

The Call to Let Go and Come Out

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Scriptures - Genesis 12.1-9

Intro

Genesis 12 is the beginning of a new era in the biblical narrative. **Genesis 12** is the announcement that God is going to form a people and a nation for Himself through whom He will demonstrate Himself as the blessing of all nations. **Genesis 12** is the story of God calling a man, but it's not the story of just a man; it's the *beginning* of God working through that one man to bless *all* men.

Martin Lloyd Jones, in his commentary on **Genesis 12**, says, "The story of Abraham is absolutely pivotal to understanding the message of the Bible." Yes, man sinned and separated himself from God...man had put himself under the power and influence of the Devil. But now God, through this man Abram and his family, is creating a nation, a separate people that will be His own possession...and they will demonstrate who He is to the rest of the world.

For us to properly understand **Genesis 12** we must understand that this isn't just a story about a man named Abraham...Abraham's story is our story. The call of Abraham is the same call to each of us; Abraham is the father of the faithful (**Galatians 3.7**). Anyone who is a follower of Jesus is described in the New Testament as "Abraham's seed...heirs according to the promise" (**Galatians 3.29**). What promise? The promise given to Abraham. We are the children of Abraham because we are children of faith...children of the promise that God gave to Abraham that his descendants would be the blessing of the nations (**Galatians 4.28**). To be a follower of Jesus is, in many ways, to walk the same journey that Abraham did.

The Passage

1 Now the LORD said to Abram,
“Go from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you;
2 And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing;
3 And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”
4 So Abram went away as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him.
Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
5 Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot, and all their possessions which
they had accumulated, and the people which they had acquired in Haran, and
they set out for the land of Canaan; so they came to the land of Canaan.
6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of
Moreh. Now the Canaanites were in the land at that time.
7 And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give
this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.
8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain 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 Then Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.

v1 - The Call

Abraham grew up in a place called Ur of the Chaldeans. Ur is in modern-day southern Iraq, close to where Baghdad is. Ur was close to the mouth of 2 rivers; the Tigris and the Euphrates. If you remember back to when we talked about the garden of Eden, you will remember me saying that this is a very likely location for the Garden of Eden. Ur was located due east of what would become a city called Jerusalem. Ur is also located in the

same area as Babel...which would come to be known as a little place called Babylon (we talked about this last week).

My point in saying all of that is this; Abram grew up in a pagan land. The god of his fathers was not YHWH. Abram grew up worshipping multiple gods. His worship was pagan worship...meaning Abram didn't know if his gods were happy or angry, so there was lots of things to be done to make sure that he was on the god's good side...including things like child sacrifice (which will become relevant in the coming weeks).

But then something magnificent happened to this man named Abram; a new God, who Abram had never heard of, came to him in his pagan land of multiple gods and demonic worship, the new God revealed Himself to Abram, and called him out of that pagan land;

"Abram, come out of this land, leave your father's house, and go to a land I will show you."

God spoke to Abram. God disrupted his life. God called him out of all that he had ever known.

Our First Steps

That is always the first step on our journey with God. Search the Scriptures and you find the same story told over and over. Pick up any biography of any saint who has ever lived and you will find them all saying the same thing, "There I was, living my life, doing the same things as everybody else, when suddenly I became conscious of a God that was calling me...disrupting me...'come out from your way of living and follow me to a land I will show you.'"

Abraham was told to separate himself from all that he had ever known. He was told to leave his country, his family, his inheritance, his gods, his way of life...forsake everything that defined him, and set out on a new path to a new home. He had to come out before he could be taken in.

Abraham's Story is our Story

The same goes for you and I. Abraham's story is our story. God asked Abraham to look at the kind of life that he was living and see that it was wrong and that he must therefore come out of it. That's what the Bible calls repentance. God comes to us and, in His grace, calls us to think again about the type of life we are living. And the gift of repentance that He gives us allows us to see that what we think about God is wrong, He's not the God that we think He is. His kindness, and the repentance that His kindness leads us to, shows us that the way that we think about life and family and money and heaven and hell and strangers and enemies and the world...it's all wrong. Just as God came to Abraham and called him, God comes to us and opens our eyes to see the state we are living in, and we realize it is void of God, it is self-reliant and selfish...and He allows us to see where it all leads, to confess that it is wrong according to His design, to receive forgiveness for our sin, and just as he did for this man Abram, God gives us a new name and a new family, and we follow Him into a new land. Just as Abram came out of Ur so that he could go in to Canaan...just as Israel came out of Egypt so they could go into the Promised Land... God calls you and I to come out of the life that we were living in so that He can bring us into the kingdom of God.

