

Called By Our Sovereign God

Abraham's Call (Genesis 12:1-9)

Introduction:

1. **Who is Terah? (Gen 11:27-32)**
2. **Who is Abraham?**

I. The Call To Faith (1-6)

A. Faith Moves Forward From The _____ (1a; cf. Josh 24:2)

- Go From Your Country
- Go From Your Kindred
- Go From Your Father's House

B. Faith Aims Toward God's _____ (1b, cf. Acts 7:1-4; Heb 11:8-10)

C. Faith Anticipates God's _____ And Protection (1c-3)

- God Leads Us – "I will show you" (1c)
- God Makes Us – "I will make of you a great nation" (2a)
- God Blesses Us – "I will bless you" (2b)
- God Elevates Us – "and make your name great" (3a)
- God Protects Us – "him who dishonors you I will curse" (3b)
- God Saves The World – "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (3c; Gal 3:8-9)

D. Faith Walks Without _____ (4b-6)

- The Age Excuse (4b)
- The Family Excuse (5a)
- The Unfamiliarity Excuse (5b-6a)
- The Intimidation Excuse (6b)

II. The Responses Of Faith (7-9)

A. We _____ In The Promise Of God (7a)

B. We _____ The God Of Promise (7b-9)

Conclusion:

1. Christ is calling us to be saved in Christ – Will We Believe? (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:1-5; Gal 3:6-9)
2. Christ is calling us to follow Him – Will We Go? (Mt 19:28-29)
3. Christ is calling us to forsake the world – Will We Obey?

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A. We Rest In The Promise Of God (7a)

B. We Worship The God Of Promise (7b-9)

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Abraham's Call (Genesis 12:1-9)

Genesis 12:1-9 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and pin you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

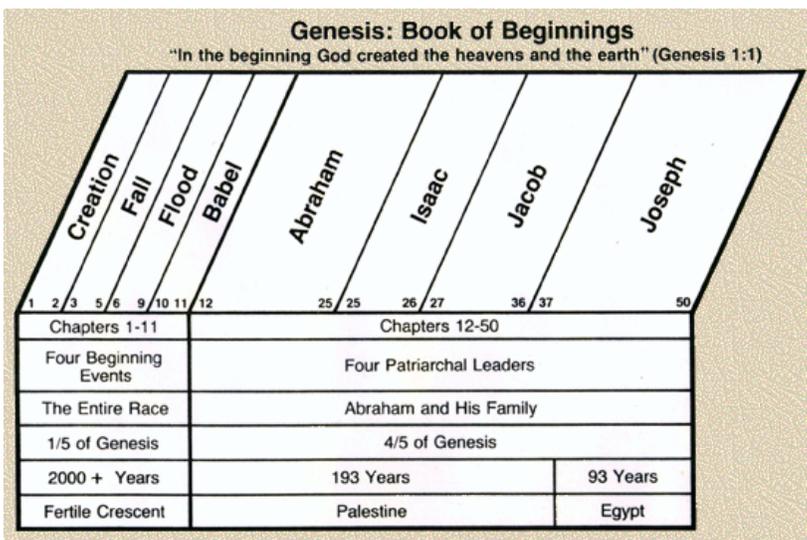
4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. 9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

Introduction:

Genesis *Rapped Up*

- Light From Dark (Gen 1-2)
- Eden Park (Gen 3-5)
- Noah's Ark (Gen 6-9)
- Babel's Bark (Gen 10-11)
- Patriarch (Gen 12-50)



