

The Meaning of Abraham

by Bill Randles

Bill Randles explores the significance of Abram's faith and God's promises, illustrating the call to leave the familiar and embrace a life of obedience and blessing.

Duration: 48:31

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-5, Exodus 12:21-23, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, Galatians 3:16, Hebrews 11:8, Revelation 21:2-3

Topics: "Abraham"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Abram going down to Egypt and the lessons we can learn from it. He emphasizes the importance of believing in God and not being deceived by the allure of worldly pleasures. The preacher also highlights the significance of Christ's sacrifice and how it has delivered and redeemed us. The sermon then shifts to the story of Abram leaving Egypt and God's promise to bless every family on the face of the earth through him, ultimately referring to Jesus. The preacher acknowledges the natural problem of Abram and his wife being barren, but emphasizes that God can work miracles even with seemingly impossible situations.

Transcript

Oh, look at my baby. Glad you're here, Gabriel. Genesis chapter 12.

Listen, we've been going through these early chapters of Genesis, and I'd like to read... Well, first, I'd like to read Genesis 12, 1 through 5. Excuse me. Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show you. And I'll make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

And I'll bless them that bless thee, and curse him that cursed thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran.

And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran. And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, into the land of Canaan, and they came. Cool.

Wow. I wonder what that is. The electric's going out.

All right. Well, we got to hurry then. Listen, everything in Genesis so far is like... Everything that happens is on a worldwide scale.

You got the fall. That's everybody in the world. Okay.

You got the flood. Everybody in the world is affected. You've got the Tower of Babel.

Once again, that's everyone in the world. And all of it ends in judgment. It always ends in a judgment from God.

The fall, the flood, and the Tower of Babel, everyone in the world comes under a judgment. There's three curses there. There's the curse that came in the Garden of Eden, that came on the whole earth because we fell.

There's a curse that happened in the flood. God said, I'm going to wipe out all flesh. And then there's this shattering curse, Genesis 10 and 11, the division of all nations and division of tongues.

This is a shattering, shattering thing. And all of a sudden, Genesis takes a turn from God dealing with everyone in the world at once to just one individual man, Abram. The Lord said to Abram, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto the land that I will show you.

And it said in Genesis 11, verse 27, these are the generations of Terah. Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity in Ur of the Chaldees.

And Abram and Nahor took them wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren.

She had no child. And Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son, Abram's wife. And they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan.

And they came unto Haran and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. So it goes from everyone in the world, and he focuses on the line of Shem, because that's where the seed of the woman would come through.

And then he narrows it down to Terah. That's Abram's father. And evidently, God had spoken to Abram to leave a place called Ur of the Chaldees, which we know of as Babylon, Iraq.

Leave. And they had left, but they didn't go to Canaan originally. They stopped in Haran.

They went halfway. And then Genesis 12 starts off with God resuming his word to Abram from Haran. Leave, he says.

What's it all mean? Well, the first thing is that Abram, and the significance of Abram is God's answer to what happened to Babel, okay? In Babel, they said, we want to make our name great. And they build this monument, and they start these false religions that were basically humanism. But God says to this one man, I will make your name great.

You don't make your own name great. God will make your name great. And then God said at the end of the Torah of Babel, I'm going to scatter all the nations on the face of the earth.

But God says to this man, Abram, I'm going to bless every family on the face of the earth through you. That's a huge promise, by the way. And God created the nations.

We talked about that last week, how the nations were formed, how God created them and divided their tongues. But from now on out, God will not deal directly with the nations anymore. God makes a brand new nation.

He creates a nation out of this one man. And that is going to be, that nation is going to be the repository of God's dealings. And that is part of the significance of Abram.

It's like a brand new way of dealing with people. A brand new start. He's going to make a new nation.

And of course, in Babel, you know, the men want to build a tower. Okay. And they create this new religion and this tower is a monument to themselves.

And they build the city. And we talked earlier in Genesis about city building. But the only thing that Abram ever builds is altars.

