

## FINDING FAITH | GENESIS 12:1-20 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 7/9/2023

The Roots (11:10-32) | \* I. The Calling of (12:1) | The Covenant with (12:2-3) | The Commitment of (12:5-8) | The Caution in (12:9-20)

**INTRO:** Last week learned how “the nations rose” and even began to **REBEL** against God’s mandate to scatter and multiply. In (11:9) God *scattered them abroad over the face of the earth, and they ceased building!* – **God’s knows how to redirect mankind to keep His plans on point!** – Now, to bring **REDEMPTION** to mankind (*God’s primary focus*), Moses sifts through the **descendants of Shem**, which are **the Roots of a Righteous Nation**, leading to a particular descendent, **ABRAM**.

### Shem’s Descendants and their Lifespan (11:10-25)

- a. **Shem** - 600 years (10-11)
- b. **Arphaxad** – 438 years (12-13)
- c. **Salah** – 433 years (14-15)
- d. **Eber** – 464 years (16-17)
- e. **Peleg** – 239 years (18-19)
- f. **Reu** – 239 years (20-21)
- g. **Serug** – 230 years (22-23)
- h. **Nahor** – 148 years (24-25) *Notice the decrease in lifespan!*

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### Terah’s Descendants and Particulars (26-32)

- a. **Terah** – 205 years (26,27;32) – Again, Moses provided more detail about his family, because it leads us to the patriarch **Abram**, who is known as the father of **FAITH**. *You see, after Noah... God was looking for another man to advance His purposes with future **God-fearing and God-Faithful Families** (tt. Gen 18:19).*
  - i. **Terah** had three sons: **Abram**, **Nahor** and **Haran** – **Abram** means “**EXALTED FATHER.**”
  - ii. **Terah** had a grandson from Haran: His name was **Lot**
- b. **Terah** **OUTLIVED** his son Haran (28a) – *Reason for Haran’s death is not mentioned (Neither his wife’s name)*
- c. **Terah** **Dwelt in UR** of the Chaldeans (28b) – *Ancient Mesopotamia*
- d. **Terah’s** **Daughters-in-law and grandchildren** (29-30) – *Mention of **Sarai and her predicament** (barren)*
- e. **Terah’s JOURNEY** (31-32) – The phrase, “**Terah took his son,**” *family members and dwelt in UR, seems to indicate that Terah was called by God...Not so! In fact, Stephen cleared this up in (tt. Acts 7:2-4).*
  - **Abram first received a Call from God**, asking him to **Step-Out and Away** from everything familiar to him (v.3): “**Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you!**” – But if you look closely, **Abram stepped out, but only half-way!**  
**Why? Two things...**
    - 1) He also **took his nephew Lot**, who would later become a liability (Ch. 13, 14, 19)
    - 2) He **took his father {TERAH, Heb. “Station” or “delay”}**. There were on the way to the promised land but got comfortable in Haran. A **25-year delay**, until his father Terah passed in Haran. (*P/A – Has God has called you to something that you are afraid of stepping into? – Have you only gone halfway in your obedience to God?*)
  - **Abram’s First Response to God’s calling was only partial obedience!** – Ahh, but God is patient with Abram, knowing that Abram is barely **Finding Faith in God!**

As we study the life of Abraham, we will learn that FAITH can have Highs and Lows. Times of Great Faith and times of Feeble Faith. – As we move into the following chapters, we will learn that with the exception of Jesus Christ, Abraham is the one of the most important figures in all of the Bible. – So far, the first eleven chapters of Genesis described 2,000 years of world history, but the next fourteen chapters are devoted to the life of this one man – Abraham, the father of faith! The bible tells us that Faith is what God is looking for in mankind! In fact, (Heb 11:6) *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* I see four things\* in this chapter...

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I. **The CALLING OF ABRAM (Gen. 12:1)** – God personally Spoke to Abraham! How did he do it? *He appeared* to him in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2), and here it tells that God spoke to him, verbally – “the Lord had said...”

