

Abram to Abraham: Leave gods for God; Genesis 12:1-3 FBC Canton Sunday am
July 26, 2026

Introduction: The Lord calls to each person because he is the personal God. Ch. 11

God was now narrowing his conversation from all people to one nation.

This is the origin of the nation of Israel, and we will see they still have a destiny because of these promises.

He calls to us to make an example of faith out of our lives. Hebrews 11

Hebrews 11:8-10

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Answer God's call to live for a different city!

I. God will give you a second chance. V. 1, Acts 7:2-4

"God told him to leave the country but Abram *didn't leave* "his kindred" and "his father's house"; he simply moved up river (approximately from Ur to Haran). The name "Terah" means "delay" and the name "Haran" means "parched." Haran was one of the chief centers for the worship of *Sin*, the moon-god." Terah was an idolater (Josh 24:2) Chuck Missler

- a. Delayed obedience leads parched Christianity.**
- b. Giving up dead idols for the Living God shouldn't be this difficult.**

ii. Abram would certainly become a giant of faith, even being the father of the believing ([Galatians 3:7](#)); yet he did not start as a hero of faith. We see Abram as an example of *growing* in faith and obedience. David Guzik

c. We have to give up the city of man, to see the city of God.

Many people have stopped at Haran, but the time came for him to move on, which he did. Maybe the time has come for you to move on from your Haran. "The Lord said, Get thee out of thy country, from thy father's family." Chuck Smith

II. God's promises are irrevocable. V. 2-3, Romans 9-11

God's contract is still intact. God has a purpose and plan for Israel. Chuck Missler

a. 7 "I Wills." The origin of all blessings; God's grace!

i. Significant nation.

ii. Abraham blessed by God.

1. Protection of the promised line.

iii. God makes Abraham's name great to His name great.

iv. Blessed to be a blessing. Isaiah 9:1-2

9 Nevertheless the gloom *will not be* upon her who *is* distressed,
As when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.

² The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.

v. Those who bless Israel prosper.

1. Be thankful God's blessings are not contingent on perfection.

vi. Those who curse Israel are destroyed.

1. When God blesses, we should expect enemy attacks.

2. The greatest problem we have is that we don't expect problems. James 1:2-4

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. David Guzik

Let's look at the history...

Hurricane Katrina hit 8 days after the United States pressured Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to evacuate Jewish families from the Gaza Strip under a disengagement plan in southern Israel in 2005.

- Eight days later, Katrina hit.

On August 27, 2021, President Biden and Prime Minister Naftali Bennet met. It is known that Biden endorses a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- As Bennet was flying from the United States back to Israel, Hurricane Ida hit.

vii. All families are blessed by the Messiah.

1. Unlimited atonement. John 3:16

Conclusion: Obedience is measured by feet. No further communication until in the Land. V. 8-9

You will notice Abraham is constantly building alters (place of worship).

The word Shechem means "shoulder." The first appearance of God

(there is no record of Abram receiving any further revelation until

His call had been fully obeyed) and Abraham is in the land (worship;

communion; promise). V, 8-9

Don Smith

Gen 12; The Promise

Portraits of Christ in **Genesis 12** “The Promise”

1. **Abraham is the man the New Testament writers use to illustrate our salvation.**

- He was justified through faith alone, in Christ alone, by the Word of God alone, by grace alone, for the glory of God alone.
- When Jesus’ greatness was being questioned by the Jews, He pointed them back to Father Abraham. ([John 8:56-58](#))
- The point is that Someone greater than Abraham was standing before them.
- It was the God of Abraham.
- In Moses’ day, the Israelites were inclined to focus on their righteousness, rather than on God’s holiness.
- They were preoccupied with their ability to keep the ‘keepable, observable’ commands of the law, while conveniently overlooking their inability to keep the ‘unkeepable, unobservable’ demands of the heart.
- This led to a man-centered religion that was more interested in practical hints to holiness, rather than in relying upon the blood sacrifice to wash away their iniquity.
- They were led to believe man contributes to salvation through his works.
- Man never has found acceptance with God on the basis of his own works.

2. **The Apostle Paul looks back to Abraham to comprehend the basis of our acceptance with God. ([Romans 4:1-5](#))**

- Even though Abraham was a man of faith, his faith was less than perfect.
- His faith must be credited to a faithful God. ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#))
- In other words, man is saved by the sovereign will of God so that we might be overwhelmed with gratitude.
- There is no clearer picture of our salvation than that worked in Abraham by our faithful God.

3. **Let’s go back to the Gospel according to Moses, in [Genesis 12](#) to learn more about Abraham, as a prototype of our salvation.**

- Remember this chapter had definite interest to Israel, as they had come out of Egypt and were preparing to enter the Promise-land.
- This chapter held keys to their destiny, as well as foreshadowing events that would ultimately find amazing fulfillment two thousand years later.
- To comprehend Abraham’s salvation as well as our own, we must begin where the Apostle Paul begins by describing the sovereign will of God.

