

Text: Gen 12.1-9

We now turn in the Bible Story to Abraham.

Abraham is the father of faith.

Adam failed because he could not believe God's word.

Noah believed God's word, but his sons failed to obey God's word.

Abram believed what God said and did it.

God intended for men to spread out and form nations. When they refused, he confused their tongues and forced them to spread out.

After this division, God called one man out of these nations to begin a nation of faith, trusting God and becoming his people. This nation becomes the dominant focus of the Bible, from beginning to end.

Our current Church Age is an interlude, waiting for God's final interaction with Abraham's nation, Israel.

The beginning of this story in Abraham is the beginning of faith, and everything about it is very relevant to Christians.

Read Gen 12.1-9

Proposition: Abram's faith models true faith in all ages.

I. The call of Abram (1-3)

"Genesis 12:1–3 consists of a command followed by seven clauses that entail the promises of the divine oath (vv. 2–3)."¹

A. The command to go (1)**1. Abram is to everything behind**

- a. His country
- b. His relatives
- c. His father's house

Every social tie is broken

¹ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, vol. 1B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 107.

2. Abram is to go to an unknown land

Stephen, in his sermon in Acts 7, says this command came to Abram before he left Ur. (Ac 7.2-3)

In the ancient world, leaving everything in this way was extremely difficult — your family, your clan, your nation, this was your social safety net.

The call to Abram is rooted in a call of separation.

B. The promises of blessing (2-3)

1. I will make you a great nation
2. I will bless you
3. I will make your name great
4. So you will be a blessing
5. I will bless those who bless you
6. I will curse those who curse you

Those who *disdain* you, I will *curse*.

- The current attitude towards Israel by many people and nations violates this promise.

7. So all will be blessed through you

“Abram had only a promise from God, which was also a prophecy.”²

This promise will recur in various forms: five times to Abraham, twice to Isaac, and four times to Jacob.

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Gen 12.2.

II. The response of Abram (4-9)

A. God said go, Abram went

1. Same root, “go” v. 1; “went” v. 4
2. Abram is 75 years old when he leaves Haran
 - a. 75 years in his father’s household
 - b. 25 years waiting for a son
 - c. 75 years living with his son

B. God led Abram through the land

1. Shechem (6) between Mt Ebal and Gerizzim
2. Bethel (8) near Ai
3. Negev (9) southern desert

This summary passage reflects Abram walking through the whole land God will give to his descendants.

“Through his vagabond journeys, traveling from north to south and leaving behind altars erected to the Lord, he symbolized what would become reality for his descendants—possession of the land and worship of Israel’s God.”³

III. The pattern from Abram

A. The difference between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant

1. Abram: leave and go to a place I will show you
2. Moses: This do and live (in the land)

“No obligations are placed upon Abram to maintain the promises (as for Israel at Sinai); he must only respond to the Lord’s command to ‘leave,’ an act of loyalty.”⁴

³ Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, 1B:105.

⁴ Mathews, 1B:106.

Rm 4.1-5 ¶ What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

- a. Moses required rites of worship for the blessing
- b. Abram was simply required to believe for the blessing

The blessings were different, the responses were different.

B. The dependence for Abram and the NT saint are the same

"God is the initiator and consummator. Abram is dependent on the Lord to achieve the promises; he only has the divine word to rely on. Abram is the passive recipient of the divine will."⁵

Conclusion:

Proposition: Abram's faith models true faith in all ages.

⁵ Mathews, 1B:106.