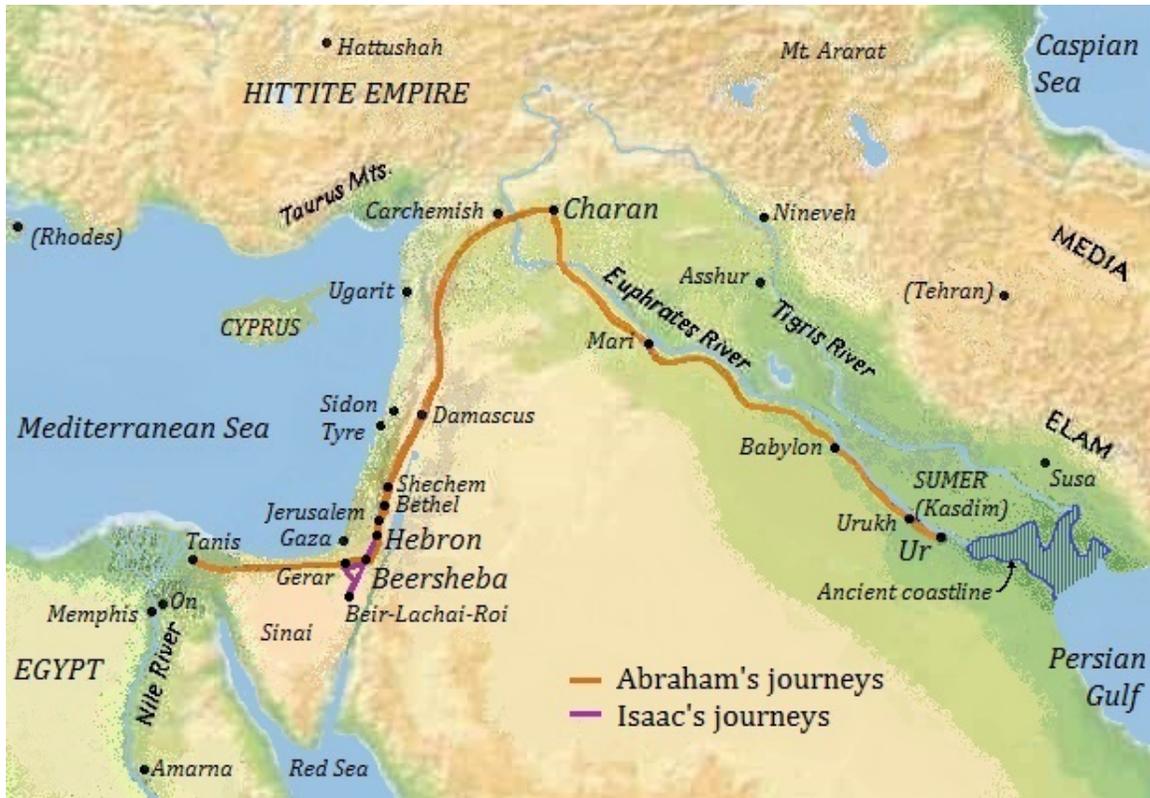


genesis

God's Book of Beginnings

The Calling of Abram by God (Genesis 12)



Journey to the Promised Land

12:1-3 God called Abram to leave his country, his people, his father and go to an unknown land.

God explained why in a one-way covenant with Abram, known as the Abrahamic Covenant.

God presented ^{v.2-3}, affirmed ^{Genesis 15:18-21} and confirmed ^{Genesis 17:1-21} the Abrahamic Covenant, and later renewed it with Isaac ^{Genesis 26:2-5} and Jacob ^{Genesis 28:10-17}. The Abrahamic Covenant is an everlasting covenant ^{Genesis 17:7, 1 Chronicles 16:17, Psalm 105:7-11} consisting of 7 unconditional promises:

- (1) "I will make you into a great nation",
 - (2) "I will bless you",
 - (3) "I will make your name great",
 - (4) "you will be a blessing",
 - (5) "I will bless those who bless you",
 - (6) "whoever curses you I will curse" and
 - (7) "all peoples ... will be blessed through you".
- In addition, the covenant contains four key elements: (A) a seed (referring to Isaac ^{Genesis 17:19} and ultimately to Christ ^{Psalm 132:11, Galatians 3:16} and His followers ^{Galatians 3:29}), (B) a land (the Promised Land ^{Genesis 15:18-21,17:8, Joshua 1:3-4}), (C) a nation (starting with Abraham ^{v.2} and including all of his offspring by faith ^{Romans 4:13} that will come from "every nation, tribe, people and language" ^{Revelation 7:9}) and (D) a divine blessing and protection ^{v.2-3}.