- In [Ephesians 1:4](#) it says, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him.”
 - What is true of us is true of Abraham.
 - He was chosen as we were—by God to fulfill His holy purpose.
 - Abraham was predestined as part of the chosen seed promised to Eve.
 - God foreordained that salvation would come through the seed of the Woman, Israel, in [Genesis 3:15](#).
 - We have previously traced the promised seed through two genealogies, with ten names in each of them.
 - The first genealogy recorded was from Adam to Noah, and the second one was from Shem to Abraham. ([Genesis 11:26-27](#))
 - As Noah was the tenth after Adam, Abram was the tenth after Shem.
 - “Abram” means “father.”
 - Later God calls him “Abraham” meaning “Father of many.”
 - Abraham was appointed to bear a promised seed that would lead to Christ.
 - Like us, Abraham was saved from God’s judgment.
4. **[Genesis 11:1-9](#) records the history of the “City of Man,” Babylon.**
- Its founder was Nimrod.
 - The “City of God,” however, is associated with Jerusalem and Abraham as its founder.
 - The residents in Babylon deliberately rebelled against God.
 - They sought to build a city that exalted man with their own hands.
 - At the center of civilization was a tower standing as a monument to “designer-religions gods,” created by man for man.
 - This city was under God’s judgment of linguistic, religious, and cultural confusion.
 - God scattered the people over the face of all the earth.
 - But out of Babylon, or Ur of the Chaldeans, God chose Abraham to be the founder of the City of God.
 - When God called Abraham, he and his family were idolaters worshiping moon gods and demons.
 - Abraham was not seeking God—God was seeking him. ([Joshua 24:2-3](#))
 - He was effectually called out of Babylon by our Sovereign God.
5. **[This was celebrated sixteen hundred years later in Jerusalem, by the people who returned from Babylonian captivity.](#)**
- Israel assembled to hear the reading of the Gospel, according to Moses, by the Levitical priests.
 - Read from [Nehemiah 9:5-8](#)
6. **[Abraham was commanded by God to obey His Word.](#)**
- God called Abraham to leave the old life behind. ([Genesis 12:1](#))
 - He was commanded to get out of his country and away from his relatives.

- To follow God he had to disassociate with country and family because of their enslavement to idolatry and sin.
 - Abraham obeyed and left Ur.
 - He traveled as far as Haran and then waited until the death of his father, before leaving on his journey west.
7. **Genesis 12:4-5 tell us Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother Lot, with all the possessions they gathered, as well as the people they acquired in Haran.**
- God had blessed Abraham in that short time with needed possessions for their journey.
 - We must keep this in mind: “God never asks anything of us without also providing the resources for us to accomplish what He asks us to do.”
 - The terms of the Covenant God made with Abraham first required obedience.
 - Obedience was a manifestation of true faith.
 - No man can say that he has saving faith in God and continually live in disobedience.
 - Abraham was not justified by good works, but justified by faith in the God of Grace. (**Genesis 12:4-5**)
 - **Hebrews 11:8** says “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.”
 - Faith is radical dependence upon God.
 - Faith is obeying God one step at a time, rarely knowing where He is leading.
 - Faith means trusting Him to lead, to provide and to protect.
 - In **Galatians 3:6-9** Paul describes God’s call upon Abraham as “the Gospel preached him.”
 - We are justified or declared righteous through faith in the God of Grace.
 - This is how Abraham came to faith and to be reckoned righteous.

A covenant not only has laws to be obeyed, but it also offers blessings by God for a glorious future. (Genesis 12:2-9**)**

1. **The Lord promised, “I will make you a great nation.”**
 - When God created Adam he pledged to bless him saying, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.” (**Genesis 1:28**)
2. **The Lord promised, “I will bless you.”**
 - As God blessed Noah, He also blessed Abraham, for they were the chosen seed of the blessed Savior, Who would ultimately crush the head of the serpent. (**Genesis 9:1**)
3. **God promised, “I will make your name great.”**
 - This pledge is in contrast to the inhabitants of Babylon, who were determined to make a name for themselves apart from God. (**Genesis 11:4**)
 - A great name means nothing unless it is a result of God’s blessing by dependence upon Him.

