

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
8-7-19

Genesis 12

The Call of Abram - Verses 1-9

¹The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ²"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. ⁶ Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he went on toward the hills 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 called on the name of the LORD. ⁹ Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

12:1-3 When God called him, Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Harran and finally to Canaan. God then established a covenant with Abram, telling him that he would found a great nation. Not only would this nation be blessed, God said, but the other nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram's descendants. Israel, the nation that would come from Abram, was to follow God and influence those with whom it came in contact. Through Abram's family tree, Jesus Christ was born to save humanity. Through Christ, people can have a personal relationship with God and be blessed beyond measure.

12:2 God promised to bless Abram and make him great, but God had one condition: Abram had to do what God wanted him to do. This meant leaving his home and friends and traveling to a new land where God promised to build a great nation from Abram's family. Abram obeyed, walking away from his home for God's promise of even greater blessings in the future. God may be trying to lead you to a place of greater service and usefulness for him. Don't let the comfort and security of your present position make you miss God's plan for you.

12:5 God planned to develop a nation of people he would call his own. He called Abram from the godless, self-centered city of Ur to a fertile region called Canaan, where a God-centered, moral nation could be established. Though small in dimension, the land of Canaan was the focal point for most of the history of Israel as well as for the rise of Christianity. This small land given to one man, Abram, has had a tremendous impact on world history.

12:7 Altars were used in many religions, but for God's people, altars were more than places of sacrifice. For them, altars symbolized communion with God and commemorated notable encounters with him. Built of rough stones and earth, altars often remained in place for years as continual reminders of God's protection and promises. Abram regularly built altars to God for two reasons: (1) for prayer and worship, and (2) as reminders of God's promise to bless him. Abram couldn't survive spiritually without regularly renewing his love and loyalty to God. Building altars helped Abram remember that God was at the center of his life. Regular worship helps us remember what God desires and motivates us to obey him.

Abram in Egypt - Verses 10-20

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. **11** As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. **12** When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. **13** Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you." **14** When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. **15** And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. **16** He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. **17** But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. **18** So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? **19** Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" **20** Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

12:10 When famine struck, Abram went to Egypt where there was food. Why would God allow a famine in the land where he had just called Abram? This was a test of Abram's faith, and Abram passed. He didn't question God's leading when facing this difficulty. Many believers find that when they determine to follow God, they immediately encounter great obstacles. The next time you face such a test, don't try to second-guess what God is doing. Use the intelligence God gave you, as Abram did when he temporarily moved to Egypt, and wait for new opportunities.

12:11-13 Abram, acting out of fear, asked Sarai to tell a half-truth by saying she was his sister. She was his half sister (see 20:12), but she was also his wife. Abram's intent was to deceive the Egyptians. He feared that if they knew the truth, they would kill him to get Sarai. She would have been a desirable addition to Pharaoh's harem because of her wealth, beauty, and potential for political alliance. As Sarai's brother, Abram would have been given a place of honor. As her husband, however, his life would be in danger because Sarai could not enter Pharaoh's harem unless Abram was dead. So Abram lost faith in God's protection, even after all God had promised him, and told a half-truth. This shows how lying compounds the effects of sin. When he lied, Abram's problems multiplied..