Everywhere he goes, we'll read about this. Abram builds altars. And he pitches his tent.

And we'll talk about that. See, man wants to build a city that from the ground up, that will exalt man. And the story of Abram, the significance of that story, is that God is going to build a brand new city.

But it's not from the ground up. It's not from this cursed earth on up to exalt man. It's from heaven down.

Hold your finger in Genesis. And look with me in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11. Yeah.

Praise the Lord. Amen. He likes this.

Hebrews 11. I want to talk about Abram briefly. I won't go long today because I don't know how long the power is going to stay around.

But thank you. Thank you, Jesus. Hebrews 11.

By faith, verse 8. By faith, Abram, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for inheritance, he obeyed. And he went out not knowing where he was going. Not knowing where he went.

By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with them of the same promise. Tabernacles are tents. For he looked for a city.

He looked for a city which had foundations whose builder and maker is God. You see, man always wants to build a city as a response to the curse. It's the city of man and man's exaltation.

Abram was looking for a different kind of city. A city made by God. Go back to the book of Genesis.

By faith, Abram went out. Abram is the answer to what happened at Babel. God is not going to deal with nations directly anymore.

Only through the new nation that he creates in Abram. In fact, that's what the name Abraham means. His original name is Abram so far.

He gets a name change. Abram means exalted father but Abraham means the father of many nations. Now, let me talk about this call of God on Abram.

Abram is so many things. He's the beginning of the new nation. He's the beginning of the new way God would deal with the world.

Abram also is the model of what it means to be a believer. Abram is the example of what it means to be a Christian believer. God's call to Abram first of all, there's always an exodus.

Abram is told, go out! Get away from everything familiar to you. He has to leave his father's house. He has to leave his land.

He has to leave his nation. He has to go out from Babylon. That's where he's from.

Abram is from Iraq. Southern Iraq. Babylon.

Did you know Abram was not a Christian when God called him? Abram was a moon worshipper. It's funny that the moon God features prominently in Genesis, and at the end of the world the moon God is back again. His name is Allah.

I'm not saying Abram was a Muslim, but Abram was an idolater. He was a moon worshipper, and so was his family. That's how far they'd fallen.

And God says, Abram, come out. So, the walk of faith and living for Christ, the new way, always starts with an exodus. You have to leave everything familiar to you.

Everything of this world. I mean, you think about it, this is a pattern all through the Bible. In Noah's Ark, they had to leave the world.

Okay. On Passover night, the Jews had to leave. He said, get your coat on, take your meal with your coat on, and get ready to leave because this is the Lord's Passover.

You always have to leave the world. Lot, we're going to read. Lot had to get out of Sodom and Gomorrah, or he's going to partake of the judgment.

And when God wanted to make a new nation, he calls this man, and he says, leave everything. Leave your father, and your father's land, and your kindred, and your nation, and come after me. And the book of Hebrews says, by faith, Abram left.

Only Hebrews doesn't go into the same details that Genesis goes into. At first, Abram's faith was partial. His obedience was partial.

He gathers his father, and his brother, and his children, or his brother's children, and Lot, and his whole... In other words, God says, leave your kindred, leave your family, leave everything familiar to you, and Abram gets his whole family, and then he leaves. And he doesn't go to the land that God showed him. He stopped it halfway in a place called Herod.

But then Genesis 12, God calls him again. See, there's a lot of people like that today, that their obedience to Christ is halfway. They don't really leave.

They don't totally leave everything. They don't do what God called them to do at first. But I'm glad that God is patient.

God is a loving and patient God. And so, at Herod, God comes to him again. And look what he says in verse 2. 1, 2, Get thee out of thy country, from thy kindred, from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show you.

I remember when I became a Christian. I never knew... I didn't know there was a born-again Christian. I didn't know there was a whole other church.

I thought it was just Catholic and Lutheran. My father said to me, Once a Catholic, always a Catholic. Just remember that.

You gotta leave all that. You gotta leave your family. Leave everything to follow Christ.

