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## **Genesis 12**

(2019)

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## Genesis 12.

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### Topics.

- God will make Abram a great nation, and in him, bless all families of earth.
- God promises to give Abraham, the land of Canaan forever.
- I will bless those who bless you, and those who dishonor you I will curse.
- Abram, Sarai and Lot depart from Haran to go to the land of Canaan.
- God said to Abram, "to your offspring I will give this land."
- Pharaoh and Sarai enter Pharaoh's house and he dealt well with Abram.
- God afflicted Pharaoh and his house with plagues because of Abram's wife.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

**The previous chapter:** in chapter eleven the focus was upon the people after the flood beginning to build a tower and city in the land of Shinar and upon God changing the language of the people. It speaks of Nimrod and then lays out the generations of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth after the flood (called the Table of Nations).

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### GENESIS 12:1-3

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#### **God will make Abram a Great Nation, and in Him Bless all Families.**

- **Genesis 12:1-3:** Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

We are not told how the LORD revealed Himself to Abram and spoke to him, perhaps by an angelic appearance, maybe by the Angel of the LORD or by a dream, a vision or an audible voice, but it matters not, all we need to know is that the LORD spoke and Abram clearly understood. This conversion of the LORD with Abraham is one of the most remarkable in the entire Bible.

#### **God Promises to Give Abraham, the Land of Canaan Forever.**

- God remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, <sup>9</sup>the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, <sup>10</sup>which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, <sup>11</sup>saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance." (Ps. 105:8-11).

This covenant was partially fulfilled during the golden years of David and Solomon, but its ultimate fulfilment is still in the process of being fully and perfectly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ the promised seed of Abraham (Matt. 1:1). James the brother of Jesus wrote, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness and he was called a friend of God." This means that all who believe in God and have faith in His plan of salvation are not only counted righteous by faith and a friend of God, but will also receive the promise of Abraham because they by faith become

children of Abraham and heirs of the promised eternal inheritance. The apostle Paul in his letter shines a light upon this same truth stating that as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness so then it is those of faith who are the true sons of Abraham. (Gal. 3:6-7). He goes on to say that the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." (Gal. 3:8). This means that those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith (Gal. 3:9) and if they are Christ's (whether Jew or Gentile), then they are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise God made to Abraham. (Gal. 3:28-29). Paul amplifies this truth even further by highlighting that the Scripture says that the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offspring's," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Gal. 3:16) which means the following two things:

1. Those in Christ receive the promised Spirit of righteousness that leads eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Those in Christ are the true children of Abraham and as his children are heirs of the everlasting promise God made to Abraham saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance." (Psalm 105:10-11).

In chapter eleven of Hebrews (commonly known as the hall of faith) it is written:

- By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup>For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Heb. 11:8-10).

The author goes on to say that all the faithful of the Old Testament lived as strangers and exiles on the earth, because they desired a better country that is, a heavenly one and because of this God was not ashamed to be called their God and has therefore prepared for them a heavenly city (Heb. 11:13-16). Likewise today Christian walk by faith as citizens not of this world, but as citizens of heaven living amongst foreigners and strangers looking forward to the same city that the Old Testament faithful looked toward, the city whose designer and builder is God that God promised Abraham and the faithful that they would receive as an everlasting inheritance. (Heb. 11:8-10). God at this present time is still in the process of building the everlasting city that both the faithful of the Old and New Testament look forward to. At this present time it is being established worldwide amongst every nation, language and people by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is a spiritual city called a new nation in Christ, a new creature in Christ, the church, the global body of Christ and the Kingdom of Christ. This present spiritual city God is building in the hearts and minds of the faithful worldwide will be a literal city on earth when Christ the offspring of Abraham returns in glory to Jerusalem the Holy city of God and gathers the faithful to himself and then rules and reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth perfectly fulfilling God's promise to Abraham Isaac and Jacob and His promise to all who by the same faith belong to Abraham's global family. For further information on this city see the title:

- Spiritual Kingdom of God in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed:** (v3) this promise crowned all other promises because it points forward to the promised Messiah, in whom all the promises are fulfilled. Abram was called to leave the place of his birth and his kindred and all his past earthly joys, but the LORD promises He would make up the loss to him. The blessing to Abram was not just that he himself would be blessed, but that he would be a great blessing to others. This covenant with Abram is still

valid today it is as effective and trustworthy as the day the LORD spoke it to Abram and guaranteed to all dwelling on earth that repent and believe the Gospel.