<http://discoveryseries.org/discovery-series/knowning-god-through-genesis/>

Abraham – America has Honest Abe, Israel has Faithful Abe

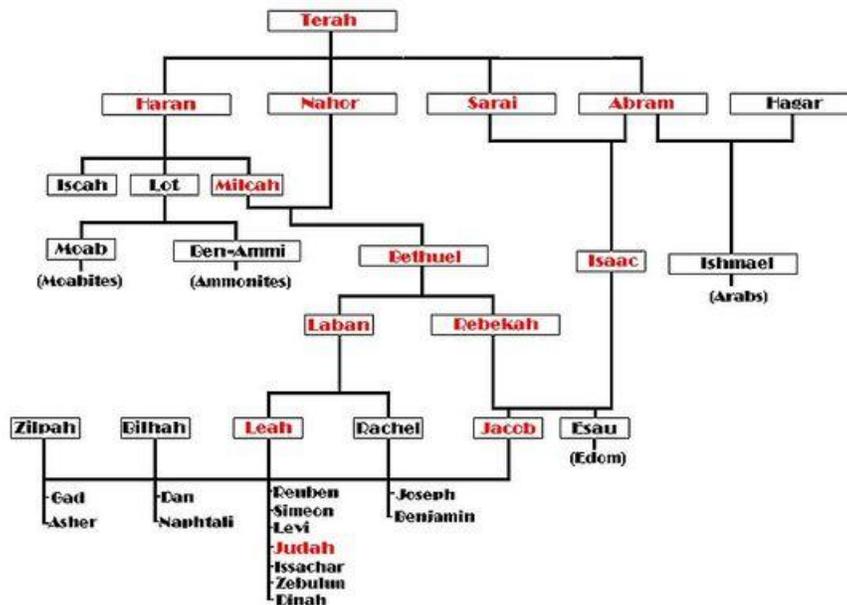
- Claimed to be Patriarch for 3 major monotheistic religions in the world – Christianity, Judaism & Islam



1. Who is Terah?

Genesis 11:27-32 27 Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. 28 Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. 30 Now Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. 32 The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

- Terah was a descendent of Shem (Gen 11:10-26)
- Terah had 3 sons: Abram, Nahor and Haran (Lot's father)
 - Moses mention Nahor (who marries his brother Haran's daughter Milcah) because he is the grandfather of Laban and Rebekah.
 - Rebekah would marry Isaac
 - Isaac's son, Jacob, would marry the daughters of Laban (Rachel & Leah)

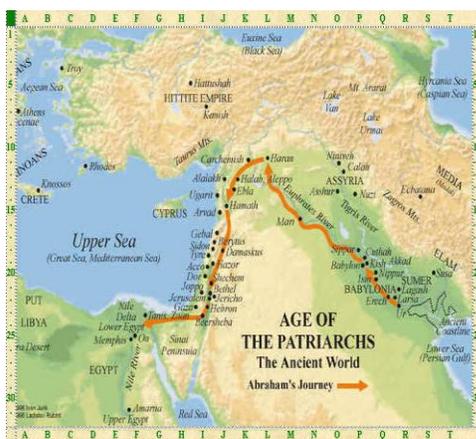


- Haran died in Ur

- Terah took Abram and the rest of family to Canaan, but Terah settled his family in Haran and died there
- Terah only went **half way**
 - A lot of people are like Terah in that they left something (Ur of the Chaldees), but didn't quite get to Canaan
 - Some people start going to church but don't really get saved
 - They are part of the way to Christ, but not really **in** Christ or **of** Christ or **for** Christ
 - **They will never get to heaven because they only got as far as church**
 - They never genuinely trusted Christ as Savior

2. Who is Abraham?

- Abraham lived sometime between 2000 BC to 1800 BC
- "Abram" = father of elevation
- "Abraham" = father of a multitude
- Eugene Merrill: "Little can be known of Abram's background except that he was a Semite of Mesopotamia whose immediate ancestors were pagan worshipers of the moon god, Sin." (*An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, Baker, 1991, p. 78)
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- Abraham's seasons
 - 75 years before Abraham gets a call from God
 - 25 years before the Promise and Fulfillment – Genesis focuses on this period of time
 - 75 more years after Isaac's birth
- He came from the land of **Ur**
- There were 2 Urs
 - A thriving city on the Euphrates – spacious homes, rich
 - More north was a smaller city called Ur
 - Most scholars think they came from the richer and more prosperous Ur
- We do know Abraham moved to Haran with his father, Terah
- Upon his father's death, he ventured to Canaan



- Abram married Sarai
- Sarai is his half sister

Genesis 20:12 Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.

I. The Call To Faith (1-3)

A. Faith Moves Forward From The Past (1a)

1a Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house

Go From:

- **Leave The Idolatrous World Behind (1a, Josh 24:2)**

- F.B. Meyer writes: "This same voice has often spoken since. It called Elijah from Thisbe, and Amos from Tekoa; Peter from his fishing nets, and Matthew from his toll-booth; Cromwell from his farm in Huntingdon, and Luther from his cloister at Erfurt. It ever sounds the perpetual summons of God, 'Come out from her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues;'" (*Abraham*, p. 15)

Joshua 24:2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.

