

Commentary by Charles Box; Questions and Answers by Wayne Harlan

The Obedience of Abram

Genesis 12:1-20

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Text:

Genesis 12:1-20,

- 1. Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father’s household to the land that I will show you.**
- 2. Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, so that you will exemplify divine blessing.**
- 3. I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, and all the families of the earth will bless one another by your name.”**
- 4. So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him to do, and Lot went with him. (Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.)**
- 5. And Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they left for the land of Canaan. They entered the land of Canaan.**
- 6. Abram traveled through the land as far as the oak tree of Moreh at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.)**
- 7. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So Abram built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.**
- 8. Then he moved from there to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and worshiped the Lord.**
- 9. Abram continually journeyed by stages down to the Negev.**
- 10. There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to stay for a while because the famine was severe.**
- 11. As he approached Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “Look, I know that you are a beautiful woman.**
- 12. When the Egyptians see you they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will keep you alive.**

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13. So tell them you are my sister so that it may go well for me because of you and my life will be spared on account of you.”

14. When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.

15. When Pharaoh’s officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. So Abram’s wife was taken into the household of Pharaoh,

16. and he did treat Abram well on account of her. Abram received sheep and cattle, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

17. But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his household with severe diseases because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.

18. So Pharaoh summoned Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why didn’t you tell me that she was your wife?

19. Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Here is your wife! Take her and go!”

20. Pharaoh gave his men orders about Abram, and so they expelled him, along with his wife and all his possessions. (NET)

Commentary:

His name at first was Abram. Later God changed his name to Abraham. God gave his descendants a land and protected them until the Messiah could be born. God's plan was to send a Savior to the world. God called Abram (Genesis 12:1-3) and by faith Abram journeyed to Canaan. God promised that He would make a great nation from him. This would be the people from whom the Messiah would come. Abram was obedient to God. He left Haran taking his wife Sarai and his nephew, Lot with him. Abraham had many possessions. When they arrived in Canaan at the oak of Moreh the Canaanites lived in the Land. Abram built an altar there to the Lord who appeared to him. He did this often. Wherever he went in Canaan he built an altar to the Lord and worshipped in the Lord’s name. When a famine struck in the land he took his family to Egypt. Abram asked Sarah to lie about being his wife because he feared someone would kill him for her. She was truthfully his half-sister, but

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she was his wife! Pharaoh took her to his house. Thing went well with Abraham but not with Pharaoh and his household. When Pharaoh knew that Sarah was Abraham's wife he "commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had."

God's call to Abraham -- Genesis 12:1-5: Abraham grew up with a father who worshipped idols and in a city that was wicked. God called him to leave that behind. The Bible says, "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." (Hebrews 11:8) Abraham understood that it was the one, true and living God who was speaking to Him. He did not confuse the voice of God with the voice of some idol. The reason for this is, "They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not." (Psalms 115:5) Abraham's call was a call to service for God and to man. He was told to leave his family and to leave his home land. He was to go to the land that God would show him. Abraham trusted God and did as He required. God called Abraham saying, "I will make thee a great nation." God took him out of a nation; but He said, "I will make of thee a great nation." God promised to make Abraham's name great. He became a blessing to the world. God promised to be with Abraham saying, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." Truly, in Christ, all families of the earth have been blessed through Abraham. The greatest value of God's promise has been that through the Lord Jesus, salvation is offered to everyone. (Mark 16:15-16)

The journeys of Abraham -- Genesis 12:6-9: Abraham left Ur with his father, his wife and his nephew. His father died at Haran. As he journeyed Abraham, "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; and into the land of Canaan they came." (Genesis 12:5) Taking Lot on the journey may have been an act of disobedience. It, for sure, brought many problems to the life of Abraham. God had said that Abram was to leave his family. When Abraham reached Canaan he came unto the plain of Moreh or the tree of Moreh. He camped about thirty

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miles north of Jerusalem. God identified this as the land He had promised Abram. "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD." (Genesis 12:7-8)

A lie that was to be told in Egypt -- Genesis 12:10-13: There was a famine in the land so Abraham went to Egypt for a while. Abraham had enough faith to travel at God's command. However, in Egypt his faith weakened and he forgot that God could deliver him. Sarah was a beautiful woman and Abraham was afraid the Egyptians would kill him to take her for themselves. In those days families had to approve weddings so Abraham told Sarah to say she was his sister. Abraham told a half truth. "And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife." (Genesis 20:12) Abraham's sin was that he was not trusting God. God had promised to bless him. Sins always have companions. A lack of trust led to lies and even misery for the innocent people. God had promised, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."

Caught in the lie -- Genesis 12:14-20: Just as Abraham had anticipated the Egyptians saw Sarah's beauty. They told Pharaoh and she was taken to his house. It is of interest to observe that at this time Sarah was about sixty five years old. She lived to be 127 years old. "And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah." (Genesis 23:1) Abraham prospered as a result of this matter. Pharaoh "entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels." (Genesis 12:16) Pharaoh did not prosper so well. "And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife." (Genesis 12:17) Abraham was then caught in his lie. Pharaoh knew Sarah was Abraham's wife. He confronted Abraham about the matter and then sent Sarah back to him and commanded

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them to leave with all that they possessed. Let us follow the faith of Abraham and not the failures of Abraham.

Jesus Christ was born as a descendant of Abraham. It is necessary to be in Christ in order to be saved. To be in Christ you must hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ (Mark 16:16), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as Lord (Acts 8:36-37) and be baptized for remission of sins. (Acts 2:38) After baptism remain faithful to God. (Revelation 2:10) Let us learn that obedience to God is always best.

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Questions

on

Genesis 12:1-20

1. How did Abram prove his faithfulness to God? _____

2. Who else in the Bible (N.T.) famously stopped what they were doing and immediately followed the call of obedience? _____

3. Abram and his family left Haran. He was _____ years old when he left.
How far into the land of Canaan did they travel? _____

What promise was given to Abram at this location? _____

What did Abram do in response to God's promise? _____

4. Who inhabited the land at this time? _____

5. Abram continued to journey by stages down to the _____. Where is this territory located? _____

6. Why did Abram leave this land and travel to Egypt? _____

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7. During their long journey Abram built altars to worship the Lord. In this chapter where did he construct altars? _____

8. Abram feared the Egyptians would kill him because _____

9. Abram told Sarai to tell the Egyptians she was his sister. Was this a lie? _____

10. Why did Abram feel he had to use this deception? _____

Do you always trust God to deliver you? _____

11. How old was Sarai at this time? _____

12. Did Abram prosper even though he deceived Pharaoh? _____

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13. Was Pharaoh the only person to suffer from the plague? _____

Does this remind you of another plague sent by God? _____

14. The plagues on Pharaoh represent the _____ time God's promise to
"_____ those who _____ you" was used.

15. Was Abram's failure to trust God a sin? _____
