"ABRAHAM - A FRIEND OF GOD"

(Part 1)
Genesis 11:10-12:9

Introduction: Genesis 11:10-32 – The Genealogical background of Abraham.

I. God makes <u>faithful promises</u> to Abraham (12:1-3)

A. God promises Abraham a LAND (v.1)

B. God promises Abraham a SEED (v.2)

C. God promises Abraham a BLESSING (v.3)

II. Abraham responds to God's promises by Faith (12:4-9)

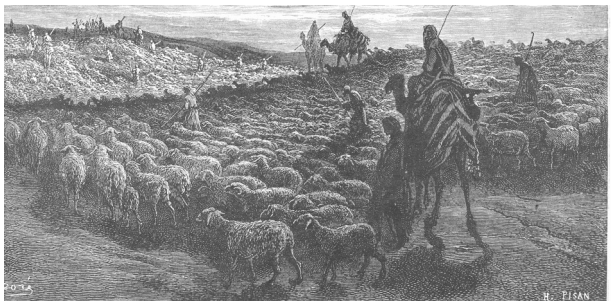
A. Abraham's STEP of Faith (v.4-6)
(By faith Abraham stepped out to where he had never been before)

B. Abraham's SACRIFICE of Faith (v.7)
(By faith Abraham offered God sacrifices of appreciation and thankfulness)

C. Abraham's SOJOURN of Faith (v.8-9)
(By faith Abraham did not plant his roots too deep in this world; He was a pilgrim in a foreign land)

"ABRAHAM - A FRIEND OF GOD"

(Part 1)
Genesis 11:10-12:9



Introduction: Genesis 11:10-32 –
The Genealogical background of Abraham.

I. God makes _____ to Abraham (12:1-3)

A. God promises Abraham a _____ (v.1)

B. God promises Abraham a _____ (v.2)

C. God promises Abraham a _____ (v.3)

II. Abraham responds to God's promises by _____ (12:4-9)

A. Abraham's _____ of Faith (v.4-6)
(By faith Abraham stepped out to where he had never been before)

B. Abraham's _____ of Faith (v.7)
(By faith Abraham offered God sacrifices of appreciation and thankfulness)

C. Abraham's _____ of Faith (v.8-9)
(By faith Abraham did not plant his roots too deep in this world; He was a pilgrim in a foreign land)

"ABRAHAM - A FRIEND OF GOD"

(Part 1)
Genesis 11:10-12:9

Introduction: Genesis 11:10-32 – The Genealogical background of Abraham.

In 2,165 B.C. there was born one of the most famous men to ever live.

He was to grow up in a wealthy, populated, and sophisticated pagan city - called Ur of the Chaldees (220 miles south of Baghdad in southern Mesopotamia).

He was to become the father of the Jewish nation, an example to all people, and a friend of God.

His name was Abraham.

Abraham is one of the few people ever to be called a "friend of God" by God.

Is. 41:8 - "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend."

II Chron. 20:7 - "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?"

Ja. 2:23 - "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

Gen. 11:27 – 25:11 is a big literary unit in Genesis which primarily focuses on God's dealings in and through one man: Abram (later to be called "Abraham").

Whenever God is about to do a great work, He usually starts with one person. A faithful man like Noah. . . Abraham. . . Joseph. . . Moses. . . John the Baptist, etc.

Will you be that person God is looking to use as we look forward to the new Millennium?

11:10
"These are the generations of Shem" – Shem, one of the three sons of Noah, would be the genealogical line God would choose to bless so that through that line, He might bless the world.

In verses 10-32, God gives us a selective (not necessarily exhaustive) list of ten generations to provide the lineage of Abraham.

The primary purpose of the genealogy in 11:10-32 is to establish the line of Abraham back to Shem.

