

February 11, 2024 – Sermon Notes

“Obeying and Going Without Knowing” Genesis 12:1-9

Prel Rmks

Text ~ Today we begin looking at the life of Abram (Abraham 17:5) ~ Title

(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.

INTRO

First 11 chapters – foundation ...

1. The history from Adam to Noah and the Flood – 1656 years
2. The 3 sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth = 9:19 “from these 3 the whole earth was populated” ~ The Table of Nations in chptr. 10
3. Tower of Babel ...
4. Shem → Terah

5. Terah – 3 sons: Abram, Nahor, Haran.

Haran was the father of Lot – he died in Ur of the Chaldeans

Nahor stayed in Ur of the Chaldeans

Genesis 11:31 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.

6. When we pick up in chapter 12 – the focus is on just one of the sons of Terah – Abram

Rest of Genesis:

Abram (Abraham) thru 25:18

Isaac thru 26:35

Jacob thru 36:43

Joseph thru the end of the book

Abram = “exalted father” ~ Abraham in 17:5 = “father of a multitude”

Genesis 11:30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

He is one of the greatest, most well-known figures in all of human history: recognized as a central figure in the 3 great religions on earth even today – Christianity, Judaism, and Muslims.

One of the greatest figures in all the Bible.

2 Chronicles 20:7 Are You not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of **Abraham Your friend forever?**

Romans 4:11 ... the father of all those who believe ...

Romans 4:16 ... Abraham, who is the father of us all ...

Abram at this point wasn't a father at all, much less an “exalted father” or a “father of a multitude”

His name is mentioned 312 times in the Bible: 237 in the OT and 75 in the NT

Matthew 1:1-2 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: **(2)** Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

So, we begin our study of the life of Abram / Abraham

I. God's Call 1

This is a second call to Abram.

Acts 7:2-4

Stephen' Sermon

(4) ... when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.

(1)

Now the LORD had said to Abram:

"Get out of your country, command

From your family very difficult

And from your father's house, comfort of familiar surroundings ...

To a land that I will show you.

1. This was a very difficult calling ...

What made it so difficult?

2. It required faith ... "not knowing"

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

We need to think about how God just looked down and called Abram out of the evil and wicked life of paganism and idolatry that were such a dominant part of his life and his surroundings?

Both Ur and Haran were places of idolatry, astrology, worship of false gods that had demonic spirits associated with them – in particular the moon god.

It was out of that kind of environment that God called Abram!

[...]

II. God's Promises 2-3

(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.**" **Through Christ**

1. Romans 4 – These promises had to be embraced by faith.
2. The issue in the Scripture always comes down to this: Do we believe the promises of God. God said it. Do we believe it?

III. Abram's Faith and Obedience 4-9

True faith and obedience always travel together.

(4)

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him,

All he had to go on was the Word of God – **he didn't know very much at all about God at this point.** But he knew enough to obey.

and **Lot went with him.**

Lots of trouble

And Abram *was* **seventy-five years old** when he departed from Haran.

75 was not like 75 is today

He still had 100 years ahead of him at this point

It was a difficult trip –

(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**.

A specific oak tree ~ in a well-known place, public place ...

It marked the plain of Moreh

And **the Canaanites were then in the land**.

Godless, wicked, evil, idolatrous, vile practices – child sacrifice
(demonic in origin).

So wicked and evil that God later wanted them wiped out entirely.

(7)

Then **the LORD appeared to Abram**

and said, **"To your descendants I will give this land."** **Title deed ...**

And there **he built an altar to the LORD**, who had appeared to him.

An altar = a place for a blood sacrifice

A public place = Abram publicly worshipped God

We see that again in v. 8

(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**.

Toward Jerusalem

Martin Luther: "It must have been hard to leave his native land, which is natural for us to love. Indeed, love for the fatherland is numbered among the greatest virtues of the heathen. Furthermore, it is hard to leave friends and their companionship, but most of all to leave relatives. And then it is clear, that with his obedience of faith, Abraham gave a supreme example of an evangelical life, because he left everything to follow the LORD. He preferred the Word of God to everything, and he loved it above everything."

Implications / Applications

1. As His children, God has called us out of this evil world.

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **(10)** who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? **(15)** And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? **(16)** And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE." **(17)** Therefore "COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU." **(18)** "I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY."

2. Obeying **God's call on our** lives is usually NOT **easy**. It almost always requires risk (from our perspective).

Luke 9:23-26 Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. **(24)** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. **(25)** For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? **(26)** For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Matthew 10:37-39 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. **(38)** And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. **(39)** He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

{Kashmir – Ahmed → Mohammed “Yousuf” → Mahmud ~ Rahim}

What are we risking for the cause of Christ?

3. Obeying God's call on our lives requires faith – trusting God.

Obviously, we can't see ahead ...

This is how the Christian life is lived.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

{**Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German Lutheran pastor during the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 1940s** - he had the opportunity to stay in the United States ...}

4. Entering the Christian life is an act of obedient faith.

Romans 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 ... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, **(8)** in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:17 For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Have you obeyed the Gospel?

The Good News of the Gospel comes in the form of command:

A command to repent

A command to come to Christ

Have you obeyed that command?

Cole Richards, President of Voice of the Martyrs:

“As Christ’s disciples, we are simply called to obey Him – at any cost and with no assurance of results. Only God can bring forth eternal fruit from the seeds of our obedience. And He often does so in ways we do not expect and cannot fathom because his wisdom and ability are infinitely, not marginally, greater than ours. This truth is both humbling and freeing ... Let’s be resolved to obey our Lord and obediently scatter the seeds of His truth everywhere we go. When we do, we ... will be freed from the anxiety of overanalyzing risks and consequences ... as we do our part, God will build His kingdom. And we will be surprised by the harvest that, unknown to us now, awaits us in eternity.”