And Nabrum did that. But at first he only did it partially. It took a long time before these promises began to happen.

Part of the reason was because his obedience is only partial. He took his father. He took his kindred.

And it was only when his father died and then his brother died and then there was one more family member with him, Lot. And we read in Genesis 13 that there was a strife that arose and Lot's herdsmen fought with Abram's and there wasn't enough grass to graze them all. So Abram basically says to Lot, You take whatever you want.

You go one way, I'll go the other. And we'll depart in peace. And Lot looked out over the fields and saw green grassy plains and took them for himself.

Abram just said, You can have them. And it happened to be those plains were the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot chose it.

Abram got the rest. And only when finally Abram had truly left everything did it start to happen for him. You've got to have an exodus.

And it's death that actually separates us from the world. Well let me go down to this promise that comes with it. Not only is it a command but it's a promise.

Verse 2. I will make of you a great nation and I'll bless you and make your name great and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse him that curseth thee. And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Okay it's right at the beginning of the Bible but we see this right at the end of the world. This promise is so significant. I will make of you a great nation.

Abram has been made into a great nation in three senses. Number one totally physically. The Jews and Arabs are the children of Abram.

Many of the Bedouins, Arabs, many of the Muslim peoples, they are the direct physical offspring of Abram. God has made Abram of great nations. More than one nation.

And also physically and spiritually. There's something spiritual about the Jews as we'll see when we look at the life of Abram. There's something special about them.

Something spiritual about them even though they're backslidden. They're significant in the plan of God. And at the end of the world they become hugely significant.

The whole world goes into war over them. And then the spiritual nation. Listen.

Everyone that believes in Christ is part of the new nation that God has built. We are a holy nation, a holy people, a kingdom of priests. God has fulfilled his promise.

I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you. And Abram's been blessed in every way that you can imagine.

I will make your name great and the name of Abram is great. Jews, Christians, and Muslims all venerate Abram's name. And look at this other blessing here.

You will be a blessing. You will be a blessing. Abram was not only blessed, but his call was to be a blessing.

Now, even secularly speaking, you think of what the Jews have contributed to this world. If you got a list of Nobel Prize recipients and Peace Prize recipients and inventors and explorers, I mean, the Jews are just a tiny sliver of the world's population, but they have contributed so overwhelmingly. I mean, just out of all proportion to everyone else in the world.

Why? God said, I will make you a blessing. I will make of you a blessing. And then verse 3. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse at thee.

If you remember back in Genesis 4, one of Cain's sons said, whoever hurts me, I'm going to get back at them seven times as much. Sevenfold revenge. He's just blowing hard, though.

It's just bravado, humanistic bravado. But God gives Abram the real thing of what this guy only boasted of. I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you.

Notice the contrast. This is two-sided. It's blessing and cursing.

Now, I haven't seen it in a long time, but when I was first saved, I read a tract called, Support Your Local Jew. Chick made it, I think. And he just went down through history.

Whoever they were, they were the greatest nations of the world. Egypt was the greatest nation in its time. It was the most advanced civilization of all time.

But they oppressed the Jews, and they went down, and now they're just a relic. Soviet Union, Hitler, I mean, you could... Great Britain is the big example in modern times. The sun never set on the British Empire until they betrayed the Jews around the time of World War I. Then the sun did set on the British Empire, and now they're a laughingstock and a humiliation.

It actually brings tears to my eyes. But I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you. I fear for our nation because of what Bush and Rice have been trying to do to Israel, forcing them to give up half of Jerusalem, forcing them to give up the so-called West Bank.

God said in the beginning, I will bless those that bless you. I believe one of the reasons America was so blessed is because of their reception and treatment of the Jewish people. I will curse him that curses thee.

And then the last of the promises. Now see, listen guys, this is huge really, because the whole Bible assumes all this, and much of the theology of the New Testament is based on this. God gives a man promise.

He says, in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Now, you think about that promise. I promise you that through you, everyone on earth is going to be blessed, basically.