Genesis 12-13

As expected, God's incredible prophetic promise to Abram to make his "name great" ^{v.2} turn out to be true materially ^{Genesis 13:2, 24:34-35}, spiritually ^{Genesis 21:22} and socially ^{Genesis 23:5-6}.

Paul stated the last promise ^{v.3b} was God's announcement of the "gospel in advance" ^{Galatians 3:8}.

The result of the blessing of "all peoples on earth" was seen by John at God's throne ^{Revelation 5:9-10}.

One of the main reasons the US has been blessed is the result of its support of the nation of Israel; thus, if the US continues to withdraw support for Israel, our nation must expect to be cursed ^{v.3}.

12:4-5 At seventy-five, Abram left Haran, with Sarai, Lot and all that belonged to them.

Stephen, in his speech to the Sanhedrin ^{Acts 7:2-53} before being martyred ^{Acts 7:54-60}, stated that Abram was called by God when he was still in Ur of Chaldeans ^{Acts 7:2-4}. However, at this point in time Abram had gone to and settled in Haran with his father Terah ^{Genesis 11:31}. So, this call of Abram ^{v.1} actually occurred earlier, because he started the journey by going with his father, but he did not leave Haran and continue his obedient journey until after the death of his father ^{Genesis 11:32}.

Most scholars believe the city of Haran where Terah, Abram and their family stayed was the same location as the present day village of Harran in southeastern Turkey, close to the Syrian border.

12:6-9 Abram traveled south from Haran, first stopping in Shechem, then at a place between Bethel and Ai, and subsequently south through the Negev (west of the Dead Sea) ^{Genesis 13:1}.

Shechem was a Canaanite town located in a valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. Later, God instructed the Israelites who entered the PL to place tribes on Mt. Ebal to pronounce curses and others on Mt. Gerizim to pronounce blessings, depending on Israel's obedience ^{Deuteronomy 27:9 – 28:68}. And later, the Lord told Joshua to designate Shechem as one of the six cities of refuge ^{Joshua 20:1-9}.

Bethel ('house of God'), named by Jacob ^{Genesis 28:18-19}, was a town 7 miles north of Jerusalem.

Later, the Israelites were defeated ^{Joshua 7:2-5}, then victorious ^{Joshua 8:1-29} at Ai, 2 miles west of Bethel.

Abram built altars of worship at these first 2 stops (Shechem and Bethel/Ai) in Canaan (the PL).

Tents are examples of temporary dwellings on earth. By faith, Abraham went to the PL and lived in tents as a "stranger in a foreign country" ^{Hebrews 11:9}. Christians live in an earthly tent ^{2 Corinthians 5:1-4}, and their duty is to be "Christ's ambassadors" ^{2 Corinthians 5:18-20} in the 'foreign land' of "the world".

The symbols of tents and altars reveal insight about faith. Faith is a journey whose key is worship.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.

Genesis 12-13

Abram Travels to Egypt

12:10-13 A famine in Canaan ^{Genesis 26:1, 41:57} forced them to travel to Egypt. His fear of death prompted Abram to instruct his wife, Sarai, to say she was his sister (a half-truth ^{Genesis 20:12}).

In truth, Sarai and Abram did have the same father (Terah), but born to a different mother ^{Genesis 20:12}; therefore, in addition to Sarai being Abram's wife ^{Genesis 11:29}, she was also his 'half-sister' ^{v.13}.

Abram's lack of trust in God resulted in flesh/spirit struggles ^{Isaiah 31:1a}: he went to Egypt for food instead of staying in the land God sent him to and his fear of death resulted in his lying about Sarai.

Due to his fear of being killed, twice Abram (Abraham) told a king that Sarai (Sarah) was his sister: here in Egypt ^{v.10-20} and later in Gerar ^{Genesis 20:1-18}. Furthermore, the same approach was also taken by Abram's son Isaac concerning his wife, Rebekah ^{Genesis 26:7}, for the same reason: fear of death.