4. **Not only will Abraham be blessed, but God promises, “I will make you a blessing” (Genesis 12:2)**
 - To be truly blessed of God is to be a blessing to others.
 - This is God’s intent in blessing us, so that we may bless others.
 - Certainly history has been blessed by God through Abraham.
5. **This Covenant also guaranteed the protection of God’s People.**
 - He promised, “I will bless those who bless you.” (Genesis 12:3)
 - In other words, many nations have been blessed not because they are good or smart, but because of their historic association with the God of Shem and the people of Abraham’s seed.
 - We enjoy blessing only as a gift of God’s common grace.
6. **The reverse is true when God says, “I will curse those who curse you.” (Genesis 12:3)**
 - We saw that when Cain rejected God’s way of worship through a blood sacrifice there was a curse on his life.
 - But God promised to protect Cain by warning “Whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven fold.” (Genesis 4:11-12)
 - The more any country separates itself from the blessing of the God of Shem and Abraham, the more it faces certain judgment.
 - I believe Anti-Semitic and Anti-Israel sentiment also puts a nation at risk.
7. **The promised blessing, however, took on true historic dimension when God promised to bless Abraham with a son, “In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**
 - God promised to bring a deliverer through the woman and her seed. (Genesis 3:15)
 - Genesis traces this seed through Adam, Seth, Noah, and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah.
 - Remember what Jesus said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56)
 - When did Abraham see Christ?
 - He saw Him by faith through the promises of God, as he anticipated the promised Son through his seed.
 - This is the “Gospel According to Moses,” as promised to Abraham.
 - But remember Moses continually records in this history that “Sarai” was barren.
 - The promise is always outside of man’s capacities and always in the hands of a sovereign God.
8. **The Lord also promised a land for His people, “I will give this land to your descendants.” (Genesis 12:5-9)**
 - Abraham walked by faith not knowing where he was going until he got there.
 - The Lord then appeared to him and affirmed that He would give this land to his descendents.
 - As Abraham walked through the land he stopped in Shechem, Bethel and the Negev building an altar to offer sacrifices to the Lord out of gratitude for God’s faithfulness.
 - Each place he dedicated to God was also the site of Canaanite cities.

- [Hebrews 11:9-10](#) recounts Abraham's faith, "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; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." ([Hebrews 11:10](#))
- Abraham lived every day by faith, believing someday God would give this land to His descendants.
- He was a pilgrim in a foreign land.
- He was looking for the City of God where God is the builder and maker.

Moses gives us further historical evidence that God was protecting the Seed by delivering Abraham Out of Egypt. ([Genesis 12:10-20](#))

- Even though Abram was dwelling in the land promised by God, there was a severe famine in the land. ([Genesis 12:10](#))
- The blessed Seed was once again at risk.
- Abraham traveled to Egypt to escape death. ([Genesis 12:10-14](#))
- As Moses records this part of the story you can imagine the Israelites hearing this and saying, "Oh my, that's the same reason our father Jacob went to Egypt 400 years ago."
- This is a history Moses will later tell when he writes about the life of Joseph.
- But we who read Matthew's Gospel in the New Testament get another side to this story that occurred two thousand years later.
- King Herod had issued an edict to kill all infant Jewish boys in the region of Bethlehem, fearing the birth of Israel's King.
- Mary and Joseph were warned in a dream to flee to Egypt.
- Abraham, Jacob, Mary and Joseph all sought refuge for the promised Seed in Egypt.
- Abraham and his family were protected in Egypt by Pharaoh. ([Genesis 12:11-16](#))
- Abraham entered Egypt fearing Pharaoh's men would observe the beauty of his wife Sarai and kill him.
- Abraham may have lived all his married life having other's comment about the beauty of his wife.
- To protect his own life, Abraham devised a plan to call Sarah his sister.
- She was a half-sister and may have shared inheritance rights, but this was a lie spun out of a lack of faith in God's covenant promises.
- Like so many lies, Abraham could not foresee the complications that were ahead.
- Sure enough, when they arrived in Cairo, Sarah was taken into Pharaoh's house to join the royal harem.
- The Pharaoh he feared not only protected him, but also gave him many gifts as Sarah's brother.
- Abraham had been protected, but what about Sarah and the promised Seed?

The same predicament later faced Jacob and his sons, who dwelt in the land of Egypt.

- The Pharaoh protected Jacob for Joseph's sake, but if his progeny assimilated with the Egyptians, the Seed would have become corrupted.

- Likewise, Mary and Joseph were protected in Egypt from Herod, but what would happen to their son Who was called Jesus, the Savior of His people, if they stayed there?

The God who saves His people called Abraham out of Egypt by plagues. ([Genesis 12:17-20](#))

- Pharaoh experienced a series of plagues and believed the Lord had cursed him because he took Sarah as his concubine.
- Abraham was reprimanded by the Pharaoh and then commanded him to take his wife, and all the wealth he had gained from Egypt, and get out.
- Again, you can almost hear the Israelites' shock, as they are told this event by Moses.
- Jacob and his sons went to Egypt because of a famine and were protected by Pharaoh, until a new Pharaoh came to power who also sought to enslave them.
- It wasn't until God brought plagues upon Egypt that Moses and his people were released.
- When both Abraham and Jacob left Egypt, they carried with them the wealth of Egypt.

Two thousand years later Mary and Joseph were informed by an angel that it was safe for them to return to Israel.

- Matthew quotes from Moses' prophecy in [Numbers 24:8](#) and [Hosea 11:1](#) that this came about so these prophecies might be fulfilled that say, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." ([Matthew 2:13-15](#))
- As Mary and Joseph rode out of Egypt, they carried with them the wealth of Abraham and Jacob...the seed of the promised Son of God, Who would bless all the peoples of the earth.