If you were to follow the Gospel of Luke's genealogy, you would find that he is able to trace the genealogy of Christ (via Mary's line) all the way back through Abraham to Adam. If that list is somewhat exhaustive, the time from Adam to Abraham would be a little over 1835 years; Abraham to Christ would be 2,165 years – giving us a time span of about 4,000 years from Adam to Christ. Thus the earth is only about 6,000 years old, not the millions and millions of years evolutionists assume.

11:10ff

With the post-Flood changes in the earth's atmosphere and the genetically mutant effects of sin on physical life, it is interesting to notice a decrease in the lifespan of people after the Flood:

Name	Years Lived
Shem	600
Arphaxad	438
Salah	433
Eber	464
Peleg	239
Reu	239
Serug	230
Nahor	148
Terah	205

11:29

The mention of Nahor's wife Milcah is significant since she would be the mother of Rebvekah, who would marry Isaac (Abraham's son), and she is the mother of Laban, whose daughters Rachel and Leah would marry Jacob (Isaac's son).

11:31

"Ur of the Chaldees" -

Abraham's native city in southern Mesopotamia; an important metropolis of the ancient world situated on the Euphrates River. Strategically situated about halfway between the head of the Persian Gulf and Baghdad, in present-day Iraq, Ur was the capital of Sumer for two centuries until the Elamites captured the city. The city came to be known as "Ur of the Chaldees" after the Chaldeans entered southern Babylonia after 1000 B. C.

Abraham lived in the city of Ur <Gen. 11:28,31> at the height of its splendor. The city was a prosperous center of religion and industry. Thousands of recovered clay documents attest to thriving business activity. Excavations of the royal cemetery, from about 2900 to 2500 B. C., have revealed a surprisingly advanced culture, particularly in the arts and crafts. Uncovered were beautiful jewelry and art treasures, including headwear, personal jewelry, and exquisite china and crystal.

The Babylonians worshiped many gods, but the moon god Sin was supreme. Accordingly, the city of Ur was a kind of theocracy centered in the moon deity. Ur-Nammu, the founder of the strong Third Dynasty of Ur (around 2070-1960 B. C.), built the famous ZIGGURATS, a system of terraced platforms on which temples were erected. The Tower of BABEL <Gen. 11:3-4> was a seven-story ziggurat made of brick. It is a miracle of God's providence that Abraham resisted Ur's polluted atmosphere and set out on a journey of faith to Canaan that would bless all mankind.

Ur's glory was suddenly destroyed about 1900 B. C. Foreigners stormed down from the surrounding hills and captured the reigning king, reducing the city to ruins. So complete was the destruction that the city was buried in oblivion until it was excavated centuries later by archaeologists.

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary) (Copyright (C) 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

I. God makes <u>faithful promises</u> to Abraham (12:1-3)

A. God promises Abraham a LAND (v.1)

"The Lord had said" – God at various times and in various ways spoke in times past (cp. Heb. 1:1); God did not wind up the clock of the universe and then step back and have no direct involvement with that creation. No, He has spoken.

Faith and obedience are always the response of a person who has an encounter with God.

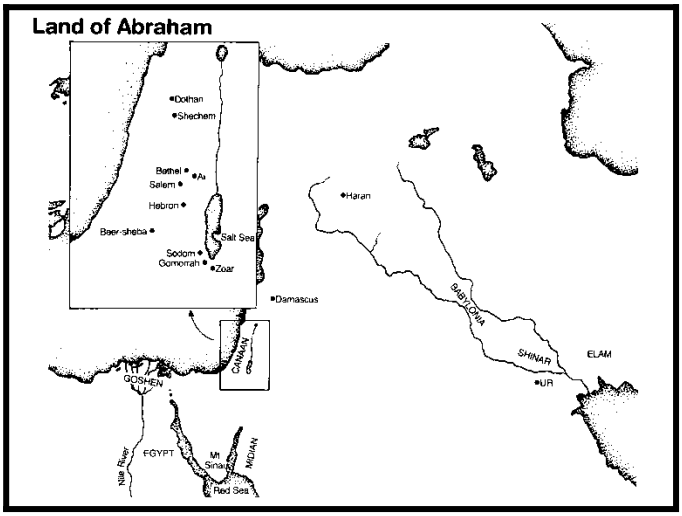
This call to move out came to Abraham while in Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2); Abraham obeyed the call; however, when he moved, his family moved out with him. They went as far as Haran (11:31-32). God's intention was for Abraham and Sarah to leave all family because God was to begin a new race of people just with Abraham. The Jewish race was about to be born.