**I will bless those who bless you, and those who dishonor you I will curse:** (v3) here the LORD is saying those who bless Abraham and by extension bless the Lord Jesus Christ will be blessed (i.e., inherit the promise), likewise those who curse Abram and by extension the Lord Jesus Christ will be condemned. All who come into contact with Abram and favour him will enter into the enjoyment of God's love and grace and ultimately be raised to eternal life and unlimited blessing. This blessing and curse apply to every individual and nation of every age that despises or rejects the God of Abram and his faith and his offspring the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The expression in your seed (i.e. in your offspring), refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as the following verses show:

- In your (Abraham's) offspring (thy seed in KJV) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice. (Gen. 22:18).
- I will be with you (Isaac) and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring (thy seed in KJV) I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. <sup>4</sup>I will multiply your offspring (thy seed in KJV) as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring (thy seed in KJV) all these lands. And in your offspring (thy seed in KJV) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. (Gen. 26:3-4).
- The LORD said to Jacob, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring (thy seed in KJV). <sup>14</sup>Your offspring (thy seed in KJV) shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring (thy seed in KJV) shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:13-14).

The following verses show that this promise is fulfilled in and through Christ:

- You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring (thy seed in KJV) shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' (Acts 3:25).
- So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:9).
- Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring (seed in KJV). It does not say, "And to offsprings (thy seed in KJV)," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring (thy seed in KJV)," who is Christ. (Gal. 3:16).
- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28).
- If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring (Abraham's seed in KJV), heirs according to promise. (Gal. 3:29).
- The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." <sup>9</sup>So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Gal. 3:8-9).
- He (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, <sup>12</sup>and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. (Rom. 4:11-12).

Here Paul is highlighting to the doubting and legalistic Jews that Abraham was declared by God to be righteous by faith, prior to being circumcised, to shine a spotlight on the truth that it is those (Jews and Gentiles) who walk by faith and not works who are the true offspring of Abraham and who will inherit the promise.

- That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring (the seed in KJV) —not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. (Rom. 4:16).

**All families of the earth:** (v3) (i.e. all nations) this is to be limited to the believers of all nations, this is in harmony with the whole flow of the Scriptures, all that will be blessed will be the faithful amongst all nations of every age, they will be blessed by faith and no other way.

- Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. (Gal. 3:7).

The expression, "all families of the earth," refers to Abram's offspring:

- In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice. (Gen. 22:18).

The following verse shows us that Abraham's offspring refers to Christ:

- You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring (being Christ) shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (Acts 3:25).

These verses shine a spotlight upon the truth that the promise does not include every individual of all the families or nations of the earth; but only as many as believe in Christ the offspring of Abraham. They are blessed with all spiritual blessings;

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. (Ephes. 1:3).

All in Christ are blessed with, redemption, justification, forgiveness of sins, sanctification, adoption, God's love and grace and at the end of their day's eternal life.

**Ponder for a moment:** it was not possible for Abram to fully comprehend how God would accomplish and fulfil this promise or even realize the magnitude of it at the time they were made and yet he forsook all and obeyed the LORD.

- By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (Heb. 11:8).

**In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed:** (v3) this promise will be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in this first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

**It should be noted:** that as glorious as Christ's millennial reign will be it is not the final stage of God's eternal plan for mankind's salvation that he planned and purposed in His eternal mind before the world began. At the end of Christ's millennial reign God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the lake of fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, second death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its eternal perfect fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## GENESIS 12:4-6

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### **Abram, Sarai and Lot depart from Haran to go to Canaan.**

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- **Genesis 12:4-6:** So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup>And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, <sup>6</sup>Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

**Haran:** (called Charran in Acts 7:4 KJV) from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran is about 600 miles. The average walking speed is around 3 to 5km per hour, if we suppose they travelled at 3km per hour (allowing for the older folk) which is 1km every 20minutes. Then 600 multiplied by 20 = 12000 minutes divided by 60 = 200 hours divided by 24 = about 8 to 9 days. Now allowing extra time to rest, eat and sleep it would take somewhere around 16 days to travel from Ur to Haran. Note the name Haran must not be confused with Haran the father of Lot.

