

June 25, 2006 AM

THE GOSPEL OF ABRAM (PART 1)
GENESIS 12.1-5A

B. PROMISE AND EXODUS FROM UR AND HARAN (12.1-5A).

1. God's Call to Abram (1-3)

A. "You must leave" (1)

B. "I will bless you" (2-3)

2. Abram's Response of Faith (4-5)

A. Abram leaves Haran (4)

B. God blesses him (5)

1. GOD'S CALL TO ABRAM (1-3)

God's sovereign selection: God chooses Abram. He does not choose Nahor. He does not choose Haran. He chooses Abram. Why God does what he does is determined in himself alone. He chooses Abram over all others.

Abram is not merely chosen at random from among all the pagans of his time. Abram is chosen from the line of Shem which is the line of promise.

Abram: The only believer?: Probably not the only believer. It is quite likely at this time that Shem was still living. Shem lived to be 600 years old. This would make him merely in his 500's when Abram left Haran at 75. Cf. also e.g., Melchizedek, Gen 14.

The choosing that is going on here as to do with more than personal salvation (although this personal salvation is certainly included). This choice of God has to do with being the promised seed and, thus, bearing the promise of God. This election of Abram has more to do with Abram and his seed's *vocation* than it does with whether or not he will go to heaven when he dies.

A. YOU MUST LEAVE (1)

When did God say this?: looks as if YHWH said this to Abram *after* Terah died and while they were in the land of Haran (cf. 11.27-32). But see Act 7.2-4; "... the God of the glory appeared ... *before* he dwelt in Haran...."

First, the timing of God speaking. Cf. Gen 15.7; God brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees. Note also grammar, "*had said.*"

Even if this is the case, it might also be that after settling in Haran for a while, God may have reiterated his word to Abram. This also follows the exodus-entrance-into-the-Promised-Land pattern.

Second, "... **The God of glory appeared** to our father Abraham." God reveals himself in the glory cloud.

The time and situation seem to run something like this: God appeared to Abram in Ur. All of the family moved with Abram (with Terah in the lead in some sense) to Haran. In Haran God possibly reissues the command. Then God leads Abram to the land of Canaan by his personal presence.

Breaking ties: First word spoken to Abram, "Go." He is telling him to get up and walk away from all that he has ever known.

Misperceptions of Abram: a nomad with a few sheep, a wife, and a nephew. He doesn't have much and can easily move around.

Abram was a well-established, wealthy, seventy-five year old man who had a large household, filled with servants. Even more people were added to his household before he left Haran.

Gen 14.14 - Abram has 318 men trained for war in his household. This means that they were certainly seasoned men, probably with families. It is quite possible that Abram could have had 1,000 or more people in his household.

Kings took notice of him and his entourage when he came to a city. E.g., Pharaoh, Abimelech, "mighty prince." Kings don't usually notice nomadic shepherds. They do notice wealthy sheiks with large retinues.

It is said that Abram lived in tents. But you must remember, the tabernacle was also a tent. He probably lived in very large tents.

Also called to leave everything he had ever known, which included his closest family relations. Emphasized with "from," denoting separation: "Go forth **from** your country, And **from** your relatives And **from** your father's house...."

Leaving father and mother: Not something totally new; cf. Gen 2.23-24. Leaving father and mother—the home of your birth, your father’s house—is something that *ought* to be done according to God’s command.

God does not endorse patriarchy—i.e., the oldest father of the family having authority over all the other children despite their age.

God expects children to marry and form new households, with new authority structures, that will, in turn, produce more households. This be fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth so that dominion will be taken requires scattering to some degree.

Up to this point it seems that Abram had not done this (for whatever reason). It is possible that this type of patriarchy might have been part of the idol-worshiping culture of Terah and especially Babel. Remember, one of the purposes of the city-tower of Babel was that the people would not be scattered. This was one of the many acts of rebellion against God’s mandate.

Leaving the culture: he had to leave his extended family and country; i.e., his culture. This is the culture of Babel. Abram could not remain faithful to God and remain a part of this family in the way that he was.

This type of separation was not something that was brand new in the world. Cf. Cain being separated from family; Noah.

Blood relationships do not absolutely tie us to one another. Blood was never and is never to over-rule loyalty to God. This has always been the case. Cf. later also Deut 21.18-21; 13.6-11; see also Mt 10.37; Lk 14.26.

The family can only be what God created and promised it to be when each member is living in conformity and loyalty to God and his word. Your family members are then defined, as Jesus says, by who does the will of the Father (cf. Mt 12.49-50).

There is no doubt that God works with, in, and through blood related families according to his creation. He gives his promises to our children; the children we have by blood. Anyone who rejects those promises is, in some sense, no longer a part of the family.

Go to the land that I will show you: This land has not yet been defined for Abram. It is possible that God led him with the glory cloud like he did the children of Israel through the wilderness.

Remember, God has *appeared* to Abram in Ur. Now he will be leading him to the land of promise.

Application: (1) Water is thicker than blood.

Application: (2) Faith is inseparable from obedience.