Wow. Part of this is really heartening because the last chapter, God scattered every family on the earth. God judged every family on the earth.

But now God speaks in blessing. Through you, Abram, I'll bless every family on the face of the earth. That's powerful.

What's he actually talking about? He's actually talking about Jesus. God preached the gospel to Abram. God told Abram about Jesus.

One of his seed. Now, there's a problem though with this. A natural problem.

Abram is in his 70s. His wife is 10 years younger than he. And it's already a well established fact that she's barren.

She can't have children. Now you just think about this for a minute. When God wants to make a brand new nation, he doesn't get a 20-year-old guy and his 20-year-old wife and say, now there's someone I can work with.

He takes someone that's already used up and totally proven to be barren and he says, now there's someone I can work with. It's the ways of God. In our weakness, his power is perfect, right? It says that Abram believed him, as we'll read.

Well, you can see in verse 4, Abram believed him. Why? How do we know Abram believed God? Because Abram departed as the Lord spoke to him. And Lot went with him.

Well, the belief was partial. He wasn't totally separate. Lot went with him.

And Abram was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarah his wife and Lot his brother's son and all their substance that they had gathered and the souls that they'd gotten in Haran. And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan.

And into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

God says, go into this land. I'm going to give it to you. But the whole time he's there, it's not his.

It's going to be given to him. And Abram in obedience goes. He leaves everything familiar to him.

He leaves all his idols and the idol worshipers. He leaves his nation and his kindred. And he sets out into this land.

And when they come into the land of Canaan, the place where God had said Canaan would be cursed, Abram enters into the land. The first place he comes is a place called Shechem. And the word Shechem means shoulder, and it speaks of strength.

He comes to the place of strength in the land that God had promised him, even though the land wasn't his. He couldn't have it then, but God said, I've given it to you. Now, listen.

Abram is a lot like Christians today. I'm going to heaven. I've been promised that, but it hasn't happened yet.

Okay. I'm in between. I'm no longer part of the world.

I left the world, but I'm not actually where I'm supposed to be. I'm walking through this land as a pilgrim. And when he got to the land of Shechem, it says that he came to a place called Moreh, which is a place the word Moreh means teaching.

Moreh El Ministries, Jacob's Ministries, a Hebrew word for teaching. God is my teacher. Moreh means teaching.

And in the promised land, he goes to the place of strength, and he comes under the plane of teaching, and it says that the Canaanite was then in the land. So right in the presence of the enemies, right in the presence of the cursed, right in the presence of the doomed civilization, Abram comes. And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.

And there he built an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he moved there unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Ai, Hai, on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord, and called on the name of the Lord.

You see, he's always got to move on. He's a pilgrim. He's got to move on.

He can't make his home in this world. That's why it says that the only thing he builds, as far as something lasting, is an altar. The only thing he builds is an altar.

The only thing that will last is your spiritual life. But what does he live in? A tent. Our life here in this world is temporary.

We're on the move. We are pilgrims, and all we do is pitch our tent. He comes to a place called Bethel, which means the house of God.

And he doesn't pitch there, and he doesn't pitch in the other place, on the other side, called Ai, which means a ruin. He pitches his tent right between the house of God and the ruin. Okay.

What's the spiritual meaning of that? That's the position of us Christians. We're pilgrims. We're moving according to the promise of God.

But we're right between the house of God and the ruin, which is our flesh, our fallen nature. Alright? I'm between. As I say constantly, I'm a man between two worlds.

I've been born again, and some part of me belongs to the house of God. I'm going to heaven. I've got eternal life.

I've got righteousness on the inside. I've got the truth. I'm born again.

And so part of me so resonates with the house of God. But I'm coming out of a ruin. My flesh.

My fallen nature. And it says, he pitches his tent between the two. And Abram journeyed, verse 9, going on still toward the south.

He gets far south. And there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was grievous in the land. It came to pass when he's come near to enter into Egypt.

