

THE PATRIARCHS: Abram's Call (Genesis 11:27 – 12:9)

We know him as “father Abraham.” He is a hero of the faith.
He is an ancient figure – ‘the’ forefather of the Jewish race.
His name comes up in confusing theological debates.
But, who is he to you and me? Why is he so important?

* To grasp the significance of these events, we must explore Abram's world!

> Abram was born in UR of the Chaldeans (“caveman speak”). What do we know of this place?

When God called Abram he was in a city in Babylonia, named Ur of the Chaldeans. Ur was a very advanced city and was believed to have been founded some five hundred years before the time of Abraham.

Ur, could be compared to a modern city, having libraries, schools, a system of law. It was a rich city and many valuable treasures have been discovered including elaborate jewelry.

The false religion of astrology which was begun at Babel was practiced there as it was in all Babylonia. Abraham's father, Terah according to Joshua 24:2, worshiped idols. Jewish tradition refers to Terah as an idol maker. Ur was an idolatrous city worshiping many different Gods such as the god of fire, moon, sun and stars. Sin was the name of the chief idol deity of Ur. Ningal, was the wife of the moon-god, Sin, and was worshiped as a mother God in many other cities. Ur was an evil and sinful city as can be seen in the worship practices of the moon-goddess, Ningal. Every female in the city at some time in her life would have to take her turn in serving as a priestess prostitute in the temples.⁽¹⁾

*1. Halley's Bible Handbook, Henry H. Halley,
Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, page 95.*

MAIN POINT #1: Abram RECOGNIZED GOD'S VOICE!

- > How did he know? To quote Crush from **Finding Nemo**, “You just know, you know?”
 - Even recognizing God REQUIRES FAITH!
 - Fun to consider: do you wonder if God called someone before Abram ... but he didn't listen?

- > When did Abram receive the call to move? (See Acts 7: 2-3) This tells me ...
 - I don't have to have PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE hearing God.
 - I don't have to be IN CHURCH to hear from God.
 - I don't have to be A CHRISTIAN to hear from God.
 - ANYONE is QUALIFIED to hear from God ... so LISTEN!

- > How do you recognize the voice of God? What does it sound like / feel like?

MAIN POINT #2: Abram OBEYED GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS!

> God's directions consisted of 2 parts: LEAVE & GO!

LEAVE: What 3 entities was Abram told to abandon?

(1) HIS COUNTRY

> Significance: He was to leave behind FALSE RELIGION.

God is not concerned with elevating one nation over another (the Canaanites were no better than the Chaldeans!). In the ancient world of the OT, all the various gods that were worshipped were gods of a particular place and/or a particular people. The most effective way for the true God to break into such a religious world and gain world recognition was to establish a relationship with a patriarchal head of a household and call him away from his idolatrous clan and from the place with which its gods were linked!

– from the NIV Study Bible notes

> Why couldn't Abram worship YHWH in Chaldea or Haran?

-- There is a real need for SEPARATION from the world! 2 Cor. 6:14 – 7:1

Q: How do you see the 21st century church accomplishing 'separation from the world?' How is the church failing?

(2) HIS PEOPLE

> Significance: He was to leave behind CULTURAL PRESSURE.

Q: How can our "people" be a hindrance to our faith?

-- How do we address this pressure? Leave like Abram?

-- Have you ever cut yourself off from those who held you back?

(3) HIS FATHER'S HOUSEHOLD

> Significance: He was to give up his SECURITY BLANKET.

-- Large family = wealth and success

-- When Terah died, Abram would inherit a position of tribal power.

Q: Has God ever instructed you to make a "risky" move?

How did you feel? How did it turn out?

Q: Does God ever call us to leave behind our "comfort zones?"

GO: Where did God tell Abram to go? An UNKNOWN DESTINATION!

> A very uncomfy position: God doesn't always give the FULL ITINERARY ...

... but often just the 1st STEP! Psalm 119: 105

What was the "bait" to catch Abram? What was the reward? A PROMISE (12:2-3)

* What is the benefit of ACTING on God's promises? Galatians 3:6-9

> **Faith**, then, is not just belief ... but the **action** based on that belief!

> Read Hebrews 11:8-10. What is contrasted in these verses?