, child-like faith that reads those promises in the Word of God and says, "I am going to make those promises mine and obey the Word of God to get them!" How we respond to God's promises determines what God will do in our lives.

- Abram acted on those promises.

“<sup>4</sup> So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him...”

When God speaks to you in the Word, you know it, and there is no saying you don't know.

In every way, in every person of honor, in every still moment in your heart, you continually hear the same thing. God never calls a person without substantially making it clear. You won't have to guess! So Abram got up and started walking in God's direction.

This is what commitment looks like!

“<sup>5</sup> Abram took his family and Lot with him, so “they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came<sup>6</sup> and Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem unto the Plain of Moreh and the Canaanite was there in the land.”

This wasn't any walk in the park. The Canaanites would be a constant enemy to Israel's future. They were dangerous and hostile to anyone who they thought to be an easy target to rob or to destroy for the pleasure of it. We know from Joshua there were giants in the land.

Abram's faith obviously was strong enough to give him the courage to overcome his fears to pass through this land. I am sure there were a lot of “what-if's” and worry going through Abram's mind but by faith he stood up to the test of obedience.

Through the Christian life we will be called upon to do things for the “truth's sake” that we would have never chosen to do on our own. In our fears, everything in us tells us not to do it, but our faith in Christ says we must do it.

- God's assurance when we're walking by faith

“<sup>7</sup> And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land (the land belongs to the Jews): and there he built an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him.”

What an encouragement this would have been to God's faithful servants who would have had many questions about their own survival. "Is this really what we were supposed to do??"

It is amazing how God will give us reassurance in very powerful ways when we are allowing Him to direct our futures. It is during those times under pressure that we become aware of the Lord's presence with us. By experience we have learned that we are not alone.

- Abram's personal testimony

"<sup>7</sup> ... and there he built an altar unto the Lord Who had appeared unto him <sup>8</sup> and he removed from there unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east and there he built an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the Name of the Lord."

If you had asked anybody in the land what they knew about Abram, they would have said, "It is the guy [ **with the??** ]'s tent and altar".

The people of the land worshipped idols. They would have asked Abram, Where are your gods? He would have said, There is only one God, and He is the true and Living God. The people would have laughed at him.

His altars were his fellowship with the Living God.

The people would have asked him, Why don't you settle down; why are you always on the move and re-pitching your tent? He would have said, I am a stranger in this land; this is not my home; I am just passing through to my home, above. They would have really laughed and had a good time with that one. But he would have continued by saying, This whole land is mine, and my descendents will own this land forever.

The people might have laughed, but they did know where Abram stood with his faith in God.

His tent looked toward Bethel which means, House of God, and Hai was to his back which means, House of Ruin. He was walking away from a past that would have ruined his life, toward the house of God that Abram knew to be in Heaven. He always had his thoughts on an eternity with God (Heb. 11:9-16).

Abram was a really rich guy and could have had anything he wanted, but that wasn't good enough for him; what he really wanted was to be in heaven.

Whenever Abram abandoned his altar and tent and headed for the comforts of Egypt he always got into serious trouble.

What makes our walk of faith in God enjoyable rather than tolerable is knowing and loving God, and filling our hearts with His Word. It is to be in a place of service; finding our purpose in Christ; always moving toward that day when God calls us to our real home with Him.

- God tested Abram's faith the second time and he failed.

“<sup>9</sup> and Abram journeyed going on still toward the south <sup>10</sup> and there was a famine in the land and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.”

Abram was rich in cattle and the pasture land was drying up and dying. He saw everybody leaving and he thought it only made sense he go along with them. Egypt had plenty for them all. God had allowed for the famine to test Abram's faith, to stay where God had placed him and trust God to provide, but he got worried and packed up and left for a more promising place to be.

He had failed the test to stay in the place of blessing and to watch God work on his behalf to care for him.

Egypt would cause a lot of heartache for his family and wife. It almost destroyed their marriage and jeopardized the coming of God's salvation of the world through Abram and his seed (Christ). What seemed so logical and reasonable just to move on to greener pastures ended in disaster. They had failed to patiently stay in the place of God's choosing for them.

Egypt and Abram's impatience brought the worst out of him.

- Abram lied (Genesis 12:11-13)

“<sup>11</sup> Abram said unto Sarai, his wife, Behold now I know that you are a beautiful woman to look upon: <sup>12</sup> therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. <sup>13</sup> Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.”

Egypt symbolized the world of the ungodly in the Scriptures. We are never to turn to the world for answers and security or we will find ourselves being pulled away from God. When we start thinking the way the world thinks, we will start living like the world.

Abram was on his own and in order to survive he said his wife was his sister. What is this guy thinking? This is pure insanity. Is lying OK? Where is his love for his wife? What’s going to happen to her? Whatever happened to his tent and his altar? How can he be justifying what he knows is morally wrong and living with his conscience?

Pharaoh took Sarai into his palace, but before he could be with her the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his household with some sort of disease.

“<sup>18</sup> And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why did you not tell me that she was thy wife? <sup>19</sup> Why did you say, She is my sister? ... Now therefore behold thy wife, and take her, and go thy way.”

What a scathing rebuke from a godless man. What Pharaoh is saying is, Where are your morals? Where is your sanity? Do you not know that this is your wife? He tells his officers to get this man out of his land. Is Abram being a witness for God? What does his wife think of him, and the rest of his family?

When we take a fall and fail to rule our lives God will overrule in His faithfulness but there are always consequences.

- Abram gets back where he got off track.

Genesis 13 “<sup>1</sup> And Abram went up out of Egypt... <sup>3</sup> and went on his journey from the south even to Bethel (House of God) unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai <sup>4</sup> unto the place of the altar

which he had made there at the beginning and there Abram called upon the Name of the Lord.”

Impulsiveness, impatience and fear came really close to destroying this man’s life, family, and God’s purpose for him in bringing the Savior of the world through his descendants. He did lose his testimony for a time.

What did Abram do? He went back to where he knew he had been right with God and began again at the beginning. He went back to the place where he knew he belonged and got his tent back and his altar back.

It is only as we are living by the promises of God and trusting Him for our futures in obedience to His Word in the place where He has put us that any good can come out of our lives.

“We walk by faith and not by sight.”