

## Steve Greenberg's Handout

Week 10, April 1, 2026 Genesis 12 Promises to Abram

### Genesis 12:1-9 Promises to Abram (The Call of Abram) Yahweh Appears to Abram (Acts 7:2-5)

**Gen 12:1** Now (**living in Haran**), the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country (**or land**) (**Go forth. Literally: Go for yourself**), From your family (**relatives**) And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.

**LORD: NKJV** uses all caps representing the divine name YHWH, often called the Tetragrammaton. Yahweh a transliteration of the Hebrew name

#### Abram (later Abraham)

**Ur:** Abram original homeland (Ur of the Chaldeans)

**Haran:** Abram and his family traveled and settled for a time

**Canaan:** The land God promised to show him.

**Jos 24:2** And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.

#### Stephen's address in the book of Acts: The Call of Abraham

**Act 7:2** 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,

**Act 7:3** "and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.'

**Act 7:4** "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.

**Act 7:5** "And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him.

#### God's instruction to Abram is structured as a threefold separation:

1. From your country (land). This means leaving his nation/region—the broader cultural and geographic identity he belonged to and going to a new land not yet specified, must go without out knowing details, by faith.

2. From your family (kindred/relatives). This narrows it down to his extended tribe the social network that defined his place in society.

3. From your father's house. This is the most personal level his immediate household, inheritance ties, the authority structure under his father most be removed.

**Gen 12:2** (**Verses 2 & 3 give the basic outline of God's covenant with Abraham**) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you (**greatly, abundantly**), And make your name great (**known to all**); And you shall be a blessing (**a source of good to others**).

God promised Abram a land, a nation, and a blessing. It is interesting Abraham's name is great to the Jews. It is great to the Moslems, and to the Christians.

v.2,3 The promise of blessing God gave to Abram included the promise of the Messiah (Christ) that was to come from Abram's line: "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. The world shall recover by your seed, which is Christ, the blessing which was lost in Adam.

### Quote by Chuck Smith 3,000 series

We never believe God will bless us, because we have this hang-up that God only blesses: as a reward for our goodness. No, the blessings of God are given to us by His grace. It was by the grace of God that He called Abram. It was by the grace of God that He called you. And it is by the grace of God that He blesses you, not by merit of our works, or our faithfulness, or our diligence, but by His grace I experience, and I receive the blessings of God

### Mankind rebels against God & said let us make a name for ourselves in rebellion to God

Gen 11:4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you (**do good, benefit**), And I will curse him (**they will be subject to My wrath and judgment**); who curses you (**has contempt in their heart, despises, dishonors**) And in you (**your seed**), all the families (**peoples, nations**) of the earth shall be blessed (**This is global, Sarah is barren**) (**God's blessing will come through your name, Gen 48:20**)."

Abram is called to be a blessing to others, and much depends on how they will treat him. The text speaks of those who bless, but also those who dishonors. Abram as the covenantal representative for a people. To be in some person is to be a member of the group that person represents.

Act 3:25 "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

Gen 48:20 So he(Jacob) blessed them (boys) that day, saying, "By you (Heb: singular), Israel will bless (pronounce blessing), saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he(Jacob) set Ephraim before (or ahead of) Manasseh.

Balaam raised his eyes, and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him. Jacob! Your dwellings, O Israel and he shared

**Num 24:8 "God brings him out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox; He shall consume the nations, his enemies; He shall break their bones And pierce them with his arrows.**

**Num 24:9 'He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?'  
"Blessed is he who blesses you, And cursed is he who curses you."**

### **A quote from the David Guzik commentary on Blue Letter Bible**

This promise — inherited by the covenant descendants of Abram, the Jewish people — remains true today and is a root reason for the decline and death of many empires.

- i. Historically speaking, nations that have treated the Jewish people well have often been blessed. "When the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others, and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome soon fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition against the Jews; Poland fell after the pogroms; Hitler's Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism; Britain lost her empire when she broke her faith with Israel." (Barnhouse)
- ii. This promise has also affected the church. The times when the church took upon itself the persecution of the Jewish people were dark times not only for the Jews but also for the church.

**Gen 12:4 So Abram departed (**went forth**) as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot (**his nephew**) went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.**

**God commanded him to go out from your family (Genesis 12:1) yet he compromised and brought his nephew Lot. Lot would not be a blessing to Abram. He would be nothing but trouble and inconvenience.**

**Abram's response to God's call, have we responded to Gods call?**

**Gen 12:5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son (**nephew**), and all their possessions that they had gathered (**accumulated**), and the people (**servants**) whom they had acquired (**taken into his household**) in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.**

**Genesis 14:14 it mentions Abraham having 318 trained men born in his household, some of them herdsmen going to rescue his brother those who were taken captive.**

**Gen 12:6** Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth (large oak) tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites (descendants of Ham's son who was cursed by Noah, Gen 9:25) were then in the land.

**Quote from Chuck Smith 3,000 series**

Now, with Abraham God said, "Get out of this land and go to a land that I will show you." Abraham went to Haran and he stayed in Haran for a time. God didn't speak to him. The Lord didn't appear to him. And the Lord did not appear to him again until he came to the land that God had called him to go to. And when he came into the land, now again God begins to deal with him. Now you're at the place where God can give you the next step and God can deal with you once more. We oftentimes get stalled, because we don't take that first step, because we are wanting God to show us a little bit further. We want Him to spell out a little bit more. But the walk of faith is one step at a time. That's why Abraham was called the man of faith. One step at a time, that's the way a person walks in faith.