**So, Abram went, as the LORD had told him:** (v4) in the previous chapter we read of Terah and Abram and his family leaving Ur intending to go to Canaan, but stopping at Harran and remaining there until his father died. It is possible Abram stopped at Haran to allow his ailing and frail father to rest and build up strength to be fit to continue travelling to the land of promise, but whatever the reason Abram and his family never left his father's side until he had died and was taken by God to a better country. Abram believed that the blessing of the Almighty would make up for all he would lose or leave behind and exceed all his desires. Like Abram believers with faith in Christ are not discouraged by the difficulties that come their way, or drawn aside by the pleasures of the world, but remain steadfast in faith as they journey toward the Promised Land. The Old Testament faithful did not consider Canaan simply as a land to be possessed, but highly valued and treasured it as a land promised to them by God, this is why they so highly and earnestly prized it.

**As the LORD had spoken unto him:** (v4) some feel that the LORD may have called Abram a second time in Haran, but it is more likely that this simply means now that Abram's father had died he is departing from Haran to continue as the LORD had called him in Ur to do. It is inconceivable that Abram was intending to ignore the original call of God and remain in Haran forever especially since God exalts him as the father of the faithful. However, it is possible God saw Abrams grief when Terah his father died and re-visited him to comfort and encourage him. Abram went with Lot, his wife and his servants, while Nahor and his family stayed behind.

**Shechem:** (Sickem in KJV) (v6) comes from the Hebrew word (*Sh<sup>e</sup>kem*) it means the neck (between the shoulders) as the place of burdens. Figuratively it can refer to the spur of a hill, the back, a portion and the shoulder. It was originally a pastoral valley in Palestine in the mountains of Ephraim between Mount Gerizzim and Mount Ebal about two miles apart and 34 miles north of Jerusalem and 7 miles southeast of Samaria that later became a city. It is located in about the middle of the land of Canaan. (Gen. 33:18) (Joshua 21:21). Shechem was the place where the LORD first appeared to Abram in the land of promise, it was later dedicated to the LORD by being made a Levitical town and a city of refuge and it was here that Joshua gathered all the people of Israel and said, "Choose this day whom you will serve," and the people said, "We will serve the LORD." So, Joshua made a covenant with the people that day at Shechem. (Joshua 24:1-25).

**The oak of Moreh:** (v6) comes from the Hebrew word (*Mowreh*) and refers to a Canaanite and to a hill (perhaps named from him). It carries the idea of an archer, a teacher or teaching. Moreh was the name of a man from which the plain was named after. Some commentators translate it, "the oaks of Moreh." Both are most likely correct since the Scriptures speak of a terebinth tree (oaks trees in KJV) that was near Shechem (Gen. 35:4). These trees were very common in Palestine. They grow to a vast size with wide-spreading branches and dark green foliage.

It is very likely that in the plain of Moreh there was a group of these trees and Abram choose to camp under them because of the cool shade they gave such shady spots were favourite places for the tents of the wandering patriarchs. It was also common in ancient times for large groups of trees to be chosen as a meeting-place for religious gatherings, teaching and rituals. It was here that:

- Jacob hid foreign gods brought by his household under the terebinth tree (the oak in KJV) that was near Shechem. (Gen. 35:4).
- Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem (v1) and wrote the words of the covenant in the Book of the Law of God and took a large stone and set it up under the terebinth (an oak in KJV), that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. (Josh. 24:1, 26).
- All the leaders of Shechem came together, and all Beth-millo, and they went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar (the plain of the pillar in KJV) at Shechem. (Judges 9:6).

The LORD had promised to show Abram the land (Gen. 12:1) he does not enter into it and take immediate possession of the land, but only travels through it and arrives at Shechem.

**At that time the Canaanites were in the land:** (v6) this land belonged to the offspring of Shem, but Canaan's descendants gained dominance of it and held it, as they did in the times of Moses, but were at that time removed, but now in Abram's time they were settled in it. The expression, "At that time the Canaanites were in the land," means that that Abram on his arrival found the country no longer in the hands of the descendants of Shem, but found that the sons of Canaan had already arrived and preoccupied the country and gained the dominance of it either by gradual and peaceful means or by conquest. Future history shows that the irreligious Canaanites would not be good neighbours.