[Return to Top](#)

Matthew Henry Commentary on Genesis 12

Chapter 12

The pedigree and family of Abram we had an account of in the foregoing chapter; here the Holy Ghost enters upon his story, and henceforward Abram and his seed are almost the only subject of the sacred history. In this chapter we have,

- I. God's call of Abram to the land of Canaan ([v. 1-3](#)).
- II. Abram's obedience to this call ([v. 4, 5](#)).
- III. His welcome to the land of Canaan ([v. 6-9](#)).
- IV. His journey to Egypt, with an account of what happened to him there. Abram's flight and fault ([v. 10-13](#)). Sarai's danger and deliverance ([v. 14-20](#)).

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy family ([Gen 12:1](#)),

So Abraham really wasn't totally obedient at this point. And this to me is interesting, because Abraham is always held as the model of faith in the New Testament, the model of a man who believed and trusted God. He's the prime example of the man who believes. And so many times when we read about faith and the exploits of faith, we think, "But I'm so weak and I've blown it so many times, surely I can't do it". It's good to know that Abraham wasn't perfect nor was his faith perfect. It's good to know that you don't have to be perfect and your faith doesn't have to be perfect for God to honor you.

So God said, "Get away from your family". He took his dad with him from the Ur of the Chaldees to Haran. That was an incomplete obedience. Stopping at Haran was incomplete obedience to God. So even men noted as men of faith have their moments. And just because you slipped back and have your moments doesn't mean that God won't honor you and honor your faith, or that God doesn't love you and wants to still work in a powerful way in your life, just because you blow it and you stop at Haran. It doesn't mean that the call of God is going to be removed and there's no chance for you to go on and fulfill that which God has laid upon your life and your heart to do.

Many people have stopped at Haran, but the time came for him to move on, which he did. Maybe the time has come for you to move on from your Haran. "The Lord said, Get thee out of thy country, from thy father's family."

from your father's house, to a land that I will show you ([Gen 12:1](#)):

So by the very virtue of the fact that Terah went with him, it could be the old man was saying, "Oh no, don't leave. I want to go with you, son". Or it could be Abraham was saying, "Okay, dad, all right", you know. And he could have been weak in this area. But then his dad began to drag him down and slow him down, until his father died spiritually following after the pagan practices, and Abraham moved on.

I will make of thee [God said] a great nation ([Gen 12:2](#)),

Now God is establishing covenant with Abraham. "Get away from your family, your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I'll make you a great nation".

I will bless you, I will make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing ([Gen 12:2](#)):

All of these promises God fulfilled to Abraham. He made of him a great nation. God has blessed him and made the name of Abraham great. It's honored and respected. "And thou shalt be a blessing."

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed ([Gen 12:3](#)).

And from that is the promise that the Messiah would come from Abraham. "In thee all the families of the earth." Not just the Jews but all the families of the earth will be blessed from Abraham's progeny, even Jesus Christ.

So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. 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 to the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came ([Gen 12:4-5](#)).

The Bible Says Genesis 12:1-3 Meaning

God called Abraham from a pagan world to begin a new nation. God instructed Abram to [Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house](#) (v 1). At that point they dwelt in the city of Haran, not to be confused with Abram's deceased brother of the same name. Abram's Father Terah had led them out of Ur to settle in Haran, where Terah lived until his death. Now God gave a command: [go forth](#).

Abram obeyed God's call to leave Haran and head to the Promised land, [so Abram went forth](#) from Haran ([Genesis 12:4a](#)). Abram had partially obeyed God's call when he left Ur, leaving his home but not his [father's house](#) ([Acts 7:2-4](#)). God called Abram to leave his [father's house](#) while in Ur, but Genesis states that Abram's father Terah led the expedition out of Ur ([Genesis 11:31](#)). According to Stephen's speech recorded in Acts, given to a hostile crowd of Jewish leaders well-versed in scripture, Abram buried Terah in Haran prior to leaving. Given that the crowd listening to Stephen's speech stoned him when he said something they disagreed with, this statement regarding Abraham burying his father prior to leaving must have met with conventional understanding at the time.

The Rabbinic sages roughly a thousand years later noted that the scripture states that Terah died (in [Genesis 11](#)) before it discusses God's renewed call and Abram's departure from Haran (in [Genesis 12:1-3](#)). But they also note a possible problem with the math. [Genesis 11:26](#) states that Terah lived 70 years, then begot Abram and his two brothers. [Genesis 12:4](#) states that Abraham was 75 when he left Haran, apparently meaning Terah would have been 145 when Abram left.

And [Genesis 11:32](#) states Terah lived to be 205, indicating Terah would have lived another 60 years after Abram departed. The Jewish sages concluded that Terah was deemed dead to Abraham, which freed Abraham to leave Haran. It is also possible that there is some mystery in the statement, "Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran" ([Genesis 11:26](#)). The scripture lists Abram first, but in a manner that does not insist on a birth order. It could be that Abram is listed first because of his importance rather than the birth order. If so, Terah might have been 70 when he began having children, and been much older when he had Abram, such that he did in fact pass prior to Abram leaving Haran.

Abram would have left a part of his [relatives](#) and [father's house](#), but not all, as Abram took Lot with him. So Abram has faith, and obeys in part, but not yet fully. God will not grant Abram [the land](#) until he parts company from Lot. However, Abram's faith in leaving to head to the Promised Land is noted in Hebrews as an example for us to follow. [Hebrews 11:8](#) tells us Abram did not know where he was going, but he knew it was [the land which I](#) (God) [will show you](#). His obedience required faith in God.

