

## God's Call To Abram

Genesis 12

### Abram Called From His Homeland

Genesis 12:1-9

#### **Abram's Call:** *Genesis 12:1-3*

##### **God's Direction for Abram**

The call to Abram was a direct and specific act of God's grace. There was no wondering or guessing involved, God told Abram exactly what to do. Instead of searching for answers, Abram simply had to follow the LORD'S direction. God's Word provides all the information required to know Him and follow His ways. It tells of Jesus Christ, who paid sin's price so sinners may know God (John 14:6). It provides teaching so believers might know how to live for God (2 Timothy 3:16). Faith is all God requires of men and women (Hebrews 11:6).

Abram was called to leave his country, kindred, and father's house. This call challenged Abram, directing him to leave all he held dear in this world for that which was unknown, a land he did not possess and never saw. But in following God, Abram's faith would be strengthened. Like most of the world, his homeland and kindred were idolatrous (Joshua 24:2). After the flood, it did not take long for the world to forsake God for idols. In leaving his homeland Abram would practice separation, which is necessary to walk with God (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). It is impossible to live in the world and follow God at the same time. Abram was to walk by faith. He was not given the location, size, description, or value of the land. Abram had to trust God's word. When everything is known, faith is not required. Living by faith is trusting God with the unknown.

##### **God's Promises for Abram**

Abram was called to leave all that he knew but God promised to bless him with so much more. The Lord gave Abram seven promises concerning His call.

1. *I will make of thee a great nation* – The LORD is able to make nations and He is able to make them great.
2. *I will bless thee* – it appears to be a promise of general blessing.
3. *I will make thy name great* – Abram was about to enter a new land where he was unknown but God would exalt him.
4. *Thou shalt be a blessing* – Abram would be a blessing to those he met and knew, as well as many he would never meet.

5. *I will bless those that bless thee* – God and Abram would be united and Abram's allies would know God's blessings.
6. *I will curse those that curse thee* – God would be an enemy to those that opposed Abram.
7. *In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed* – This was the final blessing but perhaps the greatest because it referred to the Messiah that was to come.

Abram did not set out on a fool's mission. He followed God's direction and trusted God's promises; he lived by faith (Hebrews 11:8). Anytime we trust God's Word, we will be blessed.

### **Abram's Obedience: *Genesis 12:4-9***

#### **Abram Left his Homeland**

Abram received the call in his homeland of Ur and traveled with his father Terah to Haran (Acts 7:2-3). There he remained until the death of his father, perhaps it was difficult to leave his family. Abram left Haran and continued without knowing where he was going (Hebrews 11:8-9). He displayed faith and never questioned God's direction. Abram did not know where he was headed but he believed God did, so he trusted the LORD.

Abram took all he owned and never planned to return. He followed God completely and trusted Him with everything. He took his family, wife Sarai and nephew Lot, and all his possessions with him. The Bible mentions the souls they took, which refers to Abram's servants. The Scriptures make it clear, that even the lowliest on earth possess a soul. Our soul is our most valuable possession and faith in Christ will secure it for eternity (Mark 8:36; Romans 10:13). Abram did not have a backup plan; his only course of action was to follow God. Faith is complete trust in God's Word. Living by faith requires us to be willing to follow God's direction no matter what the cost. We do not walk by faith until we are willing to give it all up for the Lord.

#### **Abram Arrived in the Land**

Abram entered the land, probably from the north, and went to Sichem, also known as Shechem, which was centrally located. Abram did not receive possession of the land upon arrival, instead he found the Canaanites inhabiting it. This may have surprised Abram and reminded him that he would have to wait on God. As we live by faith, it is important to remember that God will work in His time and way (Isaiah 40:31).

The LORD appeared unto Abram. This was the first time God communicated with Abram since He called him from his homeland. The LORD did not talk to Abram while he was a resident in Haran nor while he made his way to the land. Once again the LORD gave Abram explicit information, this time it concerned possession of the land. It had probably become clear to Abram that he would not receive the land at this time, due to the Canaanites. This may have been a concern and might have caused discouragement. Abram may have wondered why he was there and what God was doing. The LORD informed Abram that his seed would inherit the land. The LORD had a plan and this was part of it. Abram was called to go to the land and his descendants would take possession. This serves as a

reminder that God remains in control and continues to work, though we may not know how. Like Abram, we must continue by faith. Abram built an altar unto the LORD. It was an act of thanksgiving, Abram being grateful for the LORD'S blessings.

Abram continued through the land. He went south about 35 miles unto a mountain east of Bethel. There he pitched his tent, perhaps staying for a while. He also built an altar and called upon the name of the LORD. Abram continued southward, not remaining in one location for a long period of time. If he entered from the north, following the route from Mesopotamia, then he traveled the entire length of the country. At this point, Abram was again required to wait. The land was not in his possession and no other direction was given.

