

# BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

## Learning from Those Who Walked Before Us

### WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ABRAHAM?

Genesis 12:1-9; Hebrews 11:8

INTRODUCTION: The last two weeks we have looked at two men who lived during very exciting but trying times, Enoch and Noah.

Today we look at a man whose name is very familiar, Abraham, yet I suspect there is still much about Abraham's life you may not know. One reason I think this is that there is just so much about his life that God has chosen to preserve in His Word for us.

Abraham is mentioned in 217 verses of the Scriptures, more than 4 times as many as Noah. That means that there is a lot of instruction the Lord desires for us to receive as we look at the life of Abraham.

First, let's do a quick transition from Noah and the Ark to the beginning of Abraham's life.

The ark landed on Mt. Ararat and God told Noah and his sons and their wives to multiply and fill the earth. For the next 100 years, they obeyed that command and migrated to the southeast of the Mountains of Ararat, and then turned back to the west where they found a very fertile area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers called the Plain of Shinar.

Living in the plain of Shinar, the great grandson of Noah, the grandson of Ham, whose name was Nimrod, came of age and became a strong leader among the people, in fact he was called the King of Shinar. Sadly, Nimrod was not a godly man, and he led his kinfolks, who probably numbered around a million by now, to build the first city after the worldwide flood, purposefully defying God's commandment to fill the earth.

**Genesis 11:4 NKJV And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."**

Well, I hope you know the story. As they built the city, they built a tower, probably a ziggurat, which was a tower whose intent was to worship other gods.

God confused their language, so in an instant they went from all speaking the same language, probably Hebrew, to each family speaking a different language. To mark this historic event, they named the city they had been building Babel. Later its name would be expanded to Babylon.

Thus the families separated from each other and began to migrate to settle in lands near and far. This map shows where the Bible says different families, all descendants of Japheth, Ham, and Shem, originally settled, and the people groups that developed from them.

As any good geneticist knows, when you isolate a portion of a species gene pool, and allow them to interbreed, certain characteristics begin to become dominant among that portion of the species. Thus the different colors of skin and ethnic characteristics among human beings began to develop.

Folks, this reminds us, that every human being is related. We all come from both Adam and Eve but also from Mr. and Mrs. Noah. This is the very foundation of racial peace and harmony. We are all one family!

So the descendants of Shem, migrated throughout what we would call the mid-east today. Two hundred and fifty years after the dispersal of the people at Babel, Abraham was born in the city of Ur.

And there the story of this man begins whose life brings so many words of both encouragement and challenge from the Lord to each of us, that he becomes one of the best known people mentioned in Holy Scripture.

So, **WHAT ABOUT THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM SPEAKS TO OUR LIVES?**

First, Abraham's story tells us something very important about God Himself.

**GOD DESIRED TO OFFER SALVATION TO EVERY PERSON ON THE EARTH.**

Genesis 12:1–3 NKJV

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.

2 I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

I want to start at the end of God's words to Abraham as we see God's purpose in His calling on Abraham's life. (1927 BC)

How did God intend to bless every family of the earth through the life of Abraham?

I suspect Abraham wondered that. But we do not have to wonder. We can see in hindsight, and we have the benefit of being informed by God's Word.

- **God already had a plan to overcome sin and banish death.**
  - After Satan had deceived Eve and both Eve and Adam had sinned against God, God said to the evil one,

Genesis 3:15 NKJV And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; **He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.**"

- As sin began to rapidly multiply during his lifetime, the prophet Enoch declared the coming of the day God would bring judgment on the rebellion against Him.

Jude 14–15 NKJV Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "**Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, ....**"

- In fact, **Paul says that God's promise to bless all the families of the earth was the gospel.** In other words, when God talked about this blessing, it was the gospel that He had in mind.

Galatians 3:8 NKJV And the Scripture, foreseeing that **God** would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."**

- **Jesus, the descendant of Abraham through Mary, was the fulfillment of this promise.**
- **Jesus died for the sins of every person who ever lived or will live.**

1 John 2:2 NKJV And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Propitiation – atonement, the way to forgiveness.

- **Jesus offers salvation to all.**

John 3:16 NKJV For God so loved **the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever** believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Folks, listen,

**GOD DESIRED TO OFFER SALVATION TO EVERY PERSON ON THE EARTH.**

And He did! Through Christ.

There is a message here to everyone not yet saved. This offer of blessing is for you!

- Forgiveness
- Eternal life
- Internal peace
- Relationship and fellowship with God
- Comfort and strength in hard times
- Guidance all the time

This is available to you by putting your trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

But there is a message here to all of us who have received this blessing and are saved.

This remains the heart of God. This is still His great desire.

1 Timothy 2:3–4 NKJV 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

So look what God did with Abraham.

### **GOD CALLED ABRAHAM TO BE A PART OF HIS PLAN.**

Genesis 12:1–3 NKJV

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2 I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

- God did not need Abraham; God wanted Abraham.
- God would be the source of power.
- God would accomplish it all.

- Abraham was not indispensable.
- But God wanted Abraham to be a part.

That is the way God's calling is on our lives as believers.

Jesus said to His followers,

**Acts 1:8 NKJV** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be witnesses to Me** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

- Jesus does not need us; Jesus wants us; each one of us.
- Jesus is the source of power.
- Jesus will accomplish it all.
- Neither you nor I are indispensable.
- But Jesus wants us to be a part.

#### **ABRAHAM JOINED GOD IN WORKING GOD'S PLAN.**

**Hebrews 11:8 NKJV** By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. **And he went out, not knowing where he was going.**

How could Abraham know? He had spent all of his life to this point in Ur of the Chaldeans. He did not know what it was like or how to get there.

But God knew what it was like and the way!

Joining God as a part of His plan to bring the blessing of salvation to all the families of the earth usually requires us to go somewhere also.

Jesus said, Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth.

Even in our Jerusalem, being part of Jesus' plan often means in a new context.

- Center of Hope
- Baptist Center
- Anderson's Marina to be part of Bethlehem Village

But at times, it means more than that.

#### **ABRAHAM WENT WHERE GOD SHOWED HIM TO GO.**

That is the essence of joining God in His plan. It's HIS PLAN.

We do what God wants us to do. We go where He wants us to go.

I was saved when I was 8, but I really only joined God in His plan to take the offer of salvation to everybody on the earth when I was in high school.

I was in my early 50's before I realized that God had not reserved the world beyond the U.S. for international missionaries, but the whole world was part of His plan.

I surrendered, in brokenness and tears.

God did not make me an international missionary to live in a foreign land. He could have, but that was not His plan for me.

But His plan did involve going.

Folks, God wants us all to have an Abraham heart.

To say, I WILL be part of Your plan.

I will go where You show me to go.

I will do what You want me to do.

HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE.

You may say, "With COVID, we cannot go."

Sure we can. Just different places and different ways.

Center of Hope

Disaster Relief

Zoom – Brazil training

God is in charge of COVID. If we cannot go to a particular place because of COVID, that's in God's hands.

It's His plan.

My plea to each of us today is two-fold.

**BE SURE YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE BLESSING THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST.**

**HAVE A HEART LIKE ABRAHAM.** Commit your life to join God in His plan. Then go where God wants you go and do what God wants you to do in taking the offer of salvation to all the world.