So even though Abram's obedience is partial at this point, God honors it and continues to work with Abram. However, God does not change his proposition to [bless](#) Abram if he will obey, and make it an unconditional grant of [blessing](#) until Abram parts company from Lot, and fulfills all the conditions God asked of Abram.

God's promises to Abram proceeded in three stages; three blessings that fell on Abram personally, that Abram would be a blessing and cause a blessing (or curse) upon those with whom he interacts, and that Abram would be an instrument for God to bless the entire human race. The last promise points forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, who would be a descendant of Abram. In verses, 2-3 God gives seven specific promises to Abram that fulfill the three stages:

- 1) To make Abram [a great nation](#)
- 2) To [bless](#) Abram
- 3) To [make](#) Abram's [name great](#)
- 4) To [be a blessing](#)
- 5) That He would [bless those who bless](#) Abram
- 6) That He would [curse those who curse](#) Abram
- 7) And that [all the families of the earth would be blessed](#) through Abram

God first promises Abram that He *will make you a great nation* (great in number and significance) although his wife, Sarai, was barren. But it is God alone who "opens" and "closes" the womb ([Genesis 20:18](#), [29:31](#), [30:22](#); [1 Samuel 1:5-6](#)). Abram did become the father of a great nation. This promise was fulfilled in the Jewish people and the nation of Israel through the birth of Isaac, in Abraham and Sarah's old age ([Genesis 21:1-3](#)).

God also says to Abram; *I will bless you*. God blessed Abram personally with material and spiritual prosperity ([Deuteronomy 7:13-16](#)). In the Old Testament, wealth was measured by numerous and robust livestock, precious metals, such as gold and silver, and human laborers. Eighty—eight times in Genesis and 310 times elsewhere in the Old Testament, God's blessing is manifested in human prosperity and well-being with long life, wealth, peace, good harvests, and children (e.g. [Genesis 24:35-36](#); [Leviticus 26:4-13](#); [Deuteronomy 28:3-15](#)).

The third of God's promises to Abram was that He would *make your name great*. In the ancient Near East, one's name was extremely important. This promise from God meant that Abram would acquire personal honor and become a man highly esteemed with great character and reputation. Ironically, Abram received the fame that was sought by the builders of Babel, who sought to establish fame apart from obedience to God.

The Tower of Babel shows the folly of human efforts to obtain wisdom and fame. Abram would *be a blessing*, serving as the standard by which a blessing was invoked. In other words, people will say, "May God make me as blessed as Abram." True blessing comes by faithful obedience. No obligations were placed on Abram in order to receive the promises from God other than to simply respond to God's command to *go forth*, an act of loyalty and faith.

God's fifth and sixth promise to Abram was that He would *bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse* (v 3). The ones who wished Abram well would enjoy God's blessing too. Those who mistreated, abused, or caused harm to Abram would incur God's displeasure. This could be viewed as a promise of protection somewhat reminiscent of the protection God placed on Cain ([Genesis 4:15](#)).

Finally, the seventh and last promise was that *in* Abram *all the families of the earth will be blessed* (v 3) and experience God's favor. This promise is later reaffirmed to Isaac and Jacob ([Genesis 22:18](#), [26:4](#), [28:14](#)). Of course, we know that the savior of the world descended from Abraham and, as foretold by the Jewish prophets who foretold His coming, died for the sins of the world. There can be no doubt that this promise of blessing to the entire world has already been fulfilled to a substantial degree ([John 3:16](#)). It is exciting to contemplate that much more blessing stemming from this promise still lies ahead.

The apostle Paul quotes [Genesis 12:3](#) in the New Testament book of Galatians, and applies it to Gentiles, who are blessed in Abraham through their faith. In [Galatians 3:7](#) Paul asserts that the Gentiles who have believed in Jesus are Abraham's spiritual descendants by faith. Paul further asserts the fulfillment of [Genesis 12:3](#), quoting it in this passage:

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations will be blessed in you.' So, then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer"
([Galatians 3:8-9](#)).

Paul goes on to indicate that the "in you" stated by God to Abraham becomes "along with Abraham" as Gentiles are included in the blessing. This is true of the New Testament expression "in Christ" as well.

"In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"
([Galatians 3:14](#)).

In each case, the inclusion of the Gentiles comes by faith.

David Guzik

Study Guide for Genesis 12

GOD'S CALL OF ABRAM; ABRAM IN EGYPT

A. God's promise to Abram.

1. ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)) God's previous covenant with Abram.

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.
I will make you a great nation;**

**I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
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.”**

a. **Now the LORD had said to Abram:** In [Acts 7:2-4](#), God revealed through Stephen that this promise was made to Abram *when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran*. [Genesis 12:1-3](#) **repeats** a promise that God **had said to Abram**. God repeated the promise now that his father was dead and Abram was compelled to a more complete obedience.