**God said to Abram, "To your Offspring I will give this Land."**

- **Genesis 12:7-9:** Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup>From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup>And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

**Ai:** is 10 miles NNE of Jerusalem, alternative sites have been proposed, because it is possible there was a second Ai in Transjordan (Jer. 49:3). The people of Ai are called Amorites (Joshua 7:2, 7). Joshua conquered Ai (Josh 7:12) and after the seventy-year Babylonian captivity of the Jews Bethel and Ai returned to Judea (Ezra 2:28) (Neh. 7:32).

**Bethel:** (Bethuel or Bethul) was originally called Luz (Gen. 28:19) (Gen. 35:6) it is in the land of Canaan and is also an unknown town allotted to Simeon. God told Jacob to build an altar at Bethel (Gen 35:1, 14-15).

**Negeb:** is a desert region between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to the south of Judea it was part of the original territory of the Amalekites (Num. 13:29). The physical characteristics of the Negeb are that of rolling hills which abruptly terminate in the desert region. It is bounded on the E by the Dead Sea; on the W by the Mediterranean Sea. It is a land where the water supply is scarce, because of a very meager amount of rainfall in the summer months, but at other seasons of the year streams flow across its desert sands and the nomads use it for pasturage. In this territory Hagar encountered the angel when she fled from the face of her mistress Sarah (Gen 16:7 14) and it was here that both Isaac and Jacob dwelt (Gen 24:62) (Gen 37:1). Many of David's exploits are described as happening in the Negeb, centering around Ziklag (1 Sam 27:5). After Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586-585 B.C, a group of Jews retreated to the Negeb, where they were harassed by the Edomites who sided with the Babylonians.

**The LORD appeared to Abram:** (v7) this is the first time that any literal appearance of God is mentioned, (i.e., the LORD appeared), prior to this there is no communication between God and man that states that the LORD appeared. The following verses show how the LORD communicated with man prior to this occasion.

- The LORD God commanded Adam saying. (Gen. 2:16).
- Adam and Eve heard the sound (the voice in KJV) of the LORD God walking in the garden. (Gen. 3:8).
- The LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9).
- The LORD said to Cain. (Gen. 4:6) (Gen. 4:9).
- God said to Noah. (Gen. 6:13).
- The LORD said to Noah. (Gen. 7:1).
- God said to Noah (spoke to Noah in KJV). (Gen. 8:15).
- God said to Noah (spoke to Noah in KJV) and to his sons with him. (Genesis 9:8).

From here on we read repeatedly of a Divine appearance, and this visible manifestation is connected with the expression, "The angel of the LORD and the angel of God.

- The angel of the LORD found her (Sarai) by a spring of water. (Gen. 16:7).

- The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven and said, “Here am I.” (Genesis 22:11).
- The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her. (Gen. 21:17).
- The angel of God said to Gideon. (Judges 6:20).
- The angel of God came again to the woman (Manoah’s wife). (Judges 13:9).

**And here in Genesis chapter twelve we read:**

- The LORD appeared to Abram and said. (Gen. 12:7).

How the LORD appeared to Abram can only be a matter of speculation it is enough to know that the LORD can present Himself to mankind in a vision, a dream, by communicating to the consciousness of the mind, by hearing and speaking and by the angel of the LORD, the angel of God or some other way. God is not confined to the manner in which He will communicate with man but will chose whatever ways is suitable for that person and the occasion.

**To your offspring I will give this land:** (v7) notice the Promised Land and inheritance is to Abraham’s offspring, not to Abraham himself. Concerning the promise Stephen in the book of Acts wrote:

- The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, <sup>3</sup>and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' <sup>4</sup>Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. <sup>5</sup>Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child. (Acts 7:2-5).

God was speaking to Abram with a view to future ages when He called Abram out of Ur of Chaldea to go to Canaan, to be shown the land, and have it given to him to be inhabited by his offspring for centuries to come.

