

Abraham, My Friend: 07 Back on the Flight Path

by Ron Bailey

The sermon explores Abraham's journey of faith, emphasizing God's call, obedience, and the blessings that follow a second chance.

Duration: 12:01

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Genesis 12:4, Jonah 2:7, Jonah 3:1, Matthew 6:33, Luke 15:17, Acts 17:30

Topics: "Abraham"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the 'Gospel of the Second Chance' using the story of Jonah and Abraham from the Bible. He emphasizes that God is a God of grace and forgiveness, always ready to give a second chance to those who have made mistakes. The speaker encourages listeners who may feel like they have 'blown it' to remember that the Bible is full of examples of prodigals who have turned their lives around. He concludes by reminding listeners that God can do great things with ordinary people, and encourages them to embrace their own potential for a fresh start.

Transcript

Well, hello again. You're listening to a Bible Base podcast, and I'm your host, Ron Bailey. These 60 or so meditations on the life of Abraham were first published on the Sermonindex.net website, where you can still find the original text versions.

The aim of the series is to discover the way in which Abraham became a praying man and a friend of God. Number seven, back on the flight path. It's time now to examine the blessing.

So far, we have identified Abraham as an ordinary man who became an extraordinary man. He was born into no special family and had no special advantages, but he's a man with an amazing destiny. My purpose in making such a leisurely start has been to emphasize that in choosing Abraham, God did not choose a star or a man with all the right qualifications.

What God has done once, he can do again. And what he has done with one, he can do with another. Why not you? And why not now? Let's see if we can reconstruct the events of the blessing.

We have two accounts, and we shall see if we can combine them to discover the original scenario. One of the questions we must answer is, was there one call or two? Where was Abraham living when God

pronounced this blessing? Was it in Ur of the Chaldees, or 600 miles to the northwest in Haran? In Acts chapter 7, Stephen tells us plainly that it was in Ur that God appeared to Abraham. And he said, Brethren, fathers, listen.

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, Get out of your country and from your relatives and come to a land that I will show you. Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran, and from there, when his father was dead, he moved him to this land in which you now dwell. A careful examination of Stephen's words will show that this is not the promise of blessing that we find in Genesis 12, but a series of separate commands, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and come into the land which I shall show thee.

It links very neatly with the letter to Hebrews, wherein some older visions and all important truth is almost lost by the position of a verb. The original word order is captured much better in the New King James Version. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called.

The first word to Abraham was not the promise of a blessing, but a command to obey. Faith is necessary for such obedience. This was not a conditional promise, it was a non-conditional command, and Abraham obeyed.

So two pilgrims in our own age must bow the knee to become heirs of the promise. Truly these times of ignorance, said Paul in Acts 17, God has overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent. God's first word to us is a command, not a promise, and the phrase all men everywhere doesn't leave as many escape clauses.

I suspect that the best known translations of Genesis 12 and verse 1 have based their translation on evidence gathered from Acts 7, and have now the Lord had said. This had said pushes the next verses back to Ur, but there's no real reason to have translated it like this. It simply says, as in the American Standard Version, Now Jehovah said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house to the land that I will show thee.

Abraham was seventy and five years old, it goes on to say, when he left Haran. When did God say this? Well, the end of this section has the location, has Haran. In other words, this is a second encounter.

The first was a revelation of God in Ur of the Chaldees with a command. The second is a word which comes to Abraham years later, and one which adds a series of blessings to the original series of commandments. The first half of the message is a repeat of the original.

The second part is just full of blessing. If this scenario is true, we can construct an interesting history for Abraham. Abraham's departure from Ur was so important because it was triggered by the circumstances of his father's migration and by a clear word of command from God who appeared to him.

Tira, Abraham's father, was heading for Canaan. Abraham had no idea where he was going, but went anyway. When the clan arrived at Haran, they settled down.

Later, Haran is referred to as the city of Nahor in Genesis 24 and verse 10. That branch of the family had found all they wanted in Haran and saw no need to further their journey. Tira, Abraham's father, died there.

The story could well have died there too, except that Abraham had a second encounter with God who reminded him of the original command and added that series of amazing blessings. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you and will curse him who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Genesis chapter 12, verse 2, following. This is enough for Abraham.

He loads up and moves on, leaving Haran behind. The truth that excites me in this account is what we might call the gospel of the second chance. Now, I know that evangelicals get very worried about that kind of language, but what I mean is simply the truth captured in Jonah chapter 3. Jonah had blown it.

He was the prodigal prophet. The consequence had been ejection into the storm and finally a place in the stomach of a great fish. When you've blown it, do you ever feel down in the mouth? No one was ever so down in the mouth as Jonah.

But what a prayer. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Jehovah, and my prayer went up to you, says Jonah chapter 2 and verse 7. The prodigal son in Luke's gospel came to himself. The prodigal prophet remembered Jehovah.

In Jonah chapter 3, the story just flows on without a break, and the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time saying, Oh, hallelujah. This is the God of all grace who comes the second time. It's a lovely old hymn that says, Great God of wonders, all thy ways display the attributes divine, but countless acts of pardoning grace beyond thine other wonders shine.

Who is a pardoning God like thee? Or who has grace so rich and free? Perhaps someone who listens to this feels that they have blown it. Prodigals. The Bible is full of prodigals.

Prodigal sons, prodigal kings, prodigal wives, prodigal prophets, prodigal apostles. Men and women who started well, they began with such courage, but somehow they found themselves in Haran, and the vision is dimmed. You were running well, said Paul to the churches in Galatia, who hindered you.

Is it too late now? Not while we have a God who is ready to speak the second time, and with such grace, adding to what he has already said. And he said to him again a second time, Sinas, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me? He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said to him, tend my sheep.

So in our story, Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him, Genesis 12 and verse 4. So here he is, back on the flight path. A fresh start with even greater possibilities. My old Bible school principal used to say, can the bird with the broken wing ever fly as high again? And then he would pause, smile and say, no, higher.

If you would like to find out more about Bible Base, do come and join us on www.biblebase.com. We look forward to seeing you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14711.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ron-bailey/abraham-my-friend-07-back-on-the-flight-path/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net