

Abraham is a Hero of the Faith (Genesis 12:1-20)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. Abram did not Come from the Best Family (Genesis 11:24-28)
2. Abram was Faithful to his Calling (Genesis 12:1-20)
3. Abraham had his Faults (Genesis 20:1-18)
4. Abraham is a Hero of the Faith (Hebrews 11:8-10)

Question: When Abraham left Ur, did he do exactly what the Lord told him? Compare Genesis 11:31 and Genesis 12:5. How many times did God tell Abraham to go to the Promised Land?

B. The Book of Genesis is divided after chapter eleven (source: Dr. J. Vernon McGee).

1. The first eleven chapters cover about two thousand years.
2. From Genesis, chapter twelve through the end of Genesis covers 350 years.
3. From Genesis, chapter twelve until the time of Jesus covers about two thousand years.
4. The first eleven chapters cover all mankind.
5. The rest of the Book of Genesis covers four main individuals (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph).

C. Abram was from modern-day Iraq (Babylon).

1. He was Chaldean.
2. The name "Ur" meant the flame.
3. Ur was the center of moon worship.
4. Abram grew up in a heathen environment in the midst of idolatry.
5. Joshua 24:2 says, "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt 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.*"

D. God called Abram and told him to leave that land of idol worship.

1. Like many people, Abram did not completely obey the Lord. But he at least got started.
2. Acts 7:2 says, "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,*"
3. God actually called Abram to Canaan twice.
 - a. Genesis 12:1 says, "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:"
 - b. Genesis 11:31 says, "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife;

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and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, *to go into the land of Canaan*; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."

4. Genesis 12:4 says, "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.*"
- E. The Lord promised Abram great blessings.
 1. He was already seventy-five years old when he left Haran (verse 4).
 2. Genesis 12:2-3 says, "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."
 3. Genesis 13:14-16 says, "And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For *all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it*, and to thy seed for ever. And *I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth*: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."

Question: Who went with Abraham when he left Ur? Were they supposed to go with him? Who went with Abraham when he left Haran? Were they supposed to go with him?

- II. Abraham did not travel alone from Ur.
 - A. His father, his wife, and his nephew were with him.
 1. Genesis 11:31 confirms that they were headed for Canaan, but they stopped in Haran.
 - a. A likely scenario is that Abram was hindered by his father, Terah.
 - b. *Terah was one of Jesus' ancestors (Luke 3:34).*
 - c. Haran was famous during that time for having a temple for the moon god.
 - d. Genesis 11:32 says that Terah died in Haran.
 - e. The Lord probably took Terah out of the way so Abram would not be hindered.
 - f. Abram's age when he left Ur is not known. He may have been much younger than seventy-five.
 2. Abraham was human but still out of line to take his entire family.
 - a. Terah was his father.
 - 1) A young Abram would have still been part of Terah's household.
 - 2) An older Abram would have felt an obligation to look after his dad.
 - b. Acts 7:3 says, "And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and *from thy kindred*, and come into the land which I shall shew thee."
 3. The Lord wanted to get Abram out of his idolatrous environment.

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4. When Abram decided to take his father (an idol worshipper), it became a death sentence for Terah.
- B. Abram also should not have taken Lot with him from Ur or from Haran. But once again, he could have felt a moral dilemma since Lot's father had already died.
- C. Abram should have taken his wife based on Genesis (2:24). They were one.
- D. Dr. John Sailhamer compared Abraham to Noah after the Great Flood.
 1. Noah had gone through God's judgment and was called to replenish the earth (Genesis 9:1).
 2. Noah's deliverance from the flood was a picture of God's salvation and providential care.
 3. Abraham was called out of Ur following the judgment of the Tower of Babel and told to go to the land that God would show him.
 4. The Tower of Babel was God's judgment on humanity for not obeying the command to Noah.
 - a. One hundred years following the flood, and the people had not spread out to replenish the earth.
 - b. They were huddled together at Babel.
 - c. Under the Nimrod's leadership, they were rebelling against the Lord and building a tower into heaven (Genesis 10:8-9).
 - d. Genesis 10:8-9 says, "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as *Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.*"
 - e. Nimrod was a rebel, not a godly man. He was a type of the Antichrist.
 - f. Secular History (The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop) describes Nimrod as the person that led the building of the tower. *He reasoned that a tower into heaven would give the people a path of escape if God ever flooded the earth again.*

Question: What lie did Abraham tell the Egyptian Pharaoh in Genesis 12:14-20 and King Abimelech in Genesis 20:1-18? Why did he tell that lie? Do we need to sometimes withhold some facts for our own protection?

III. Abram had his occasional problems.

- A. Genesis 12:12 says, "Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive."
 1. According to Dr. McGee, **Pharaoh DID NOT commit adultery with Sarai.**
 2. Esther 2:8 says, "So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that *Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.*"

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- B. In Sarai's case, Pharaoh's house was plagued by her presence.
1. Genesis 12:17 says, "And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife."
 2. Somehow, the Lord revealed to Pharaoh that Sarai and Abram were married.
 3. God's Sovereignty and Man's Free Will at work.
 - a. Notice the difference between Pharaoh in Genesis 12:15-20 and the Exodus 5:2.
 - b. Exodus 5:2 says, "And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."
 - c. One Pharaoh, of his own free will, obeyed the Lord once he knew what was going on, and the other Pharaoh, of his own free will, resisted.
 - 1) I do not believe that God stacked the deck for or against either Pharaoh.
 - 2) ***God gave both the chance to repent of their actions.***
- C. Abram told the same lie twice, not just once.
1. Genesis 20:2 says, "And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah."
 2. They committed the same sin once as Abram and Sarai and once as Abraham and Sarah.
 3. King Abimelech was warned about the lie in a dream, and like the Pharaoh before him, cleared himself of any wrongdoing.
 4. II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
- D. Abraham told a half truth rather than the whole truth.
1. Genesis 20:12 says, "And yet indeed ***she is my sister***; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife."
 2. God did not let Pharaoh and Abimelech fail because of Abraham's lie.
 3. He did let a stubborn, hard-hearted Pharaoh come to ruin during Moses' time.

Question: Why did Abraham have a less than honest attitude when he was first starting out? Can people living today be true heroes of the Faith in word and deed? How?

IV. Serving the Lord is a growing process.

- A. Abram (Abraham) grew closer to the Lord through each of his failings.
- B. We do the same thing.
1. The Lord is not looking for reasons to throw people away.
 2. He is looking for ways to conform us to image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

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Next week's lesson: "Abraham's Faith and Isaac's Obedience" (Genesis 22:1-14)

Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday:	Genesis 1:1-31
Tuesday:	Genesis 12:1-20
Wednesday:	Genesis 14:1-24 and Genesis 17:5
Thursday:	Genesis 20:1-18
Friday:	Genesis 22:1-14, Genesis 26:24, and Genesis 28:12-15

Study questions:

1. In what ways can one say that the Lord is transcendent?
2. In what ways can one say that the Lord is personal? How do Genesis 11:31, Genesis 12:4 and Genesis 15:7 show that God does not give up on His people?
3. In Genesis 12:7, what two promises did God make to Abraham? How do those promises affect the way that many individuals interpret the Book of Revelation?
4. What mistake did Abraham make twice?
5. What was the very difficult test of Genesis 22:1-14?
6. How does God show His nature and attributes to humanity? What does God's name, Jehovahjireh, in Genesis 22:4 mean?
7. In Genesis 22:9-10, how is Isaac a type of Christ?