- i. Abram's partial obedience did not take God's promise away. Instead, it meant the fulfillment of the promise was delayed until Abram was ready to do what the LORD told him to do.
- ii. Abram would certainly become a giant of faith, even being the father of the believing ([Galatians 3:7](#)); yet he did not start as a hero of faith. We see Abram as an example of *growing* in faith and obedience.
- iii. More important than Abram's faith was God's promise. Notice how often God says **I will** in these verses. Genesis [chapter 11](#) is all about the plans of man. Genesis [chapter 12](#) is all about the plans of God. [Genesis 12:1-3](#) explains how God promised Abram a land, a nation, and a blessing.

b. **To a land I that I will show you:** After stating He wanted Abram to leave his country and his relatives, God promised Abram a **land**. Specifically, God promised the land of Canaan, what might be called “greater Israel.”

c. **I will make you a great nation:** God promised to make a **nation** from Abram. He will have children and grandchildren and further descendants, enough to populate a **great nation**.

d. **And make your name great:** God promised to bless Abram and to **make** his **name great**. There is probably no more honored name in history than the name of Abram, who is honored by Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

e. **I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you:** God also promised He would **bless those who bless you** and to **curse him who curses you**. 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.

f. **In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed**: Not only was Abram promised blessing, but God also promised to **make him** a blessing, even to the point where **all the families of the earth** would be blessed in Abram. This amazing promise was fulfilled in the Messiah that came from Abram’s lineage. God’s blessing to Abram was not for his own sake, or even the sake of the Jewish nation to come. It was for the whole world, for **all the families of the earth** through Jesus Christ.

i. *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.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham* ([Galatians 3:8-9](#)).

ii. *And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation* ([Revelation 5:9](#)). The work of Jesus will touch every people group on the earth.

iii. Boice quoted the observation of Martin Luther, who said the promise **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed** should be written “in golden letters and should be extolled in the languages of all people,” for “who else... has dispensed this blessing among all nations except the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ?”

iv. This also indicated a missionary vision that God intended Abraham’s covenant descendants to have. They were to look beyond themselves to all nations, to **all the families of the earth**. “There, you see, was the missionary character of the seed of Abraham, if they had but recognized it. God did not bless them for themselves alone, but for all nations: ‘In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed’” (Spurgeon).

2. ([Genesis 12:4](#)) Abram’s departure from Haran.

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.

a. **And Lot went with him**: This was more partial obedience by Abram. God commanded him to go out **from your family** ([Genesis 12:1](#)) yet he brought his nephew Lot. Lot would not be a blessing to Abram. He would be nothing but trouble and inconvenience.

b. **Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran**: Abram came into the land of Canaan at this advanced age. Fathering a child through Sarai seemed a long-forgotten hope.

Genesis 12: The Call of Abraham Chuck Missler

Terah had three sons named Abram, Nahor and Haran. Terah was an idolater (Josh 24:2) and his youngest son Haran was born and died in Ur (Gen 11:28), capital of Sumer. He also had a daughter by his second wife named Sarai. Abraham marries Sarai and they have two sons named Ishmael and Isaac. Genesis 20:12: *And yet indeed she [Sarai] is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but **not the daughter of my mother**; and she became my wife.*

Genesis 12:1-3

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: 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: 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 told him to leave the country but Abram *didn't leave* "his kindred" and "his father's house"; he simply moved up river (approximately from Ur to Haran).

The name "Terah" means "delay" and the name "Haran" means "parched." Abram's failure seems hidden (Cf. Heb 11:8).

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Psalms 103:12

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

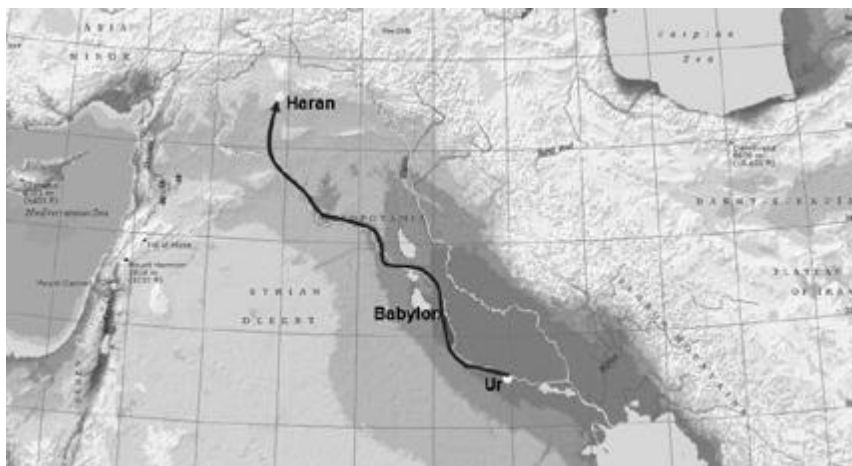
Hebrews 8:12; 10:17

*And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, **before** he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.*

Acts 7:2-4

Stephen's address to the Sanhedrin. (Talk about *Chutzpah!*) Haran (or Charran) was an important city in ancient Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia means "between two rivers." It was situated about 550 miles northeast of Ur and 280 miles north of Damascus. Principal routes converged there. Highways to Nineveh, Babylon, and Damascus had their start from it.