This is the first mention of Egypt in the Bible. Then he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now I know that you're a fair woman to look on. Therefore it shall come to pass when the Egyptians shall see thee that they shall say, This is his wife and they'll kill me, but they'll save you alive.

Say I pray thee that you're my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee. It came to pass that when Abram was coming to Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princess also of Pharaoh saw her and commended her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

And he entreated Abram well for her sake. And he had sheep and oxen and he asses and men servants and maid servants and she asses and camels. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that you've done unto me? Why didn't you tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say she's my sister? So I might have taken her to me, the wife. Now therefore behold thy wife. Take her and go thy way.

And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away and his wife and all that he had. If Abram's the type of believer then this is the type of what every believer has to go through is some kind of trials in this world. The first part of the trial is that he goes into the promised land and he's looking around.

He goes to the place of strength. He goes to the place of teaching. He goes to the place between the house of God and the flesh.

But then a famine comes. A famine comes. You see, God is going to try your faith.

The trial is not what ruins a person. No trial of faith ruins a person. Every person in here, young person, old person, teenager, whatever you are.

You're fake. What you say, you believe, will be put to the test. And it's never the test that wipes you out.

Because all the test can do is show you where you're at. Now God knows where you're at and God knows where I'm at. That's never the problem.

God already knows. So God doesn't test us so He can find out. But God will allow tests in our life so that you can see where you're at.

And the question is, what do you do when there's a famine? Now, the first mention of Egypt in the Bible is right here. And usually whenever something's mentioned first, Genesis is the book that just sets the tone for the whole Bible. First mention gives you the symbolic meaning.

Okay? There's a famine in the promised land, so Abram goes down to Egypt. Now, Egypt will always be a menace, basically, to the believer. Because what it represents is, Egypt represents reliance on the world.

The pleasures of the world, the abilities of the world, reliance on the world. Hold your finger at Genesis and look at the scripture we read, Family Devotion, a couple weeks ago. Isaiah 31 1 really spoke to me.

Isaiah 31 1. Egypt represents reliance on the world. When the famine came, Abram leaves the promised land that God sent him to. He leaves the place where God sent him and goes down to the world.

It says in Isaiah 31 1, Woe to those that go down to Egypt for help and stay. That means rely. Rely on horses and trust in chariots because there are many.

And in horsemen, because they're very strong. But they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord. Okay.

Everywhere else, Abram builds a tent, puts his tent and builds an altar. But there's no mention of that here. This has nothing to do with the will of God or seeking the Lord, because God did not even come into his thoughts here.

Immediately when the famine hit, time to go down to Egypt, because you know that they have food stored up. Egypt was the most modern place on earth. It was the most advanced and civilized.

It says in Isaiah 31 1, Woe to those that go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses and trust in chariots. Don't we sing a song? Some trust in chariots and some in horses. But we remember the name of the Lord our God.

That means that we don't rely on the flesh. We don't put all our confidence in the world. Our faith is in God.

But he says they are very strong, and a horseman, because they're very strong. But they don't look to the Holy One of Israel. They don't seek the Lord.

Now look at Isaiah 30, verse 1. He calls it rebellion. Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord. They take counsel, but not of me.

They cover with the covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin. They walk to go down into Egypt and have not asked of my mouth to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Go back to the book of Genesis.

Abram slips in his faith. This is the time he didn't build an altar or pitch a tent. See, the world always wants to build a city, but people like Abram always have to pitch a tent.

Why? What's the difference between a city and a tent? You build a city because you think you're going to be there for a long time, so you want to make life as comfortable as possible in the city. But the people that pitch a tent know, I'm going to have to strike this tent pretty soon and move on somewhere else. Why? Because I'm a pilgrim.

I'm a pilgrim following. I'm not a settled inhabitant. It says in Hebrews, Abram looked for a city whose builder and maker was God.

He was part of something else. But Egypt is the epitome of the settled life. What happens in Egypt? He runs into a different morality than the one that he's been trained in since he came to God.

He knows what it's like there. His wife is beautiful. By the way, Abram's 75, but his wife is so beautiful the Egyptians want her.

