

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #31

Genesis 12:1-9

When Isaiah wrote concerning the call of Abram he wanted to make certain that Israel understood that God is the One who wanted full credit for Abram's call - Isaiah 51:1-2 says - "Hearken to me, you that follow after righteousness, you that seek the LORD; look unto the rock from which you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you are digged. Look unto Abraham, your father, and unto Sarah, who bore you; **for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him.**" Regardless of the fact that Abram came from an idolatrous homeland, God did these remarkable things with and for Abram because Abram was the man God chose to use.

When we turn to the book of Hebrews we discover that the way Abram responded to the call of God was a tremendous example of a righteous faith (Hebrews 11:8-12). Of all people named in this famous faith chapter, the one to whom the most verses are dedicated is Abraham.

GOD CHOOSES TO CALL AND BLESS WHOMEVER HE WANTS AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE GOD AND OBEY GOD WILL BE BLESSED BY GOD.

The fact is, God called Abram when there was nothing about him worth calling or choosing. God blessed Abram when there was something about him worth blessing.

PART #1 - The call of God. 12:1-3

There have been three date proposals as to when this call occurred, but archeological discoveries since 1925 have concluded and confirmed the dates 2100 B.C.-1800 B.C. Discoveries were found listing four eastern kings mentioned in Genesis 14, which fit this time frame (See John Davis, pp. 155-160).

Feature #1 - God's call was completely unconditional. 12:1a

We see from the last couple of verses in chapter 11 that there was nothing initially about Abram worth calling - he was from an idolatrous country and an idolatrous home. The text does not specifically say here the city where this happened, but other texts do, the city was Ur (Genesis 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7) - an idolatrous, immoral city (Joshua 24:2) located 160 miles from the head of the Persian Gulf, about 220 miles S.E. of Baghdad. Excavations of this ancient city by Leonard Woolley from 1922-1934 show that there were magnificent jewels, various musical instruments and well crafted statuettes, homes and multistory buildings. As Davis observed, "This data gives the impression that Abraham's Ur was a sophisticated, well-designed, wealthy city, one that provided the best available comforts (p. 166). God called Abram not because he deserved or merited to be called. Abraham was an idolator and God's call was one of pure grace.

Feature #2 - God's call demanded total separation. 12:1b

God demanded that Abram leave everything - country, relatives, even his own father's house. It is important to observe that when God initially calls Abram, He does not immediately inform him of where it is He specifically wants him to go. One thing that many theologians have observed is that **God rarely demands personal sacrifice without the promise of greater compensation and blessing**. Those who truly want the ultimate of God's blessings, must be willing to abandon everything to follow God's Word and Will.

Feature #3 - God's call promised wonderful blessings. 12:2-3

(Blessing #1) - God promised to lead Abram to a new land. 12:1c

(Blessing #2) - God promised to make of Abram a great nation. 12:2a "nation" – Hebrew "goy"

(Blessing #3) - God promised to give Abram His blessings. 12:2b

(Blessing #4) - God promised to make of Abram a great name. 12:2c even "kings" (Gen. 17:6)

(Blessing #5) - God promised to cause Abram to be a blessing. 12:2d

(Blessing #6) - God promised to give Abram special protection. 12:3a

(Blessing #7) - God promised to honor Abram universally. 12:3b

The demands were high, but so were the promised blessings.

PART #2 - The response of Abram. 12:4-9

Fact #1 - Abram fully obeyed God's word. 12:4a

Abram did exactly what God's word told him to do, sensing the lack of the Mesopotamian world. He departed from Ur, crossed the Euphrates (no easy task) and headed to the land of Canaan.

Fact #2 - Abram took his family with him. 12:4-5

Abram was a true spiritual leader of his own family.

Fact #3 - Abram obeyed God as an older man. 12:4b

Abram was 75 years old when he followed the leading of God - his advanced age meant nothing.

Fact #4 - Abram's obedience resulted in opposition . 12:5-6

Abram faced much opposition in obeying God: his wife is barren; he does not know where he is going; he had to leave his family; his father died; plus when he gets to Canaan, he faces an enemy - his land was occupied by the Canaanites.

Abram came to Shechem - to the oak of Moreh. The Hebrew name Moreh means teacher or instructor. It is very possible that this particular place, at the time Abram first arrived, was a spot known for Canaanite instruction, teaching and education. He has landed right in the heart of Canaanite life and idolatry. Even though Abram was fully doing God's will in response to obeying God's Word, he still faced opposition.

Fact #5 - Abram's faithfulness received reconfirmation. 12:7a

The LORD appeared to Abram and reconfirmed that this would be the land he would give to his seed. People Who carefully follow the word of God will always end up seeing more and more things of God.

Fact #6 - Abram's faith worshipped God. 12:7b-8

Abram, the herdsman becomes a builder - not of a city or tower, but of an altar. One of the greatest things a faithful servant of God can do in the face of opposition is to worship God. In the midst of this pagan land and pagan polytheistic religion, Abram built an altar and worshipped God both at the "oak of Moreh" (12:7b) and again at "Bethel," some twenty miles to the south.

Fact #7 - Abram's faith kept following God. 12:9

Abram was somewhat uncertain as to the precise boundaries of the land, so he moved toward the Negev, which is the dry area south and west of the Dead Sea, that part of land that binds Asia and Africa. This is the third move Abram makes in a relatively short time, which tells us that **sometimes a few moves are necessary before one finally reaches his ultimate destination of blessing.**

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

- 1. True Abrahamic faith believes the Word of God.**
- 2. True Abrahamic faith obeys the Word of God.**
- 3. True Abrahamic faith follows the Will of God.**
- 4. True Abrahamic faith worships God.**