It was only 60 miles from the stronghold of Carchemish, the capital of the Hittite empire. Haran was one of the chief centers for the worship of *Sin*, the moon-god.



Ur of the Chaldees: An ancient city of the early Sumerian kingdom, located about 125 miles from the present mouth of the Euphrates, 100 miles southeast of Babylon, 830 miles from Damascus, and 550 miles from Haran. It was the capital of Sumer. In Abram's day it was a thriving commercial city, with unusually high cultural standards.

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: 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. 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.

Genesis 12:2-3

Seven "I Wills"

- I will make of thee a great nation,
- I will bless thee,
- I will make thy name great;
- thou shalt be a blessing:
- I will bless them that bless thee,
- I will curse him that curseth thee:
- and *in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

Abrahamic Covenant

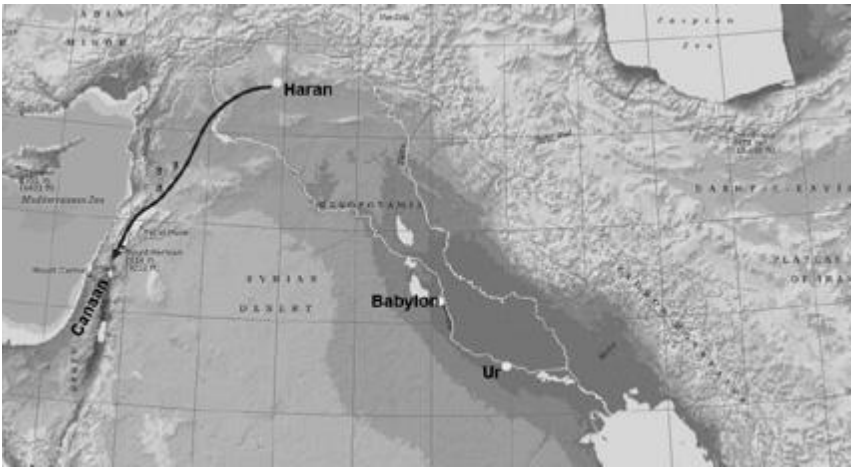
God's contract is still intact. God has a purpose and plan for Israel.

Nations will be judged (Matt 25:31-46). It foresees the blessing of the family of the entire earth (Gal 3:8) before the Throne of God (Rev 5:9).

Genesis 12:4-5

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. 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.

Abraham was about seventy-five years old and his nephew Lot went with him.



Genesis 12:6-7

And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 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

You will notice Abraham is constantly building alters (place of worship).

The word Shechem means “shoulder.” The first appearance of God (there is no record of Abram receiving any further revelation until His call had been fully obeyed) and Abraham is in the land (worship; communion; promise).

Genesis 12:8-9

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. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

Note the altars. There was no altar for Abram in Ur or Haran. His tents were a symbol or emblem of a pilgrim or temporary residence. We must be strangers and pilgrims on the earth before acceptable worship is possible. (Note the contrasts in Revelation with the saints and the “earth dwellers.”)



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.” Genesis 12:1

The most dramatic changes in your life will come from God’s initiative, not yours. The people God used mightily in Scripture were all ordinary people to whom He gave divine assignments that they never could have initiated. The Lord often took them by surprise for they were not seeking significant mandates from God. Even so, He saw their hearts, and He knew they were trustworthy.

The Lord spoke to Abram when He was beginning to build a nation dedicated to His purposes. Through this nation would come the Savior. God appeared to Moses at the very time He had purposed to deliver Israel out of slavery in Egypt. God found in Jesse’s youngest son David a godly man who could lead His people. God surprised Mary when He told her she would be the mother of the Messiah. God’s Son selected the twelve disciples, all ordinary, uneducated men, when He was ready to take the good news of His salvation to the world. Through the ages God has taken the initiative in the everyday lives of people to accomplish things through them that they never could have imagined.

The Lord may be initiating some new things in your life. When He tells you what His plans are, trust Him and walk closely with Him. Don’t let the busyness of your present activity keep you from experiencing all that God has in store for you. You will see Him accomplish things through your life that you never dreamed were possible (Eph. 3:20).

◀ Abraham: Ancestors of, Idolatrous ▶

Jump to: [Nave's](#) • [Library](#) • [Subtopics](#) • [Terms](#)

Topical Encyclopedia

Abraham, originally named Abram, is a central figure in the Bible, known as the patriarch of the Israelites, Ishmaelites, Edomites, and Midianites. His account is primarily found in the Book of Genesis. Before his calling by God, Abraham's ancestors were known to be idolatrous, worshipping other gods, which was a common practice in the region of

Mesopotamia where they resided.

Terah, Abraham's Father

Terah, the father of Abraham, is mentioned in the genealogies of Genesis. He lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, a city known for its polytheistic practices. [Joshua 24:2](#) provides insight into the idolatrous background of Abraham's family: "And Joshua said to all the people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates and worshiped other gods.'"

