

December 5, 2021

“The Lord Calls Abram”
Lesson 1 of Unit

Genesis 12:1-9

Intro

“In the beginning...” God began with a perfect world. Perfect environment, perfect conditions, perfect people. But things didn't stay perfect. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, Cain murdered Abel, and by Genesis 6, “every intent of (man's) heart was only evil continually. So God used a flood to cleanse the earth of everything bad and to start again.

But mankind was still the same. People still disobeyed God, still chose to follow the evil intents of their hearts rather than serve and please the One who created them. God could bring another flood every time man's sin got “out of control”, but instead He chose another path. He put a rainbow in the sky to remind humanity He would never destroy the earth again. He took the burden off of us and put it on Himself to find another way to meet the world's sin problem. He showed His love and His justice by sending Jesus to die a sacrificial death on the cross to pay the price for mankind's sins. Bringing Jesus into the world in human form began with the man in today's passage, a man called Abram.

Read Genesis 12:1-9

1. vs. 1: God calls to Abram (he becomes Abraham in Gen. 17)

This shows that God is the initiator of mankind's redemption

Humans don't know how and don't have the ability to redeem themselves

Redemption begins with God because only He has the power to do it

Abram's role is to obey

He doesn't have to plan, but obeying the unknown is just as hard (harder?)

He doesn't even know where he's going (“to the land I will show you”)

It's not important that Abram (or us) knows the complete story

His job is to obey first

This is known as “stepping out in faith”

You know what you are supposed to do, even if you don't know all the details, or what will happen

Mesopotamia was a thriving part of the world

In today's ideas, we would say it was where the culture was

Canaan is not so advanced or as thriving as Mesopotamia

This shows that God calls people to serve Him in unexpected places

Humanity would go to the “big city”

God sends us where He wants, sometimes far from the big city

God calls Abram to “leave...your father's household”

He is leaving an again father and many other relatives

He is therefore leaving what is secure and known

God is teaching Abram to trust in Him alone, not in people, even family

2. vs. 2: God gives Abram the great promise

“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you”

This promise is given without the details of how it will come to pass

Abram’s reaction isn’t recorded, but what might he have thought when hearing this?

Abram shows his faith by not asking God for the specifics

He follows God and believes what He has said

3. vs. 3: Abram was told in vs. 2 that he will be a blessing

Vs. 3 shows some of how that will happen

God will bless those who bless Abram, and curse those who curse him

Through kindness to Abram, God will bless others

The second half of the verse says that “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you”

Abram didn’t travel enough to directly impact all the earth

This is a Messianic prophecy

God will use Abram to bless the world, as through his line the Christ would come

4. vs. 4: Abram leaves and takes Lot with him

Abram obeys God, showing faith in God’s guidance and instructions

However he is 75, and Sarai 65

Even then, that is an advanced age

Abram also takes Lot with him

Lot is his dead brother’s son

Abram was told in 12:1 to leave his father’s household

However, it was custom to take responsibility for a dead sibling’s family

Abram might have then considered Lot to be part of his own household

5. vs. 5: This verse accompanies vs. 4

They leave Haran, and go to Canaan

Canaan is not an empire of its own at this time

It lies between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River

It’s like a crossroad area between larger empires (Egypt, Babylon)

This is typical of how God works

He takes a land of the “not great” to form a people/nation that He will make great

Only God would take the ordinary and transform it into the great

6. vs. 6: Abram has done a lot of travelling

Canaan is about 400 miles away from Haran

This is like traveling from Sweet Home to Seattle and back (w/o cars!)

And Abram doesn’t stop when he gets to the edge of Canaan

He travels to the “great tree of Moreh at Schechem”

He has been traveling southwesterly from Haran

Shechem is further southeast of the Sea of Galilee

Also, the verse mentions “the Canaanites” that are already there
Some are descendants of Canaan, Noah’s grandson
There are also the Philistines by the coast, and other peoples as well
God told Abram to go there, so Abram went
There are now two major problems to making Abram a great nation
Sarai is barren, and there are other people established in the land

7. vs. 7: Several significant things happen in this verse

First, God appears to Abram

We aren’t told how, in what form, but God appears to Abram

This is likely to confirm to Abram that God is with him

God will be with him in bringing the promise into being

Second, God will give the land to Abram’s offspring

Since Sarai is barren, where will these offspring be coming from?

This implies that Abram won’t be the one taking over the land

Third, Abram’s response is to build an altar to God

This shows Abram’s devotion to God—his response to God is to worship

8. vs. 8: This is Abram’s response to vs. 7

He goes further into the land of Canaan and sets up his tent

This looks like a temporary stay

He builds another altar and calls “on the name of the Lord”

In both of these actions, he shows his trust in what God has said

9. vs. 9: Abram heads further south

It appears he is looking over the whole of the land

A famine happens in the following verses, and Abram heads to Egypt to escape it

Perhaps God is preparing Abram for this journey by having him head further south

Application: Here is the application from our text:

“God has called into existence a people who are to know better than to reject God’s solution to their real needs. He has revealed His will and His Son to them so they can show and tell a hurting world about His kingdom. God wills to bless the world, and His Son sends us out into the world by the power of His Spirit to do this. But we, like Abram, must leave “Ur” behind us.

“We cannot proclaim God’s kingdom while we seek the kingdoms of this world. Like Abram, we do not always know what the next step will be, and we may even make mistakes that will blow up in our faces. Like Abram, we may have to wait a long time. We may have to tarry in “Egypt” while God continues to prepare our hearts.

“The world wants a quick and cheap fix. May God grant us the grace not to settle for giving the world what it wants. May we instead truly bless the world by giving it what God knows it needs.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for calling Abram to make a people who would worship and serve You. Thank You that Your plans and Your ways are higher than ours. Forgive us where we fail to carry out Your plan in Your way. Help us develop and show the faith that Abram had and showed. In Jesus' name, Amen.

.

.