This is the blessing of the Lord. His wife is beautiful and it scares him so even before he gets into Egypt, he says, listen, I'm afraid they're going to kill me and take you because you're so beautiful. So what I want you to do is tell them that you're my sister, not my wife.

This too is the very thing Isaiah was talking about. You rationalize. You make something up.

It's half true in a sense. It's half true, but not really true. It could be justified.

It could be rationalized that his wife was a sister. My wife's my sister in Christ. It's a half truth, but it's a lie because he's trying to deceive the Egyptians and he won't tell them that she's his wife.

So he tells her, say I pray thee, verse 13, that you are my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake and my soul shall live because of thee. It came to pass when Abram was coming to Egypt, the Egyptians behold the woman that she was very fair. The princess also of Pharaoh saw her and commended her before Pharaoh and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

Now let me talk about the big picture that I don't think Abram got here. God promised Abram that through him and his wife, Jesus would come. So this is spiritual.

This is Egypt trying to get in there. What if Pharaoh would have married her? What if Pharaoh would have gone into her? This was a direct attack on the seed of the woman that Genesis 3, 15 talked about. The seed of the woman shall come and shall bruise his head, but he shall bruise his heel.

That seed could be tracked right down to Shem, right down to Terah, right down to Abram and Sarah. And now the king of Egypt, which is the type of the devil, has the seed of the woman. He has a woman and he's about ready to go into her.

This is how serious this is. And it says that that Pharaoh loaded Abram down with wealth. And then verse 17 the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarah, Abram's wife.

That night Pharaoh's house was extremely plagued. And Pharaoh found out why. You've got a prophet's wife.

Pharaoh hadn't touched her. God preserved her. Abram didn't preserve her, but God did.

And so Pharaoh calls Abram in verse 18. See, this is something every believer probably goes through at one time or another, but it always hurts. It's one thing to be rebuked by believers.

Let the righteous smite me. Let the preacher expose my sins or whatever. But when you get rebuked by the world and you know that they're right, you know that God's in that rebuke.

Okay. Peter says something about Sarah one time. He said wives be like Sarah.

She wasn't afraid with any amazement. She submitted to her husband. She wasn't afraid.

So even when Abram gave her away basically. She trusted God is what Peter says. She trusted God and was not afraid with any amazement.

Well listen, when God corrected Abram, God corrected Abram in a way Sarah never could correct Abram. God rebuked Abram through the Pharaoh. Pharaoh said, why have you done this? Are you trying to make me into an adulterer? Why didn't you tell me the truth? Pharaoh's plagued.

Why did you say she's my sister? I might have taken her to meet a wife. Now therefore behold thy wife. Take her and go thy way.

Verse 19. I might have taken her as a wife. It's a routine thing for a Pharaoh.

See a beautiful woman? Take her. God protected the seed. The seed of a woman that would crush the serpent's head.

And then I want you to know something else too. Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him and they sent him away and his wife and all that he had. It's like an exodus.

The plague comes on Egypt and Abram and his children and his family and his wife they plunder Egypt in a sense and then they come out. Abram's a prophet so he prefigures what's going to happen to Israel. Now I'm not going to take too much more in the next chapter but I want you to look at the first four verses.

And Abram went up out of Egypt he and his wife and all that he had and lot with him into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle and in silver and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning between Bethel and Ai.

Unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord. What are these first four verses teaching us? That when Abram suffered the consequences of sin and unbelief the call is go back between Bethel and Ai.

Go back to the uncomfortable place. Go back and do the things you did at first. Listen.

I am a man between two worlds. You are people between two worlds. We're right between the very house of God that we long to go and be a part of and the ruin of our flesh.

And I get tired of the flesh. I get tired of the ruin. I could get tired of being a pilgrim.

I could maybe want to settle into this world and make it more comfortable. But when Abram paid the price basically for his unbelief and sin it says in Genesis 13 that he goes right back between there. And what does he do? He goes right back to the altar of God.

