

## Genesis Ch. 12

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Chapters 1-11 speak of the human race in general and 4 great events:

1. Creation.
2. The fall of man.
3. The flood.
4. The tower of Babel.

Chapters 12-50 speak about 4 individuals: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

- As we get going in this narrative, it is important to note that while God is using Abram's testimony to instruct us – there are others out there who believe, Job and Melchizedek to name a couple – we shouldn't assume that Abram is the only one – just like Calvary Chapel is not the only one...
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V: 1 “Now the Lord had said to Abram:” – past tense

- It appears that at first Abram was only partially obedient:

**Genesis 11:31-32** “And Terah took his son Abram ... and they went out from the Ur to go to the land of Canaan.... And came to Haran and dwelt there.”

1. Get out of your country – the Ur of the Chaldeans & go to Canaan.
2. Get away from your family.
3. Get away from your father's house.

- Judging from Chapter 11 it's difficult to determine if Terah initiated things, or if it's just a way of communicating that Terah accompanied Abram on his journey.
- In either event this is not what God directed, Abram was to get away from his family (Lot) and specifically from his father's house.
- It appears that Terah was caught up in the pagan worship of the land.

**Joshua 24:2-3** “<sup>2</sup>And Joshua said to all the people, thus says the Lord God of Israel: your fathers, including Terah, the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. <sup>3</sup>Then I (contrast) took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.”

- Initially they are moving, but they stop in Haran, and are there until Terah dies.

Obedience to God's Word keeps us on track with God's plan in our lives.  
Disobedience to God's Word, stalls & delays God's work in our lives.

- Abram doesn't hear from God again until he is obedient to the first thing that God spoke to him.
- Haran was an important city of Northern Mesopotamia. Located on the Balik River, a tributary of the Euphrates River.
- Located along a trade route, later mentioned in Ezekiel.
- Excavated in the 1950's and determined to have been established in the middle of the 3rd millennium BC and occupied through the Babylonian and Assyrian times up through Islamic times.
- The city was also a major center of worship for the moon god Sin.
- Haran is also the name of Terah's son, Lot's father who had died.
- The name means "Mountaineer".
- It seems possible that Abram & company were just going to their relative's city and not particularly leaving the land of the Chaldeans at this time, just the Ur of the Chaldeans.

We don't really know how long the layover in Haran lasted, just that it took place until Terah died, then they left.

- The name "Terah" literally means "delay".

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- God is so gracious in dealing with Abram, and with us.
- The New Testament gives us a few glimpses into Abram's faith:

Stephens defense:

**Acts 7:2-4** "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, <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you." <sup>4</sup>The 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."

**Hebrews 11:8-19** "<sup>8</sup>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."

- This portion of scripture goes on to describe the other things that Abram did by faith, a progression of faith, from one event to another.
- Also note that these New Testament references don't make any mention of Abrams failings in the area of faith.
- The New Testament dispensation is seen through the blood of Jesus, God only see's our victories, our sins and short coming are invisible, not spoken of – like Abram's. ☺

- When I think about what it is to truly be a Christian, I realize at times how far short I have fallen; when I'm not as patient, kind, or thoughtful as I should have been with other people, or when I question the things of God and don't always trust God completely – He doesn't see those things, He sees us through the blood of Jesus – and that puts a smile on His face, and mine. 😊
- God doesn't bless us because we're good; He blesses us by virtue of His grace upon us. If we think that God only blesses us when we're good, then we miss out on, we don't see often that God blesses us all the time – as children of God we should be looking out for and expecting His blessings all the time.
- None of the blessing are by our merit, faithfulness, or our diligence to do anything – we are blessed because of His grace – His incredible love for us!
- God knew exactly how Abram would respond, and how quickly – yet we see His blessing upon Abram.

V: 2-3 God blesses Abram and makes several promises to him:

1. He will make Abram a great nation. During the reign of King David, and Solomon Israel was a great nation, God will someday restore the borders that He intended and things will be different than they are today.
2. He will bless Abram. The Jews have been blessed with intelligence and ingenuity, they far surpass the world in Nobel Prizes, patents, all kinds of innovations, they've made the desert blossom and produce food – seemingly the Midas touch – envied by the entire world, at the same time persecuted and reviled.
3. He will make Abram's name great. To this day Abram's name is great amongst the Jews, the Mohammedan, and Christians.
4. Abram shall be a blessing. – Through Jesus our Savior.
5. God will bless whoever blesses Abram, and curse whoever curses him. – We have been blessed because of our support for Israel, because we have been a refuge to the Jews – in keeping with God's word.