This verse indicates that Terah, along with his family, was involved in the worship of multiple deities, a practice that was prevalent in the ancient Near East. The city of Ur was a significant center for the worship of the moon god, Nanna (also known as Sin), which suggests that Terah and his household might have participated in such religious activities.

Nahor and Haran, Abraham's Brothers

Abraham had two brothers, Nahor and Haran. While the Bible does not provide extensive details about their religious practices, it is reasonable to infer that they were also influenced by the idolatrous culture of their time. Haran, the father of Lot, died in Ur, and Nahor later settled in the region of Aram Naharaim, also known for its idolatrous practices.

Cultural and Religious Context

The broader cultural and religious context of Abraham's ancestors is essential to understanding the significance of Abraham's call by God. The Mesopotamian region, where Abraham's family originated, was characterized by a pantheon of gods and goddesses, each associated with different aspects of life and nature. Temples and ziggurats were central to religious life, and rituals often involved offerings and sacrifices to these deities.

Abraham's Departure from Idolatry

Abraham's departure from his ancestral home and his break from idolatry mark a pivotal moment in biblical history. In [Genesis 12:1](#), God calls Abraham to leave his country and family: "Then the LORD said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your kindred, and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you.'" This call signifies a turning point where Abraham is set apart to follow the one true God, Yahweh, establishing a covenantal relationship that would have lasting implications for his descendants and the unfolding of biblical history.

The narrative of Abraham's ancestors highlights the transformative journey from idolatry to monotheism, underscoring the radical nature of Abraham's faith and obedience to God's call.

Nave's Topical Index

[Joshua 24:2](#)

And Joshua said to all the people, Thus said the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelled on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

Nave's Topical Index

Library

[From the Flood to Abraham](#)

... Aeolus, Dorus, and Ion, who were the **ancestors** of the ... In the time of **Abraham** and long before, and on to ... however, filled with all sorts of **idolatrous** abuses and ...
/.../tidwell/the bible period by period/chapter iii from the flood.htm

[The Preface to the Commandments](#)

... Testament, I brought you out of the land of Egypt;' an **idolatrous** place ... that he brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, where **Abraham's ancestors** served strange ...
[//christianbookshelf.org/watson/the ten commandments/1 3 the preface to the.htm](#)

[The Unmistakable Honesty of the Writers of the Bible Attests to ...](#)

... was written by a descendant of **Abraham**, yet nowhere ... record how again and again their **ancestors** (contrary to ... was followed by a number of **idolatrous** rulers, and ...
[/.../the divine inspiration of the bible/chapter three the unmistakable honesty.htm](#)

[The Pilgrim's Longings](#)

... with its sinful pleasures and its **idolatrous** customs. ... **Abraham's** slips, for he had one or two, were ... befallen thee but what thy noble **ancestors** have celebrated ...
[/.../spurgeon/spurgeons sermons volume 18 1872/the pilgrims longings.htm](#)

[The Prophet --His Youth and his Call.](#)

... there, Shiloh where Eli and other priestly **ancestors** had served ... God of Israel, the God of **Abraham**, Moses and ... only but ethical, not only **idolatrous** but immoral ...
[//christianbookshelf.org/smith/jeremiah/lecture iii the prophethis youth.htm](#)

[Whether There Can be any Suitable Cause for the Sacraments of the ...](#)

... that this declaration, and imitation of **Abraham's** faith, might ... feet are the examples of our dead **ancestors**. ... the reason was to avoid **idolatrous** worship: because ...
[/.../christianbookshelf.org/aquinas/summa theologica/whether there can be any 2.htm](#)

[The Historical Books.](#)

... shows how God fulfilled his promise to **Abraham** that he ... Judah an alternation of pious with **idolatrous** kings, and ... exiles the lineage of their **ancestors** must have ...
[/.../barrows/companion to the bible/chapter xx the historical books.htm](#)

[The Journey of the Three Holy Kings to Bethlehem](#)

... At the side of **Abraham's** mountain, more towards the lower ... and later it degenerated into the **idolatrous** horror of ... For 500 years the **ancestors** of the kings had ...
[/.../emmerich/the life of the blessed virgin mary/xiii the journey of the.htm](#)

[Bunsen's Biblical Researches.](#)

... written on the conscience, are not **ancestors** of Pharisees ... awe of a Divine voice, bade **Abraham** slay his ... hands, it became a materialism almost **idolatrous**, or an ...
[/.../essays and reviews the education of the world/bunsens biblical researches.htm](#)

[At Jacob's Well](#)

... Some of the **ancestors** of the latter people had once belonged ... suffered them to be overcome by an **idolatrous** nation ... of the people be; and through **Abraham**, that in ...
[//christianbookshelf.org/white/the desire of ages/chapter 19 at jacob's well.htm](#)

Resources

[How old was Abraham when he died? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[Why did God command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[How many sons did Abraham have? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[Abraham: Dictionary and Thesaurus | Clyx.com](#)

[Bible Concordance](#) • [Bible Dictionary](#) • [Bible Encyclopedia](#) • [Topical Bible](#) • [Bible Thesuaru](#)