1. **God Spoke to Abram in his Circumstances** – No more delays...His Father, was **NOW** dead! – (Josh 24:2-4) tells us that Abram’s father worshipped idols – *And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants... God was patient while waiting for Abram!*

2. **God Called Abram FROM something... TO something!** – He wanted to bring him to a PROMISED LAND... a PLACE he HAD never seen or heard of – (Jer 29:11) God thoughts towards his people is to give them “a future and a hope.” – Subjectively, the same is true of you and I: (2 Chron 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.* (Those who will believe & obey Him!)

- When Peter said to Jesus, “See, we have left all and followed You., in (Mark 10:28b-30), *Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, <sup>30</sup> who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time... in the age to come, eternal life. Faith...willingly surrenders all for the promises of GOD! (Pearl of great price!)*

The 2nd thing I see in this chapter is...

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II. **The COVENANT WITH ABRAM (Gen. 12:2-3)** – 25 years earlier God told Abram to Step out in faith and promised that He would bless.

1. **Though the word “covenant” is not used here, these refer to what is known as the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.** (unconditional), Gen. 12:1-4;13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8 – This covenant is one of the great revelations of God concerning future history.

2. **God says He will do 4 Great Things:** Notice there are five “I Wills” from God!

- a. Make a Great **NATION** of Abram (2a) – National Blessings
- b. Provide Great **BLESSINGS** for Abram (2b) – Personal Blessings
- c. Establish a Great **NAME** for Abram (2c-3a) – Social & Spiritual Blessings
- d. Launch Great **FAMILIES** from Abram (3b) – Posterity Blessings

- Abram would have numerous posterity, personal blessing, **his name would be great**, and he, personally, would be a blessing! **Through Abram...** would come **a great nation** (Israel), and through him (via that nation), **all the nations of the earth would be blessed** (Messiah). **Through Abraham's descendants** (the Jews) came the prophets of God, the writers of God's written Word (the Bible) and **Christ/Messiah accordingly**.

P/A – Even though the promises were unconditional, Abraham still had to believe God. –

**FINDING FAITH** first requires us to BELIEVE in order to RECEIVE God's blessings. – God told Isaiah to tell King Ahaz of a potential attack from Syria, that it would come to nothing! He said to Ahaz, (Isa 7:9b) *"If you will not believe, Surely you shall not be established."*

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III. **The COMMITMENT OF ABRAM (Gen. 12:4-8)** – Abram **obeyed** and went forth by

**FAITH**. – He went out **full force** (4-5) – By faith, He took everyone and everything with him! –

As the leader of his family his faith impacted the lives of his entire tribe! (*Growing faith does that!*)

- (Heb 11:8) *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.*

1. **He Arrived in Canaan, at Shechem (6-7)** – Cir. 2090 B.C. – **SHECHEM** was 40 miles north of Jerusalem at the eastern entrance to the pass between **Mt. Ebal** and **Mt. Gerizim**. The ancient town stood on the lower southeastern slope or shoulder of Mt. Ebal, hence the meaning of the name: **Shechem** = **SHOULDER**. Samaria was about 8 miles northwest. – The town would later become a **City of Refuge** (Josh 21:21). – [GOD SPOKE TO ABRAM AGAIN!]

a. The **Tree Moreh** was probably named after someone; in **Hebrew it means Teacher**. **Abram will return here often** as this became a special place, where God met with him!