**Abram built there an altar to the LORD:** (v7) it was enough for Abram to worship God in his heart as it is with those who are devoted to Christ, but to declare his inward faith he built an altar to make an outward profession his faith before all mankind. This altar would also act as a monument that God had appeared to him there and a sign that God had promised the land of Canaan to his offspring. The altar would also be a place of worship, praise thanking the LORD for His gracious appearance and for the gift of the land of Canaan to his offspring. By this act of devotion Abram:

- Exalted and honoured the appearance of the LORD to him.
- Made an open profession of his faith.
- Established the worship of the true God.
- Declared his faith in the LORD’S promise.
- Separated himself and his household from the religions of the Canaanites and surrounding nations.

**Conclusion to the promises:** God singled Abram out from among his fellow-idolaters in the land of Ur, that He might preserve a people for Himself, among whom true worship of Him might be maintained until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ through the birth of Mary and ultimately his return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16). From this time forward Abram and his offspring are the central focus of the history recorded in the Bible. Though Abram deeply loved God he was tried and tested more than most in that he was called to willingly leave the land he had been raised in to travel to a place not knowing where he was going and live in tents in a foreign and hostile land (Hebrews 11:8-9).

Those who turn to God and leave their comfort zone will not, only never regret their decision, but will gain by the change they have made. The call God gave to Abram, is the same Gospel call that goes out into the world inviting the children of Adam into God's Kingdom, all who hear this call must be willing to leave their comfort zone to gain God's love and grace and be heirs to the promised eternal inheritance. Following are the many precious promises God gave to Abram:

- I will take you from your own people and make you the head of a great nation and another people.
- I will bless your offspring with an inheritance of land that they can call their own.
- I will make your name great.
- I will bless them that bless you, and curse those that curse you.
- In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

All of these promises can be claimed by faithful Jews and Gentiles who have faith in Christ the true offspring of Abraham. Through Christ, God is at this present moment inviting children of Adam to forsake the ways of the world and enter into his spiritual Kingdom. God will not only make those who accept this invitation a great nation, but will also make them the head of all nations of the world when His Son returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords. (See the title: "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed," (v3) following the notes below (v1-3) (above). Their name will be great amongst the inhabitants of the earth and all families of the earth will be blessed by their rule of compassion, fairness and justice (in contrast to self-exaltation, fame and pride) over the nations with Christ as their head and their King. Added to this blessing those who take up God's invitation will inherit an immortal body, eternal life and everlasting happiness, while the wicked and those who rebel against him and his government will be condemned.

**Ponder for a moment:** Jesus Christ is the greatest blessing that has ever walked upon the earth and the greatest blessing that the world will ever know and all of this is because of Abraham and his offspring. It is only through them that we have the Bible, a Saviour, and the Gospel. Abram's offspring are the foundation upon which the Christian church has sprung up from. With this in mind, consider the struggles, backsliding, the gross wickedness, troubles and hardships that biblical history records of Abram's offspring and yet the plan God purposed in His eternal mind before time began is being accomplished, it matters not what governments, nations, individual do nothing will prevent God's eternal plan for His Son, His people and His Kingdom coming to pass.

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## **GENESIS 12:10-16**

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### **Abram and Sarai enter Egypt and Pharaoh Dealt well with Abram.**

- **Genesis 12:10-16:** Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. <sup>11</sup>When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, <sup>12</sup>and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. <sup>13</sup>Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." <sup>14</sup>When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. <sup>15</sup>And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. <sup>16</sup>And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

**There was famine in Canaan:** (v10) so severe that it caused Abram to turn from his travels in Canaan and go to Egypt. All the way from Ur to Haran, from Haran to the land of Canaan and from north to south of the

land in which he was a stranger, there is not a word of anxiety dread or fear. But now Abram devises a plan not only to deceive Pharaoh of Egypt, but also one that has the potential to cause both Sarai and Pharaoh to sin.

**I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance:** (v11) Sarai was sixty-five years of age at the time when Abram describes her as a woman fair to look upon, meaning beautiful, some wonder how can this be? But consider the following, she gave birth to Isaac when she was ninety years old (Gen. 17:17) and she lived to be one hundred and twenty seven (Gen. 23:1) which means that Sarai's age corresponds with around forty years in modern times, as she was at this time about half the age to which the people of that age lived. Added to this she was coming from a mountainous country, had not given birth to any children and compared to the Egyptians her complexion would be light compared with the darker faces of Egyptian women, this would especially make her stand out amongst the Egyptians and cause them to desire her. Besides this many women's beauty does not vanish simply because they are somewhat past their younger years.