**Shechem events:**

Shechem's New Testament name is Sychar — where Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:5-6

This is where Jacob built an altar to the Lord and called it El Elohe Israel (Genesis 33:20). This established the connection between Jacob and what became known as Jacob's well.

This is where the bones of Joseph were eventually buried when they were carried up from Egypt (Joshua 24:32).

This is where Joshua made a covenant with Israel, renewing their commitment to the God of Israel and proclaiming: as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24).

**Gen 12:7** Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants (offspring) I will give this land." And there he (Abram) built an altar to (honor, dedicate & give glory to) the LORD, who had appeared to him.

**This is the first of a number of times that God shows himself to the patriarchs. Theophanies, God appearing to man: Gen 16:7-13; 18; 22; 33 etc.)**

**Gen 17:1** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

**Gen 17:2** "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."

**Gen 17:3** Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:

**Gen 17:4** "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.

**Gen 17:5** "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

Gen 17:6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

Gen 17:7 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you (**I will be your God**) and your descendants after you.

Jhn 3:16 "For God (the Father) so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son(Jesus), that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

2Cor 5:21 For He(God) made Him(Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Gen 12:8 And he(**Abram**) 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 (**worshipping**) the name of the LORD.

From Shechem, Abram migrates southward to a location between Bethel and Ai.

Gen 12:9 So (**after that**) Abram journeyed, going on still (**continued traveling**) toward the South (**South country of Judah, Hebrew Negev**).

### Genesis 12:10-20 Abram and Sarai in Egypt

Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there (**temporarily living as a foreigner**), for the famine was severe in the land.

This is a new trial in Abram's life? How was he going to respond? Trials are a part of our lives. Are you going to run back to Egypt (World) or pray and trust God?

Gen 12:11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he(**Abram**) said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed (**Listen carefully**), I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance (**Sarai was beautiful and about sixty-five years old at this time**).

Gen 12:12 "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife (**we want her**); and they will kill me, but they will let you live (**or so then we can have her, if her husband is dead**).

Gen 12:13 "Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I (**Literally my soul**) may live (**be spared**), because of you (**on account of you**)."

Though Abram is considered to have been a great man of faith, his faith was not always constant, and here is a lapse of faith.

Sarai was Abraham's half-sister because they had the same father, but different mothers (Gen 20:12).

**Abram compromises his witness based on a half-truth (see 20:12), thinking God is unable to protect him. Yet it does not work the arm of the flesh never works, the Lord ultimately rescues him (12:17)**

**Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

**Gal 6:8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.**

**Gal 6:9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**

**Gal 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

**Heb 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.**

**Heb 11:9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;**

**Heb 11:10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

**Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,**

**Heb 11:18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"**

**Heb 11:19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.**

**Through Jesus Christ, the blessing becomes fully realization: Spiritual (forgiveness, relationship with God); Transformational (new life, eternal life)**

**Gal 3:7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.**

**Gal 3:8 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."**

**Gal 3:9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.**

**Gal 3:14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

**Gen 12:14 So it was, when Abram came into (**entered**) Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman (**Sarai His wife, and half-sister**), that she was very beautiful.**

**Gen 12:15 The princes (**officials**) of Pharaoh (**royal title, ruler or King of Egypt**) also saw her (**Sarai**), and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman (**Sarai**) was taken (**to be part of his harem, and possibly his wife**) to Pharaoh's house (**His palace**).**

**Gen 12:16** He (**Pharaoh, King of Egypt**) treated Abram well for her(**Sarai**) sake (**gave many gifts on account of her being in his harem**). He(**Abram**) had (**received**) sheep, oxen (**cattle**), male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels (**these were added to his possessions**).

**Gen 12:17** But the LORD plagued (**struck, afflicted, sent consequences to**) Pharaoh and his house with great plagues (**severe diseases**) because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

God will punish future pharaohs (leaders) for their mistreatment of Abram's descendants.

**Gen 12:18** And Pharaoh (**King of Egypt**) called (**or summoned**) Abram and said, "What is this, you have done to me (**demanding**)? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"

Abraham said Sarah "She is my sister." To Abimelech king of Gerar

**Gen 20:2** Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

**Gen 20:3** But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."

**Gen 20:7** "Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

**Gen 20:11** And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife."

**Gen 20:12** "But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife."

**Gen 20:17** So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children;

**Gen 20:18** for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

**Gen 12:19** "Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I "might" have taken her as my wife (**or as a wife**)? Now therefore (**behold, Listen carefully**), here is your wife; take her and go your way (**get out of here**)."

God had divine protection of Abram and Sarai they should have just trusted in God and told the truth, instead they were rebuked by pagan King. God will use all kinds of people to show us we need to just trust in Him

**Gen 12:20** So Pharaoh (**King of Egypt**) commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him(**Abram**) away (**out of the country**), with his wife and all that he had (**including what had been given to them**).

God is faithful and He who has promised will perform it

**Pro 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.**

**Pro 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.**

**Pro 21:3 To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.**

**cf. similarly speaking of Moses, Pharaoh let him go, Ex 3:20; 4:21**

**End:**

**Extra Notes:**