God is here calling upon Abraham to leave: 1) "country" 2) "kindred" (extended family) and even 3) "thy father's house" (immediate family)

God took a man out of a pagan culture and out of an idolatrous family (Josh. 24:2) and would use him to make a new beginning.

God still calls upon His people today to separate from the corruption around them ("Come out from among them and be ye separate"). Moral, personal, and ecclesiastical separation are vital elements to true holiness.

"Unto a land" – This land would be a gift from God to Abraham and his descendents. Since God made the world, He has the right to give any part of it to anyone He wishes. That land (Canaan), now called "Israel" or "Palestine" was the most strategic piece of property in the ancient Near East. It was the "land bridge of the world," a location strategic for evangelism.



B. God promises Abraham a SEED (v.2)

God promises Abraham fertility, fortune, and fame.

"I will make of thee a great nation" – At this time Sarah was barren (11:30). She could have no child even through her 80's; however, when God promises something, though it seems improbable or impossible, He will follow through with whatever He says.

"I will bless thee" – "This promise was fulfilled in Abraham temporal blessings (13:2; 24:35), spiritual blessings (21:22), and fame (23:6; Is. 41:8)." (Ryrie note).

"I will bless thee. . . thou shalt be a blessing" – God tells Abraham what He would do to him and through him. God must work for us and in us before He can mightily work through us.

Abraham was to be a blessing due to God's blessing upon him. One reason God blesses you is so that you in return can bless others with the blessing God blessed you with.

C. God promises Abraham a BLESSING (v.3)

"I will bless them that bless thee" – This promise was to Abraham immediately, but also would apply to his people (the Jewish Nation) (EX: Balaam blessed Israel and could not curse).

Abraham passed this promise of blessing down to his son Isaac and it went on from Isaac to Jacob (Gen. 27:29) and it still applies into the future.

God still blesses those who bless His people:

--Potiphar gave Joseph a job and Potiphar's house was blessed because of Joseph's presence (Gen. 39:5).

--God even blesses an unsaved person by virtue of the fact that he/she is related to one of God's children (I Cor. 7:14).

God did curse those who sought to be (even unintentionally) a curse to Abraham (EX: Pharaoh 12:17).

"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" – Every nation on earth would be blessed by the Jewish nation. How?
It is through the Hebrew people that we received . . .

1) The Bible ("the oracles of God") (Rom. 3:1-2 - What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.)

2) The Messiah (Rom. 9:4-5 - Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.)

Note: Two imperatives are found in vv. 1-2 –

"Get thee out" (v. 1)

"Thou shalt be a blessing" (v. 2)

After each command comes three subsequent blessings. Whenever we obey God's commands, such obedience results in blessing. Do you want God's blessing? Then "Get thee out" of the world!

Note all of the times God says "I will". The successful believer's life does not consist in what "you will do" but in what "God will do"!

II. Abraham responds to God's promises by Faith (12:4-9)

A. Abraham's STEP of Faith (v.4-6)

(By faith Abraham stepped out to where he had never been before)

12:4

"So Abram departed" – The year would be 2,090 BC As a 75-year old man, Abraham's life was in a sense just beginning.

God delights in using aged men to do a great work for Him (EX: Caleb who conquered Hebron at 80; Moses who led Israel at 80). It's never too late to start serving God; the important thing is that you start as soon as God calls you!