- **We all need a tree of Moreh in our lives...a place where we can sit and meet with our Great Teacher**, to impart wisdom, direction and even correction in our lives. (*Do U have 1?*)

b. God **appeared once again** to Abram and **REAFFIRMED** His promise to his descendants. – **The Promise... I WILL GIVE THIS LAND!** – Folks, I don't care what any other nation or people declare, but **the land belongs to Israel!** [STAY ON COURSE -> GOD WILL SPEAK TO YOU!]

c. **Abram responded with worship!** – He **built an altar for God**, a place to meet with God. **This acts served as a public confession that He worshipped the True and living God!** – His Son **Isaac (26:24-25)** and grandson **Jacob (33:18-20)** would likewise build their own altar to declare the same. (*Genuine encounters w/God produce humble responses to God – worship*)

2. **He Moved near Bethel (8)** – At this second location he **CALLED ON** the name of the **LORD**, that is, he made proclamation of Yahweh by name! As Abram began **Finding His faith in God**, **he began making altars** in various places and calling upon the Lord, (**Gen 21:33**), *Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God.* As faith in God grows, we become bolder in our proclamation of who He is!

- God now had a **WITNESS** in the midst of **the Canaanites**. – *The wicked Canaanites had many shrines in groves of oak trees, where they worshipped! (Are your committed to be a witness?)*

**IV. The CAUTION IN ABRAM (Gen. 12:9-20)** – As we grow in faith, **there will most certainly come a time** when a when we're walking with the Lord and we're growing in faith and we're worshipping our King, then suddenly...things **“Go South,”** in Abram’s case literally...ironically!

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**1. Abram Kept Journeying Southward (9-10)** – Possibly exploring the land, planting trees and making places of worship. But he went just a bit too far though, literally into **EGYPT**, the land of the Coptic’s. – At this time, **Egypt was strong and was well known for its Worldly Ways and Pagan Practices**. – **Symbolically, we refer to Egypt as a type of the world.** (*Don't love the world!*)

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**2. Abram Encountered FEAR (11-13)** – This is one of those **“faith lapse moments”** that comes upon us! Instead of trusting the Lord, **Finding Faith** in the unknown situation, **he allowed FEAR to grip his heart and mind!** – Truth be told, **He told Sarai to lie about being his wife!** (*1/2 truth*)

- **His fear was caused (11-13)**, possibly by warnings or stories of others. Particularly, fear fueled his mind because **his wife Sarai was a 65-year-old hottie!** (*He feared for his life, not hers!*)

- **Fear always thinks the worst! Faith always Hopes in God for the Best.** – This reveals **Abram’s adolescent faith!** – We all get the shakes sometimes...**but God is still there!** – If he only knew Solomon’s wisdom, **(Prov 18:10) The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.** (*In Finding our Faith, we too must learn this!*)

- But we must remember, **Abram is young in his faith, barely finding it.** What happens to him was actually **written for our learning**. – The apostle Paul would later instruct believers, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.** (Rom 15:4) – (*Faith & Hope are Siamese twins!*)

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**3. God Still Protected Abram (14-20)** – Wow... **it all came to pass!** But God did not give up on Abram for his shortcoming, He knew exactly where he was, as well as the circumstances! – And God’s **DIVINE INTERVENTION** sustained Abram in this situation...**PLAGUING PHARAOH’S GREAT HOUSE**. – God’s **DIVINE PROTECTION delivered** Abram, Sarai, and all that he had. **WHY? B/C He was developing a man of faith!** – **(2 Tim 2:13) says, If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself!** Abram’s Caution caused him to react in the flesh, figuring it all out for himself...to protect his own neck! – Fear overcame him the very moment he went south!

- **Finding Faith requires us to seek the Lord in every situation!** **(Psalm 34:4) I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.**

- This teaches us that God helps us to **“walk by faith and not by sight.”** (2 Cor 5:7)  
(*When we walk in faith we become a blessing to others! Precisely what God desires!*)

**CLOSING THOUGHTS:** **How can we find faith in the times we are currently living?**

- **Answer Gods’ Call** - With obedient Faith Step-Out!
- **Build an Altar** – i.e. Find you Place to meet alone with God! **BE BOLD** in what you believe!
- **Don’t Wander to foreign lands** – Stay in your Bethel (House of God)
- In times of unknown, **Respond in FAITH...not FEAR!**
- **When things “Go South” in your life...Return to Bethel?**