### ***Abram Recovered From Egypt***

*Genesis 12:10-20*

#### ***Abram's Decision: Genesis 12:10-13***

##### **Abram and the Great Famine**

As Abram waited, a grievous famine came upon the land, implying a lengthy drought. As a result of the drought, there was probably a shortage of crops and food, creating a famine. Abram may have become concerned with the welfare of his family. He was in a foreign land, one promised to him but not in his possession, he was the minority living in a land of idolaters, and he faced a great famine. Any one of those situations can shake a person's faith.

Abram decided to go to Egypt to sojourn, implying he planned on staying a short period of time. It was his way of escaping the famine, which appeared to be a good decision, but was it? The Bible does not say they were starving or without food. Perhaps Abram left for Egypt due to fear of hunger and starvation. If so, his decision was based upon what might have been instead of what was. There is also no indication of the LORD directing him to Egypt. Abram had just arrived in the land God promised to him and his family, there was no reason to leave. Difficult times will challenge our faith in God's Word. Abram knew God's promises but also recognized the threat of famine, instead of clinging to God's word he made a decision based upon his circumstance and fled for Egypt. This decision would affect his family for years.

##### **Abram and Egypt**

As he neared Egypt, Abram discovered new fears. That's what often happens when we run from the LORD'S direction.

1. *Abram feared the Egyptians* – Rightly so, because Egypt was a flourishing nation. It was well populated, wealthy, and powerful. Abram believed the Egyptians would look upon Sarai and take her from him because of her beauty. His fear led him to believe the LORD could or would not protect Sarai.

2. *Abram feared death* – He was certain the Egyptians would kill him in order to take Sarai. He knew the Egyptians could overpower them and he fearfully forgot the LORD'S promises.

Abram made an unwise decision, one that would endanger his wife. He encouraged Sarai to lie for him, saying she was his sister. He may have believed the Egyptians would ignore them, but Sarai found greater trouble by giving the impression she was single. It was a hasty decision made without faith.

1. *Abram's decision was motivated by his fears* – His lack of control over his emotions put himself and his family into harm's way (Proverbs 25:28).
2. *Abram's decision was based upon his reasoning* – His decision could be justified because Sarai was his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). But a partial lie is still a lie and "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" James 4:17.

Abram lived by his strength instead of trusting in God's power. He would learn that it is better to trust in the LORD than in our own ways (Proverbs 23:26).

### **Abram's Dilemma:** *Genesis 12:14-20*

#### **Abram Entered Egypt**

The Egyptians immediately looked upon Sarai because of her beauty. Like the Egyptians, most societies place a lot of importance upon appearance. It is good to remember that God looks upon the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). The Princes of Pharaoh took note of Sarai and commended her to their leader; she was then taken to Pharaoh's house. To their credit, they believed she was Abram's single sister and not his wife. The Pharaoh treated Abram kindly because of Sarai, offering him many gifts. Abram did not plan for this and it probably grieved him.

The Pharaoh and Sarai were never married. God protected her despite Abram's foolishness. Once again, God displayed His great grace and mercy towards Abram and his family (Ephesians 2:4-9).

#### **Abram Discovered**

The LORD plagued Pharaoh's house because of Sarai. The plagues are unknown but they were effective. How the Pharaoh discovered Abram and Sarai were married is also a mystery. Perhaps Sarai told him or it was revealed after an investigation of Abram was made. Either way, upon finding out, the Pharaoh quickly questioned Abram concerning Sarai and his lie. To the Pharaoh it was probably upsetting to have been deceived in such a manner (Proverbs 25:19). He received no answer to his question. Maybe he waited not for a reply or Abram had nothing to say due to shame. The Pharaoh issued what appears to be an executive order that sent Abram on his way. Nobody was to prevent them from leaving. Abram was immediately sent off and he returned to the land God promised him. By God's grace, Abram left Egypt with his family and even more possessions. These blessings do not condone Abram's sin but manifest God's grace and mercy towards those He loves.

Abram was at fault. He chose to ignore the LORD'S direction and live amongst the world. Because of this he had no strength or confidence in God, lack of faith. Abram blended in with the world and acted no differently. Sadly, the Pharaoh offered up a better testimony than Abram. In this difficult time, Abram learned that it is best to follow God's direction.

### Conclusion

Abram was called out of his homeland so God could bless him. Abram went by faith because he did not know where he was going, when he would arrive, or how he would get there. Abram only had God's word, but that is all he needed. By faith he embarked on the journey of a lifetime with God as his guide. Today, God requires us to follow Him by faith and those that do will be blessed. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. John 12:26*

#### Point to Ponder

Abram was given more from God than what he left behind.

#### Quote

"God never calls men to make them less." Joseph Parker

#### Questions

Why did Abram leave his homeland?

Why did Abram go to Egypt?

What did Abram deal with because of his choice to leave the land God gave him?

How was Abram humbled in Egypt?

What new truth have you learned from this lesson?