The Critical Moment

Most of us think the most important moment in our life is our wedding day or maybe the birth of our children. But in reality, the most important moment a person ever experiences is that moment when God invites you to come out from the life you are living without Him. The most important thing that a person ever does is respond to the call of God when it comes. **Genesis 12** was Abraham's critical moment...that moment when the God of all creation humbled himself to speak to this man in southern Iraq and invite him to come out. What would this man named Abram do with that opportunity? The Scriptures say that,

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness"

(**Galatians 3.6**).

On what basis did Abraham believe? What proof was there? What miracle convinced him? What theological argument was made that showed Abraham that this God was better than all the other gods? It was simply this: the word of God came to Abram and he believed it. God didn't make an exception for Abram and give him some special proof

that isn't available to you or I...that's why God's righteousness was transferred to Abraham, it was a righteousness that only comes by faith, and faith is only present when there is no proof...otherwise it's not faith that's at work, it's good decision making based on verifiable evidence. If Abraham's story is the story of every other person who ever received salvation and righteousness and forgiveness, if Abram is the father of the faithful...then there was nothing exceptional made available to Abram when God called him. It's the same invitation that He gives to you and I;

"Come out from your present situation and follow me."

"On what basis can I believe you, God?"

"On the basis that you believe I am as good as I say I am."

Abraham believed that what this God said was true. Abraham believed that whatever he gave up in his hometown was worth it because there was something better that could only be found in a new land with this God. Imagine what Abraham's friends and family said?

"Where are you going? Why are you leaving us? You're going give up everything you have here to live in tents in some place you've never seen? You're going to be a wanderer, a traveller, a sojourner in a foreign land. Why would you do that and what evidence do you have that this God is real and that this plan will succeed?"

It might be the life of a sojourner...yes, he might have to live in tents and be in the minority, but there was something about this God that he could trust.

So Abraham went all in.

Abraham wasn't perfect, but he was committed to obeying this God. As we will see, Abraham tried to take some things from his old life into the new life. He brought his father, who ended up costing him 5 years in a place that wasn't where God wanted him to go. Abram brought his nephew, Lot, who ended up causing some serious issues and dangerous situations for Abraham. But Abraham never turned back, and that's what matters.

Maybe you're like Abram; maybe you've tried to bring some things from your old life into this new life of following Jesus...you've brought friends from your old life, business

practices, hobbies or habits, family members even. These things don't disqualify you, but they will slow you down...they will distract you...they may even harm you.

The point is, Abraham's journey is our journey. We can learn from his successes, and we can learn from his mistakes...as long as we respond to the call of God in the same way Abraham did. We may not understand what this new life of faith will look like, or where it will take us, but there is something about this God that we can trust. We can believe that if we go all in with this God, the land that He brings us into will far surpass any life we could carve out for ourselves separate from Him. To everyone who responds with the faith of Abraham, they become children of the promise, children of righteousness, children of God.

Conclusion

Hebrews 11,

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he left, not knowing where he was going.

9 By faith he lived as a stranger in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore even from one man, and one who was as good as dead at that, there were born descendants who were just as the stars of heaven in number, and as the innumerable grains of sand along the seashore.

Where does God want to take you? What area of barrenness does He want to give life to? What is God asking you to come out from so that He can take you into something new? Whatever it is that you are letting go of so you can grab hold of Him, you are not giving up anything...you are actually leaving behind the cheap, temporary, substitute of what God has for you...which is always eternal, authentic, supernatural, glorious...**a life that is not guaranteed to always be easy, but it is guaranteed to be full of Him.**