

# Going Out and Keeping Out

by Horatius Bonar

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*Abram's call is a demonstration of God's electing grace and divine sovereignty, and a model for the church today of trusting in His sovereignty and guidance.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1

**Topics:** "Obedience", "Faith in God's Promises"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes God's call to Abram to leave his homeland and family, illustrating the sovereign and authoritative nature of God's command. He highlights Abram's immediate obedience, showcasing a profound trust in God's promises despite the uncertainty of the destination. Bonar draws parallels between Abram's call and the Christian's call to separate from worldly ties and follow Christ, urging believers to heed God's voice and step out in faith. The sermon underscores the blessings that come from obedience and the importance of trusting in God's unchanging promises. Ultimately, Bonar encourages the congregation to embrace their own call to come out from the world and follow God wholeheartedly.

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## Transcript

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all 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 and five years old when he departed out of Haran." --Genesis 12:1-4

THUS begins the story of Israel's calling, as a nation. Like the great rivers of earth, it has a small beginning,--one individual; a Chaldee of Ur; an idolater of Mesopotamia; with no recommendation or worthiness; a genuine specimen of God's electing grace, and of divine sovereignty, as well as of the power of the Holy Ghost.

So far as appears, God had not personally interposed, from Noah's time to this. The only kind of interposition was that at Babel. Now he comes forth out of His silence and darkness. He speaks; nay, He appears; He, as the God of glory, or "God of the glory" (Acts 7:2). The shekinah re-appears; and out of it God speaks to Abram. The frequent use of the words "the Lord appeared to Abram," in connection with Stephen's reference to the glory, intimates this mode of revelation.

I. The command. It is sovereign and authoritative; it is explicit and uncompromising; it does not wait on our will or choice; it leaves no room for hesitation on our part. "Get thee out" are Jehovah's words to Abram. They refer to one single transaction, about which there can be no mistake; and lest there should be any mistake, the three things to be left are specified, country, kindred, father's house. The getting out is to be complete and decided. It is also to be immediate; no waiting, nor lingering, nor preparing; get out at once. This command is all the more peremptory from its not specifying the place to be gone to. With that he was not to concern himself. The terminus a quo was quite explicit; not so the terminus ad quem. The latter was of little moment in the mean time. It would come to light by and by. It was on the bare command of Jehovah that he was to act; putting himself blindfold into the hands of God. All that Abram was to know of his route or destination was this, "It is the land which I will shew thee." Thus completely was he shut in and shut up to obedience.

II. The promise. It is as directly from God as the command is; so that he can no more doubt the one than the other. It relates wholly to the future,--much of it to the future of far ages. Yet it is a very explicit and blessed promise, for the fulfilment of which he had the divine truthfulness and unchangeableness. "God who cannot lie;" who "does not repent,"--this is the God both of the command and the promise. He gives both; let us accept both; not separating the one from the other. In this promise God comes forth strikingly as the doer of the whole; "I will shew;" "I will make;" "I will bless."

All is of the Lord and of none else, (1.) A land,--though unknown; (2.) numbers; (3.) blessing; (4.) honour; (5.) fountain of blessing; (6.) the occasion of blessing or cursing; (7.) the blessedness of the whole earth in him. Large promises these! Glorious blessings! Including all that Abram needed for eternity as well as time. This gives a vision of Messiah and his glory, as well as of all earth under Him; for Abram is to be "heir of the world" (Romans 4:11).

III. The obedience. "He departed as the Lord had spoken to him." "He obeyed," says the apostle (Hebrews 11:8). God called, he complied. He did not argue, nor linger, nor hesitate, nor look back. He set out at once. He knew not where he was going; not a step of the way or anything of the land. He had no earthly counsellor or guide. Only the God of the glory,--Jehovah in His shekinah, He went before him, as in the pillar-cloud. Everything connected with this obedience was supernatural and divine. Jehovah broke his earthly ties; enabled him to triumph over earthly affections; made his face like a flint against all opposition; took him by the hand and led him out. Here we have obedience in its simplest, purest form,--believing, trusting obedience. "God has spoken," that is his answer to all suggestions from without or within. "God has spoken," that cheers and gladdens him. He could not mistake the voice,--either its meaning or the quarter from which it came. That was enough for him. We need not ask particularly, was this the time of his conversion? Probably it was. It was the day of God's power to him. It was what Christ's words were to the sons of Zebedee, or to Zaccheus. God spoke, and the Holy Spirit carried the message to the inner man. He was turned from dumb idols to serve the living God; he became heir of the righteousness which is of faith; he became Messiah's ancestor, yet a trophy of Messiah's power.

There are some striking texts in subsequent scriptures which derive much light and point from this scene. They are the following :

(1.) Psalm 45:10, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." God thus speaks to His chosen ones; the bride of Christ. Thus he speaks aloud to an unheeding world." Hear, and your soul shall live." Oh, listen now,--turn your back on the world; your face to Jesus!

(2.) Matthew 16:25, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Christ's command is as explicit as that to Abram. "Come after me,"--come at once. Come now! Deny self and come! Deny self and take up your cross! Whatever hinders, come!

(3.) 2 Corinthians 6:17, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Here the words are remarkably like those addressed to Abram. The command is, therefore, come out; be separate; touch not; the promise is like unto it, "I will receive you;" "I will be a father;" "Ye shall be my children." God speaks to us, and says, "Come out."

(4.) Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people." In one aspect this is the likeliest to Abram's call, for it is a call out of Babylon. It suits these last days well. Come out of Babylon! Come out of every false church; every city of idols; every refuge of lies! Come out! Say not, I will stay, but worship the true God inside! No. Come out! This is God's command!

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