**Say you are my sister:** (v13) Abram to protect his own life tells Sarai and no doubt those with him to conceal their marriage and the truth that Sarai was his wife and instead state that she was his sister; which was perfectly true, as she was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother. However, to hid the fact that she was also his wife was a horrific deception since it not only risked the possible sacrifice of the chastity of his wife, but also had the potential to cause Pharaoh to grossly sin without being aware of it. Abram risked his wife's chastity and his own honour to secure his personal safety. The thing Abram was most noted for was faith; yet here even after God had appeared to him twice, he shows complete unbelief and distrust in God to save him. Abrams actions here cause us to wonder, surely if God had put Abram in Canaan which He did, Abram should have trusted God to keep him alive during the famine?

Since there is no hint of God's voice leading him there it seems to imply that Abram going to Egypt was due to his own reasoning and a failure of faith. Perhaps he depended upon Sarai's cleverness to help herself out of the difficulty, but such a mixture of faith and weakness, of trust in God in putting so much at risk and trusting in his own reasoning for his personal safety prompts us to wonder how much infirmity there was dwelling in a character otherwise so noble. Prior to this Abram was obeying the voice of the LORD and therefore was full of confidence in God's protection, but now a famine has come and rather than waiting patiently to hear from the LORD he appears to be relying on his own thinking and chooses to leave the land of promise and travel to a land of plenty and therefore does not have the assurance of God's approval that he once had. It truly shows that no matter how godly there is no one on earth free from trials and free from blemishes, perfect happiness and perfect purity can only be found in heaven.

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## **GENESIS 12:17-20**

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### **God afflicted Pharaoh with Plagues because of Abram's Wife.**

- **Genesis 12:17-20:** But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. <sup>18</sup>So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? <sup>19</sup>Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." <sup>20</sup>And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

After seeing the beauty of Sarai Pharaoh took her into his house (v13) with the intention of laying with her, it seems that while Pharaoh's Eunuchs and maidens were preparing Sarai for the kings' bedroom the LORD seeing what was about to take place begins to afflict Pharaoh's household with plagues. Pharaoh is made aware that Sarai is Abram's wife

(maybe after seeing the people, being afflicted with the plagues she told him the truth). Pharaoh then (no doubt in great fear), asks Abram, "Why did he deceive him?"

**Pharaoh's reproof of Abram was very justified:** had God not intervened Sarai would have been bedded by the Egyptian Pharaoh which would resulted in them both sinning (though Pharaoh unknowingly) and the plagues and afflictions spreading out amongst all the people. It is a terrible testimony when the secular world or worshippers of other gods are justified in rebuking a believer of the true God for being deceptive, especially when what they have said borders upon a lie. Those that commit such sins have every reason to thank those who tell them of it. It should also be highlighted that Abrams fear of Pharaoh was groundless, even after Pharaoh had abundantly blessed him and then discovered he had deceived him, Pharaoh had no intention of harming or killing Abram, but sends him away and orders his men not to hurt him in anyway. It is a common trait of human nature to allow groundless, imaginary and unfounded fear to affect the decisions we make, especially when there is a lack of trust in God.

**Later in Genesis Chapter twenty:** we read of Abraham again doing the same thing. He tells Abimelech king of Gerar that Sarah is his sister, because he thought that there was no fear of God amongst Abimelech's people and therefore, they would kill him to have his wife Sarah. Abimelech sent servants to bring Sarah to him. God came to Abimelech in a dream and said, "You shall surely die and all who are yours because the woman who you have taken, is a man's wife." Abimelech had not approached Sarah, so he said, "LORD, will you kill an innocent people? The LORD understands that Abimelech had done no wrong and had been deceived and tells him to return Sarah to Abraham. Abimelech no-doubt in shock horror and fear over what could have happened said to Abraham, "What have you done to us?" As an excuse for his deception, Abraham tells Abimelech that Sarah is his sister, the daughter of his father, but not of his mother and for fear of the people in the land he told Sarah to say at every place that they come to that he is her brother. Abimelech says to Abraham and Sarah, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you," and abundantly blessed them both. (Gen. 20:1-18).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*