Look at the nations that have cursed Israel:

- Egypt went from being a great world power to a virtual wasteland,
  - The Greek civilization defamed the Temple, and soon thereafter fell.
  - The Romans persecuted the Jews – and their empire disintegrated.
  - Spain persecuted the Jews through the inquisitions, and was reduced to a 5<sup>th</sup> rate nation.
  - Germany persecuted the Jews through the holocaust was destroyed completely.
  - There are and have been others whose day is coming.
6. In Abram all the families of the earth shall be blessed. – The Messiah shall come and save the world.

There is another way to look at this situation, these blessings – and that is in contrast to the tower of Babel.

- God promised Abram that He would make him a great nation and bless him; he would be lifted up above all the other nations and peoples.
- God said that He would make Abram's name great, give him identity.
- God said that he would protect Abram, that he would be his security.
  - The builders of the tower of Babel said let us build a city and a tower who's top is in the heavens – they wanted to be lifted up, elevated.
  - They said let us make a name for ourselves, they also wanted identity.
  - They said lest we be scattered, they wanted security, and sought it in a city.
- They wanted all the things that God would have given them if they had just been willing to humble themselves and ask – God willingly gave these things to His children who would simply follow Him.
- These two verses constitute the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Messianic prophecies in the Bible thus far. The 1<sup>st</sup> being given to Adam and Eve about the “Seed of the woman”.

V: 4 Abraham was obedient.

Our faith is manifest through our actions, through our obedience.

**James 2:17-22**      “<sup>17</sup>Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.  
<sup>18</sup>But someone will say, you have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup>You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble! <sup>20</sup>But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup>Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?”

- Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran.
- The listing of Terah's sons was not necessarily in birth order, but in order of importance to the Biblical narrative.

God waited for Abram so that He could be gracious to him.

**Isaiah 30:18a**      “Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore he will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you...”

V: 5-6 Abram, Sarai, and Lot – all their stuff and their servants leave Haran and head West towards Canaan.

- 600 miles from Ur, Chaldees to Haran.
- 600 miles from Haran to Canaan, Shechem / Bethel area.
- Shechem was a city in Northern Israel / Canaan at the time, along an important trade route. Shechem is pretty much the “center” of Israel.
- Shechem was built on the slope or shoulder of Mt. Ebal; the name literally means “shoulder”. Shechem will be mentioned many more times as we go through the Bible.

V: 7 “Then the Lord appeared to Abram...” (2<sup>nd</sup> time.)

This is a significant 1<sup>st</sup>. Technically it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time because Steven in Acts 7:2-4 tells us that God appeared to Abram while he was still in the Ur of the Chaldees.

**Acts 7:2-4** “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,<sup>3</sup> and said to him, “get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.”<sup>4</sup> The 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.”

- A first because it is the first time in scripture that we read of an “actual appearance” of God.
- God had “walked” and spoken with Adam, Enoch, and Noah, and He may have been visible in some way – but scripture does not say so specifically.
- Here however there was a visible manifestation – a “Theophony” – a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

John records the words of Jesus:

**John 1:18** “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

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Jesus said:

**John 14:21** “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

- Abram was obedient – then the Lord appeared to him.
- God appears to Abram 7 times, each is a progressive aspect of Abrams growing faith.

God spoke a promise to Abram:

“To your descendants I will give this land.”

(V:7 cont.)

- When God says He will do something it is the same as a promise, He will keep His word!
- We're not just talking about the 67 borders, or what was established in 1948 by UN decree. The river Nile to the river Euphrates.

**Genesis 15:18** "... To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates."

- God repeats and affirms this promise to Abram and his descendants many times.
- With the revelation / manifestation of God in the presence of a true believer comes the natural response – worship.

**John 4:23-24** "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and Truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup>God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and Truth."

**Revelation 1:9-17** <sup>9</sup>I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup>I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup>saying, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the Last, and what you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. <sup>12</sup>Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. <sup>14</sup>His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup>His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; <sup>16</sup>He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. <sup>17</sup>And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last."

**2 Chronicles 16:9** "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him...."

- Abram builds his first altar to worship God.

V: 8 Moving from the area of Shechem farther south, into Canaan to Bethel.

"Bethel" means "house of God" and "Ai" means "ruin" or "heap".

- There's always a choice to be made, we're always between two places – where we were, and where we're headed.

**Deuteronomy 30:19** “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;”

- Abram builds an altar and calls upon the name of the Lord.
- Abram is hooked! God has appeared to him twice now, God has spoken to him – and now he wants more!

**Psalm 34:8** “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”

**Psalm 27:4** “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His Temple.”

V: 9 Abram moves farther South.

- At this point it appears from V:8 that Abram sought the Lord's counsel and will, and is responding or moving based on his understanding of God's will.