He goes back to the right priorities. An altar is a permanent thing. It's made out of stone.

You're not going to pack that up and move it with you. That's permanent. A tent is temporary.

Wind might blow it down. A tent can be struck and restruck anywhere. Look at Abram's priorities.

What was permanent in his life? His spirituality. That's what was permanent and immovable. Everything else, his whole concept is I'm a pilgrim.

I'm in a tent by fate. Go to Hebrews 11 and we'll close. See God's in Abram, the meaning of Abram.

I've often wondered what is the meaning? What's behind it? The meaning of Abram, it can only be understood in the light of the first 11 chapters of Genesis. Abram is the answer to the Tower of Babel. Will God scatter all the families of the face of the earth and divide them? Yes, but God loves them and God will bless every family on the face of the earth through this new nation.

Will God divide the nations? Will God deal directly with the nations anymore? No, no more. Only through the new nation. The way God deals with all the nations of the earth is not through the nations, only through the new nation that God formed.

And when God wants to build a nation, He doesn't do it the way we would. No young Adam and Eve, or no young virile couple. Old barren guy and his wife, long past childbearing year.

God says, now there's someone I can work with. When God wants to make a believer He doesn't get a perfectly righteous man. What does He work with, with believers? Sinners.

Amen? When God wants to build a church, He doesn't call Madison Avenue or the advertising execs. What does He use? The worthless, the lowly. God says in Corinthians, I don't choose the wise or the exalted of this world.

Don't flatter yourself. He says, God chose the nothings to bring to nothing the things that are. You see what I'm saying? That way He gets all the glory.

But what is the call of God? Always involves an exodus. You've got to leave the world. You've got to come out.

God says to Abram, come out from all that idolatry. Come out from all that man glorifying humanism. Come out from that moon worship.

Come out from Babylon, the so-called great. Come out into a land that I'll show you. You've got to come out.

If you won't be separate, see it slows it down. Abram packs up his whole family and goes out to half obedience. And then he has to wait until his father dies.

And his brother dies. And Lot can't stay with him anymore because of the flesh. And only through these deaths, only through death, only through crucifixion are we separated from this world.

Finally, Lot gets so mad at Abram that Lot chooses for himself the best pasture land. And Abram is left with nothing except God. Then God speaks to him.

Then it can commence. And what kind of call is it? It's a call to be a pilgrim. What's more permanent? Your house or your spirituality? The only thing Abram ever built.

You know, the men of this world, they built the Tower of Babel and they built a city. And they had a building project and they cranked out bricks. And they didn't just mess around with mortar.

They used oil for mortar. Tar. It was all about this world.

But the only thing Abram and his children built is an altar. It's prayer. It's a constant reference to his utter dependence on God.

A constant reference to his sinfulness and the need for a sacrifice. It's like Abel again, with tears streaming down his face and blood running through his fingers. He puts a sacrifice on the altar and burns it with fire, thus saying to God, I am a sinner and I deserve to die, but I believe in the substitute.

That's what was permanent in Abram's life. The tent? He pitched it. He pitched it here and he pitched it there.

He pitched it here and he pitched it there. Why? Because he's saying, I'm a pilgrim. I'm looking for a city.

Hebrews chapter 11. He looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. He says in verse 8, by faith, Abram, when he's called to go out into a place where he should receive for an inheritance, obeyed.

And he went out not knowing where he went. The trials will happen too. What do you do when there's a famine in the promised land? You go down to Egypt? Can the Lord set a table in the wilderness? Someone asked him one time.

I'll tell you what, Egypt's always got a table set. Egypt has a lot of comforts and pleasures. But Egypt is under God's very judgment.

Egypt is doomed. And so when Abram goes down into Egypt and then he's going to be coy. I can go into Egypt, but I won't get touched by Egypt.

By the time that episode's done, he's given away his wife. Can you be in Egypt and not be touched by Egypt? Can you play with Egypt and not have to submit to the morals of Egypt? Abram gives away his wife, the unthinkable thing. Only thing that preserved her is that God would preserve the seed of the woman who would come and crush the serpent's head.