- Abraham's father, Terah, worshipped idols
- At some point, Abram left the polytheistic worship of idols to obeying the One True God
- Archaeologists have uncovered that Ur was a wealthy city, full of culture including a university and a library
- The people of the city were committed to worshipping the Moon Goddess
- Abraham probably worshipped this Moon Goddess
- An old Rabbinic tale: "As the story goes, a craftsman named Terah made idols. His oldest son, Abram, began having doubts about all the gods worshiped by the people of his culture. So one time when his father was out, Abram smashed all the idols in the family's shop except the largest one, then put a stick in the hands of the one remaining statue. When his father came back, he was furious. But Abram blamed the vandalism on the standing idol, who had gotten angry at all the smaller statues. His father accused him of lying on the obvious grounds that idols can't speak or move—to which Abram responded, 'Then why do you worship them?'" (*A Walk Thru The Life Of Abraham*, Walk Thru the Bible, 2010)

1. Go From Your Country

- For us, it may not be a geographical relocation, but a replacement of what our nation values
- Our country may value:
 - Independence, but we are to be dependent upon God

- Material Success, but we are to value Spiritual Faithfulness
- Pull yourself up by your own bootstrap (Horatio Alger's rags to riches stories), but we are to rely on God's power in our weakness
- Domination, but Christians are to have a servant's heart
- Carve out your own identity, but believers are to find our identity in being created in the image and likeness of God

2. Go From Your Kindred

- Kindred = extended family
- Our family culture has a huge influence on who we are
- For Abraham, his family worshipped the Moon Goddess
- Sarah's name may have come from the Babylonian *sarratu* which means "queen" and Milcah's name may have come from the Babylonians word for "princess" (*malkatu*)
 - Allen P. Ross: "*Sarratu* was the name of the wife of the moon god Sin, and *Malkatu* was a name or title of Ishtar, daughter of the moon god." (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 258)
 - But Ross does note that there is no clear connection to the pagan names, though this is a possibility growing up in a Moon worshipping cult
- Abraham had to break from that
- Maybe your extended family is Buddhist or Atheist
- Maybe your extended family says that only reason or science can be relied upon, not God
- You see great persecution when a Christian is hated by his Muslim or Jewish family
- Abraham had no Bible, no pastor, no Church, no missionary to help him walk with God
- Abraham had a single command from God – this took great faith!

3. Go From Your Father's House

- Abraham was supposed to have left his family – his most significant influence
- But he only partially did, going with Terah to Haran
- Gene Getz points out that Abraham stayed in Haran 15 years before obeying the Lord in going to Canaan (*Abraham: Trials & Triumphs*, p. 17)
- Perhaps God removed Terah so Abraham would obey God's command
- F. B. Meyer: "Nothing strengthens us so much as isolation and transplantation. Let a young man emigrate, or be put into a responsible position; let him be thrown on his own resources – and he will develop powers of which there would have been no trace, if he had always lived at home, dependent on others, and surrounded by luxury.... But when we are pushed out from all these surroundings, with nothing but God to look to, then faith grows suddenly into a cable, a monarch oak, a master-principle of the life." (*Abraham*, p. 17)
- Ie/ My father hated the fact that my brother and I became Christians, initially
- Ie/ He became even more upset when I wanted to go into the ministry

- I had to leave my father's expectations for me to be successful in the eyes of the world which left him disappointed in me
- But God called me to the ministry
- God will call **YOU** to something

B. Faith Aims Toward God's Direction (1b, cf. Acts 7:1-4; Heb 11:8-10)

1b to the land

Acts 7:1-4 1 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" 2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' 4 Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living.

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.

- Faith = action of going, though not knowing
- God is reversing the curse of Adam
 - Instead of banished from Eden, now inheriting a promise land
 - Instead of death, eternal life will come through the Messiah

C. Faith Anticipates God's Provisions And Protection (1c-3)

*1c that **I will show** you. 2 And **I will make** of you a great nation, and **I will bless** you and **make your name great**, so that you will be a blessing. 3 **I will bless** those who bless you, and him who dishonors you **I will curse**, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

- We can't take this promise that God gave to Abraham and apply them literally to us today
- God had a unique purpose for Abraham – one man, one nation, one Messiah
- But we do see the heart of God in wanting to bless our step of faith

1. God Leads Us – "I will show you" (1c)

- God will direct us
- God directed Abraham to a new land and to a new life
- Maybe God is trying to show you a new ministry, but we are too comfortable with being stagnant or unchallenged
- **Q:** What is God trying to show you that you are resistant to see?