"And Lot with him" – Abraham's nephew. Lot's father (Haran) had died even before his grandfather Terah did (Gen. 11:27-28). So Abraham, being the responsible man that he was, took Lot under his wing and for a time took care of him.

Hebrews 11: 8-f

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:
10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
Abraham was the *"friend of God"* (Ja. 2:23) because he by faith obeyed God.

Faith is always the foundation for obedience. The level of your obedience reveals the level of your faith.

"Not knowing whither he went" - It was a road he never had traveled, a location which would forever separate him from his hometown, family, and friends.

Abraham was to leave the "security" of country, family, and home, to follow the leading of God.

Note: The importance of separation.

1 - The original call came at Ur
(Acts 7:2)
2 - The family moved out of Ur to Haran
(Gen. 11:31)
3 - God then moved Abraham out of Haran into Canaan
(Gen. 12:4-5)

Jesus spoke of leaving country and family for the Gospel's sake and the rewards that would come with such sacrifice (Mk. 10:29-30; cp. Mt. 19:29-30).

To do that which you have never done before requires faith.

--It's a step of faith to go to Bible College or Seminary.
--It's a step of faith to sign up to teach a Sunday school class.
--It's a step of faith to go out on visitation and evangelism.
--It's a step of faith to go to a foreign field as a missionary.

12:5
"The souls (*nephesh)* **that they had gotten" –** Probably <u>not</u> a reference to <u>slaves</u>; certainly not c<u>hildren</u> (Sarah was barren); most likely <u>proselytes</u> (as Abraham shared his faith in *Yahweh*) (Cassuto, p. 320; cited by Ross, p. 265).

12:6
"The plain of Moreh" – between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, near present day Nablus (south of the region of Galilee).

"The Canaanite was then in the land" – This cursed tribe (descendents of the cursed grandson of Noah – Gen. 9:25) would be an obstacle for Israel, but not one that would be too big for God to remove.

B. Abraham's SACRIFICE of Faith (v.7)
(By faith Abraham offered God sacrifices of appreciation and thankfulness)

"An altar unto the LORD" – God gave a promise to Abraham, and what was his response?

Faith that resulted in a worshipful sacrifice of thankfulness.

Has your faith resulted in sacrifices of thanksgiving?

C. Abraham's SOJOURN of Faith (v.8-9)

(By faith Abraham did not plant his roots too deep in this world; He was a pilgrim in a foreign land)

12:8

Still moving south (about 20 miles south of Shechim), Abraham, who is surveying his promised land, comes to a mountain near Bethel ("house of God") and there again he, with thankfulness for God's promise of the land, offers God more sacrifices and prayers.

"Tent. . . altar" – "Wherever Abraham went in the land of Canaan, he was marked by his tent and his altar (Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18). The tent marked him as a 'stranger and pilgrim' who did not belong to this world (Heb. 11:9-16; I Pet. 2:00), and the altar marked him as a citizen of heaven who worshipped the true and living God. He gave witness to all that he was separated from this world (the tent) and devoted to the Lord (the altar). Whenever Abraham abandoned his tent and his altar, he got into trouble."" (Wiersbe, p. 19).

Heb.11:9 -*"In a strange country" -* in a foreign land.

"Dwelling in tabernacles" - living in tents (not permanent structures; not stationary brick houses; not stable buildings). Old Abe was a camper for life.

Abraham lived in <u>tents</u> because he was a stranger and pilgrim in the world and had to be <u>ready</u> to move whenever God spoke.

Christians today are also strangers and pilgrims -

I Pet. 1:1 - "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

I Pet. 2:11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

Faith keeps this life <u>in perspective</u>.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I Jn. 5:4).

EX: Hymn - "Faith is the Victory"

Abraham had his sight on the eternal not the temporal,
the enduring, not the decaying,
the immortal, not the mortal,
the spiritual, not the physical,
the supernatural, not the natural.