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V: 10 Now Abram crosses a line, literally into Egypt.

- Notice, Abram goes “[down](#)” to Egypt. Throughout scripture Egypt is symbolic of the world and the flesh, whenever people go to Egypt – it is always down.
- This is a test of Abram's faith – there is always the testing of our faith, and it's always progressive. ([This is just a test of the emergency Christian system](#))
- God told Abram to go into the Land of Canaan – no mention of Egypt.
- We need to keep doing the last thing we heard until we hear otherwise.
- We're given the reason why, at least from Abram's standpoint – famine in the land.
- Abram is responding to what he knows, what he sees as opposed to what he's been told.

**2 Corinthians 5:7** “[For we walk by faith, not by sight.](#)”

- It gets worse for Abram as we'll see in the next few verses.

- Once we get away from God's word, from His counsel – it always leads to sin and pain.

**Proverbs 14:12** “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

- Just because God speaks and we hear doesn't mean that we stop listening – it's a lifetime of listening and responding to His voice.

**Isaiah 30:21** “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, this is the way, walk in it, whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.”

- There is that old saying about the Bible / The Word of God – that book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from that book!

Paul asks the Galatians:

**Galatians 3:3** “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?”

- We don't see Abram calling on the name of the Lord at this point, nor do we see God speaking or appearing to him.
- The next time we see these two things is after Abram is back in the land of promise, back in a place of obedience.

**James 1:5** “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

- When Abram eventually leaves Egypt, after having compromised himself, having subjected himself to rebuke by Pharaoh – he also leaves with amongst other things – a servant girl by the name of Hagar – a choice that will have far reaching consequences for the rest of his life.

V: 11-13 As most of us that have experienced enough of life know, one compromise usually leads to another, which is what these next few verses portray.

- The aging process is still progressing slowly; the gene pool is not as corrupted then as it is now. Sarai is about 65 years old and still a babe!
- Abram concocts a lie (½ truth, Sarai is his ½ sister), leaning on his own wisdom.

**Genesis 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.”

- He doesn't have too many options considering he is out of God's will.



**Judges 17:6** “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

- We should appreciate this for what it is – an honest and forthright account of how Abrams’ faith was developed – in a progressive manner.
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- This brings up decision making: the basis for making decisions in general.
- If we set the truth of God’s word aside, then our decisions are fleshly, sensual, based on emotions, or perceived needs at the time – often times not achieving the results we desired.
- Yet when the Word of God is the final authority we know that His will is perfect and that God will make the best decisions for us.

**Romans 8:31** “... for if God is for us, who can be against us?”

**Psalms 119:105** “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

**Psalms 119:165** “Great peace have those that love Thy Law, and nothing causes them to stumble.”

V: 14-15 Short term cause and effect, reaping and sowing.

- If Abram hadn’t gone to Egypt – he wouldn’t be dealing with this.

**Galatians 6:7-8** “<sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup>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.”

V: 16 Abram begins to seemingly profit from his sin – he gets more wealth (Hagar is in that package as well). – The “soft south wind” – false confirmation that somehow he’s in God’s will. That’s just the enemy telling us soothingly, “sleep, sleep, you’re ok...”

V: 17 God intervenes in the affairs of men!

- At a time when it seemed that neither Abram nor Sarai could save themselves from this situation – God intervenes!

**1 Corinthians 4:10** “... We are weak, but You are strong!”

“Because of Sarai” – God protects Sarai in / from a bad situation.

[Speaking of wives, Sarah is the only women named as a good example to follow in the whole Bible.](#)

**1 Peter 3:3-6** <sup>3</sup>“Do not let your adornment be merely outward – arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel – <sup>4</sup>rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup>For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup>as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”

- God is gracious, even when we are in sin.

V:18-19 Abram gets called on the carpet by Pharaoh.

**Numbers 32:23** “But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out.”

- Why did you lie? I thought you were a Christian...

**Proverbs 21:1** “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

- Pharaoh could just as easily have killed Abram as anything – yet the Lord directed him in what he would do – all part of God’s plan.

V: 20 Abram leaves Egypt, having been chastened by Pharaoh and by God.

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- God called Abram out of the Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan, not to just go on from there to Egypt.
- We can leave one sin for another if we’re not careful.

**Matthew 12:43-45** <sup>43</sup>“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. <sup>44</sup>Then he says, I will return to my house from which I came. And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup>Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

- It has been said that nature abhors a vacuum. It is the same in spiritual situations as well. We can’t just put off sin; we also have to put on Jesus Christ. We have to fill that void – or the enemy will fill it for us.
- Otherwise we will just go from sin to sin – we need to hear God’s voice and seek His perfect will in our lives.