2. God Makes Us – "I will make of you a great nation" (2a)

- Through one man (Abraham) comes one nation (Israel) who will bring forth the Messiah (Christ)
- But remember how ironic this is for Abraham: he's 75 and childless
Genesis 11:30 Now Sarai was barren; she had no child
- He didn't have what it would take to make a nation (a child)
- Israel, as a nation, is the extension of God's blessing to Abraham

3. **God Blesses Us** – "I will bless you" (2b)

- "bless" = Heb. *barak*
- in the OT, it was a spiritual, material and familial blessing
- Abraham would be blessed with great faith, great wealth and a great nation
- Bruce Waltke: "The three nuances of bless— prosperity (13:2, 5; 14:22– 23; 24:35; 26:12– 13; 30:43; 32:3– 21), potency/ fertility (1:28; 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3,14; 35:11), and victory (cf. 1:22)— are spelled out in 22:17. Horst says, 'Blessing brings the power for life, the enhancement of life, and the increase of life.'"

Waltke, Bruce K.; Waltke, Bruce K. (2016-11-22). *Genesis: A Commentary* (p. 205). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

- A blessing is God's goodness bestowed upon us
- E.g. salvation given to us
- E.g. grace experienced every day

4. **God Elevates Us** – "and make your name great" (3a)

- The world assigns greatness to fame, success and possessions – Abraham was blessed in this way during his life time
- Waltke: "Thus a great name entails not only fame but high social esteem 'as a man of superior character.'" (*Genesis*, p. 205)
- For us, God assigns greatness to servanthood
 - The Zebedee brothers, John and James were arguing who would be the greatest in the Kingdom
 - Jesus responded that greatness is a result of being a servant

Matthew 20:26 But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,

5. **God Protects Us** – "him who dishonors you I will curse" (3b)

6. **God Saves The World** – "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (3c)

- Here, God is not just focusing on a single nation, but the whole world
- How will Abraham's family bless the whole earth?
- By bring forth a Savior who will save the world from sin

Galatians 3:8-9 ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

- Warren Wiersbe: "The missionary mandate of the church does not begin with John 3:16 or Matthew 28:18–20. It begins with God's covenant with Abraham. We are blessed that we might be a blessing." (*Be Obedient: Gen 12-25*, p. 15)

D. Faith Walks Without Excuses (4b-6)

"So Abram went, as the Lord had told him"

- Faith moves
- Abraham went

- Faith is instructed
- "as the Lord had told him"
- We trust in the Word of God

1. The Age Excuse (4b)

4a So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. *Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

- How many of you are ready for a new chapter in your life at 75?

2. The Family Excuse (5a)

5a And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran,

- Haran was Abraham's now deceased brother as well as a place they lived
- Haran's son was Lot and Abraham took care of his nephew
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3. The Unfamiliarity Excuse (5b-6a)

5b and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6a Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh.

- Remember that Abraham went going without knowing where – but the key was that he knew Who was leading him

4. The Intimidation Excuse (6b)

6b At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

- The Canaanites are seen throughout the book of Genesis as enemies to Israel
- Moses relates to Israel that the enemy of Canaan goes way back to Abraham's time
- Yet we can't be intimidated by our enemies

Ie/ PK and I had a discussion this week of several people who got angry at us in the past for trying to do what's right in ministry. I was surprised people actually got mad at him.

II. The Responses Of Faith (7-9)

A. We Rest In The Promise Of God (7a)

7a Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."

- 75 year old Abraham and his aged wife are still without children when God promises their offspring will be granted land

B. We Worship The God Of Promise (7b-9)

7b So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. 9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

- Abraham responded by building an altar to worship God
- A. W. Tozer: "Abraham, commit your whole life and future into My hands. Let Me as your Creator and God fulfill in you My perfect design. It is My great desire that you become a faithful and delighted worshiper at My throne." (*Men Who Met God*, p.23)
- He settled in the hill country – east of Bethel, West of Ai
 - Bethel means "house of God"
 - Ai means "ruin" or "heap of ruins" (Phillips, p. 117)
 - Abraham had to look towards Bethel and not towards ruins
 - Moses' Israel had to look to the Promise Land and not back towards Egypt
 - Much of our Christian life looks one way to the house of God while turning our back to the ruins of the world and the flesh
- Keep your eyes focused on Bethel
- Allen P. Ross: "Those who truly believe the Word of the Lord will forsake all else to become worshipers of the Lord and to serve in his program to bring blessing to the world." (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 268)

Conclusion:

1. Christ is calling us to be saved in Christ – Will We Believe?

Genesis 15:6 And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:1-5 ¹ What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as

his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Galatians 3:6-9 ⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? ⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

2. Christ is calling us to follow Him – Will We Go?

Matthew 19:28-29 ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

3. Christ is calling us to forsake the world – Will We Obey?