Jesus had a lot of people in his family tree, but Pharaoh wasn't one of them. Pharaoh was a type of the devil. You can't go down there and just oh, one little deception.

It starts with one little deception, one little lie. By the time it's done, man, he sits there and receives rewards and payments for his wife. And can you slide out? No, first Pharaoh has to rebuke him.

But even that becomes a prophecy of what would happen to the seed of Abraham 400 years later in the Exodus. The plagues will come on Pharaoh. It's even a prophecy of what will happen in the book of Revelation.

The plagues will come on the God of this world. The judgment's coming, and all the Abrahams in this world are going to make an Exodus out of it. Even the raptures in Exodus.

And then it ends. He goes back to where it was uncomfortable, but that's where he belonged. Right between the house of God and the ruin.

Right between the holy city that we're headed for and the flesh. Why do I have to be a man between two worlds? I want to go to heaven, and I want to be done with sin, but in the meantime I can see the ruin. It's right there in my sight.

I can see the house of God. It's right there in my sight, and I'm right in the middle. Between the two.

And my faith is going to be tested. Well, what do the tests do? Do the tests ruin you? No, the tests show you what's in you that would ruin you. Unbelief, compromise, whatever.

All they do is bring it out. But then it ends, though. It ends with him going back and doing the things he did at first.

It said he went back between Bethlehem and pitched his tent again and built an altar. It says in verse 9 of this chapter, by faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob. There's with him the same promise.

They all were pilgrims. They all lived in tents. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, is the opposite of the tower of Babel.

It's not a city built from the cursed ground up, exalting man. It's not Babylon the great. It's a city that comes from heaven itself down to us.

Abram looked for the city and it says there that they were looking for a country. Verse 13 and 15 and then we'll close. These all died in faith.

Abram died in faith. Sarah died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Is that your confession? That I'm a stranger.

I'm an alien. A stranger means a foreigner. I don't really belong here.

These aren't my values and this isn't my place. This is not where I can be at home. I won't build a home here.

I only pitch a tent. I'm moving through. Truly if they'd been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

One thing about Abram, when God said get ye out of your country, he didn't leave half of his wealth back there. Hey, if anything goes wrong, I got this back here. I'm going back.

No. He packed it all up and moved. They weren't thinking about the country they came from.

They're thinking about where they're going. But now they desire a better country. That is a heavenly.

Wherefore God's not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city. Father, in the name of Jesus, let us learn the faith of Abram. Let us live out the promises, O Lord, to Abram and to all his seed.

Let us confess with him that we're pilgrims. Let us learn the meaning of the altar and the tent, O Lord. What's really permanent in our life and what's not? What's really important and what isn't? O God, lead us out of temptation and testing, O Lord.

Let us not think that we can be all right just trucking with Egypt even for a little bit, Lord. It makes us do things we'd never dream we'd do. It takes us places we'd never dream we'd go.

Abram never dreamed he'd give away his wife, Lord, or sell her even. But that's what he did when he went down to Egypt, Lord. Let us believe in you, Lord.

Let our young people believe in you. Let them not see Egypt as some great place, Lord. Strip away the covers and let them see it for what it is.

Let them see Pharaoh for what he is, Lord. Let them see the pleasures of Egypt for what it is. Let them see the bondage, Lord.

The bondage that we celebrated this morning being delivered from, Lord. For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. The body and the blood, O Lord.

You have delivered and redeemed us, Lord. And out of Egypt do you call your Son, Lord. And Lord, above all, let us go back to the beginning, Lord.

Right between Bethel and I. Right between the house of God and the ruin. That's where you've called us to be. You've called us to be pilgrims and to believe in you and to totally rely on you, Lord.

And not to resort to the flesh or to the Egypt, O Lord, or to Babylon, O God. Right between Bethel and I, Lord. Let us erect these altars and pitch our tents.

We ask in Jesus' name. And everybody said, God bless you all.

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