12:14-20 Deciding to be obedient to Abram, Sarai told the Egyptians she was Abram's sister. Because of Sarai's beauty, Pharaoh had her brought to him and gave Abram great riches, but God protected Sarai by sending "serious diseases" on Pharaoh and his house and revealing to Pharaoh who Sarai actually was. In the end, Pharaoh sent them on their way, with the riches.

At this time, Sarai was "middle-aged" (about 65 and died at 127 ^{Genesis 23:1}) and still very beautiful.

His fear of being killed was Abram's motivation to lie about him being married to Sarai ^{v.12}; however, his reasoning to call Sarai his sister may have been based on some cultural traditions ^{Genesis 24:29-59}.

Were these circumstances a foreshadowing of the later historical events of Abraham's offspring? ...a famine forced them to Egypt ^{Genesis 47:4}, Pharaoh was attracted to Sarai (Hebrews) ^{Exodus 1:8-14}, plagues on Pharaoh's household ^{Exodus 7-11} and deliverance with added riches ^{Exodus 12:31-36}.

The Separation of Abram and Lot (Genesis 13)

13:1-4 Abram and Sarai headed back to Canaan with Lot and all of their many possessions. They moved "place to place", eventually worshipping at the altar near Bethel & Ai ^{Genesis 12:8}.

13:5-7 Abram and Lot both had such large numbers of sheep and cattle that their herdsmen (and the herdsmen of Canaan) began arguing over the pasturelands for their livestock.

The measure of wealth was not in the land owned, but the size of herds and possessions ^{Job 1:1-3}.

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Genesis 12-13

13:8-9 In a mature act of selfless charity, Abram waved his right as family head and allowed Lot to choose the portion of the land he wanted, with Abram accepting whatever was left.

His generosity to Lot was an example of Abram's spirit being victorious in his flesh/spirit struggles. He could be generous, because he knew God's promises for him and his spiritual family ^{Genesis 12:2-3}. Christians should be similarly generous to others, for the same reason ^{Matthew 28:20b, John 14:15-17a}.

13:10-11 Considering his options, Lot "looked up and saw" the fertile lands around the Jordan. He chose it, because the well-watered Jordan River plain reminded Lot of the Nile River valley, and was possibly the closest land he could imagine to the Garden of Eden ^{Genesis 2:8-14}.

Human eyes tend to be Satan's entry point ^{Genesis 3:6, Joshua 7:20-21, Proverbs 27:20, 1 John 2:15-16}, whereas God reaches mankind mainly through the ears ^{Matthew 11:15, 13:9,43, Luke 14:35b, Romans 10:17, Revelation 2-3}.

13:12-13 Consequently, Abram stayed in central Canaan, while Lot moved to the plains of the Jordan River with all of his possessions. Lot made his home near the wicked city of Sodom.

The example of Lot shows that sin starts subtly in a believer (Lot's greed ^{v.10-11}) and will grow when it is allowed to be nurtured (Lot "pitched his tents near Sodom" ^{v.12} and later lived there ^{Genesis 19:1}).

13:14-17 In His first reaffirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant ^{Genesis 12:2-3}, the Lord urged Abram to carry out the deeding customs of seeing ^{v.14-15} and walking "the length and breadth of the land" ^{v.17} He would give to Abram and his innumerable descendants ^{v.16}, forever ^{v.15}.

Notice the two ways to use eyes: Lot used his eyes for greed, to find the best land for himself ^{v.10}; however, Abram used his for joy, to see the great gift the Lord gave him and his descendants ^{v.14-15}.

13:18 Abram and his family moved and settled "near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron". As was his custom anywhere he stayed for a while, he built an altar for worship ^{Genesis 12:7,8}.

Hebron (also, Kiriath Arba ^{Genesis 23:2}) is an ancient city about 19 miles (32 km) SSW of Jerusalem. It is in the West Bank hill country (~3000 ft elevation), which later was also a city of refuge ^{Joshua 20:7}.

Much later, Sarah died at Hebron ^{Genesis 23:1-2} and was buried by Abraham near Mamre ^{Genesis 23:19}.

Concluding thought:

Abram walked by faith ^{2 Corinthians 5:7, Galatians 3:11}; **Lot walked by sight** ^{John 20:29}.

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