



## Genesis – Chapter 12:1-13:1 Yahweh Appears to Abram (Lesson #22)

To access missed lessons, lesson guides, and additional study materials please visit our class website:  
<https://truth-seekers.net>

This morning, we will see God's second calling of Abraham, to go to a land that Yahweh will show him. We will also see eight promises God made to Abram:

- 1) Vs 2 - **I will make of you a great nation**
- 2) Vs 2b - **I will bless you**
- 3) Vs 2c – **I will make your name great**
- 4) Vs 2d – **I am doing this so that you will be a blessing**
- 5) Vs 3 – **I will bless those who bless you**
- 6) Vs 3b – **I will curse those who dishonor you**
- 7) Vs 3c – **In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed**
- 8) Vs 7 - **To your offspring I will give this land**

**12:1** 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. **2** 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. **3** 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."

**Vs 1** - First, the most obvious point. **Yahweh speaks to Abraham.** We do not know how He spoke, or what it looked like. But we know that **God made it clear to Abram what His desire was for Abram's life.**

So God leads with: Go from here, follow me, to a place that I will show you!

We know from Acts 7:2 (Stephen's sermon) that God appeared to Abraham while he was still dwelling in Mesopotamia:

*"2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' 4 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. 5 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." (Ac 7:2-5 ESV)*

So, following the flow from Genesis 11, this is the **second calling of Abraham.** God has led Abraham this far and **God is calling him to continue to follow.**

**APPLICATION: Even in difficult times,** loss of loved ones, loss of job, major health concerns, even parents who decide to go a different way. **God is calling you and I to trust Him and to follow HIM!**

**Vs 2** - Here we find the second component of what God says to Abram, his promises. **Promise #1** - I will make you a **great nation!**

We have read about the **seventy nations** in **Genesis 10.** Here, God calls a man out of darkness and into his light and makes an **audacious promise to him.** I will make of you a **GREAT NATION.**

A great, large, important NATION from you. Not part of the 70, but instead a special nation, **setup by God.**

Please remember what we read at the end of our **lesson last week:**

*"Now Sarai was barren; she had no child." (Ge 11:30 ESV)*

This promise is not just **large and audacious**, it is **unlikely** and indeed **impossible** under the **current circumstances**.

**Promise #2 - A second component** of what God plans to do. **I will bless you!** I will not simply make you a great nation, **I will bless you.**

What a promise, from the creator of all things. He looks at Abram and following the audacious promise to make of him a great nation. **He makes another amazing claim.** God says, **I Will bless you!**

Abraham, is to serve as a picture of what it looks like to be blessed by God!

But did really God “bless” Abraham and in what way(s)?

**(Physical)** - *“1 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb. 2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.” (Ge 13:1-2 ESV)*

**(Spiritual)** *“And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.” (Ge 17:9 ESV)*

*“And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.” (Ge 17:15 ESV)*

**APPLICATION:** Now is an appropriate time to remind each of **us:**

*“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,” (Eph 1:3 ESV)*

You are the among the **ones from all nations** who have been **blessed by God!**

**Promise #3 - I will make your name GREAT!**

This is becoming embarrassing it is so amazing. Who can turn down an offer like this, who would walk away from such as offer as this.

It is interesting when you think of the three major religions: **Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, Abraham’s** name is revered in all three.

Now it is interesting when you go back to what was happening at the Tower of babel. Do you remember what they wanted to do? *Yes, they were trying to make a name for themselves.* Here, God says to Abraham, if you will follow me. I will make **your name great!**

**APPLICATION:** *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,” (1Pe 5:5b-6 ESV)*

We should not be worrying about being famous or important, instead we should humble ourselves before God, and let God do what He wants with us!

**Promise #4 -** God looks at this nomad, whose wife is barren, and he says: *“I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”*

God blessed Abram, so that he could be a blessing to others.

**What an amazing promise** God has made to this **pagan man** who he called out of **Ur of the Chaldeans** and now again calling out of **Haran!**

**APPLICATION:** You and I have been richly blessed by God... So that we can be a blessing to others. Physical blessing, financial blessing, and/or spiritual blessings. You and I have been blessed by God, not to be a reservoir of blessings, but a conduit of blessings.

\*\* We often wonder what God wants to do **to or for us**, we should ask what does God want to do **through us**. \*\*

**Vs 3 – Promise #5** God is not done yet; **I will bless those who bless you.**

I will honor and protect you. Look at how God expressed it. God will not only **bless Abraham**, but God will **bless those who bless Abraham as well**. Here a blessing is promised for those who bless Abraham.

Does this **seem audacious**, does it seem like God is **sorta over the top here? God is not done!**

**Promise #6** – Those who dishonor you, **I will curse**. Those who **dishonor Abraham, God will CURSE**.

Notice those who “**dishonor**” you. The Hebrew word is קָלַל (**qalal**). It can mean **dishonor, despise, lightly esteem or curse**. The ESV chooses to dishonor you.

**God says, I will curse them**. A different Hebrew word אָרַר (**‘arar**). The word is normally translated **curse**.

God says, I will curse those who dishonor or esteem you lightly!

**Promise #7 - the clincher! In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed!**

What, how is that possible? How in the world could all the families of the earth ever be blessed in this man and his barren wife.

This is the scarlet thread. This is what the book is all about. This is the coming of the PROMISED ONE, who would bless the nations! Here it is again, a hint of the coming Messiah!

#### **THOUGHT EXERCISE:**

How did Abraham understand this promise?

How did the nation of Israel understand this promise?

Paul explains this to the church in Galatia:

*“And 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.”” (Ga 3:8 ESV)*

---

---

---

**4 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. 5 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, 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 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. 8 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. 9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.**

**Vs 4 - So Abram leaves Haran** and heads to the **land of Canaan**, as Yahweh had **told him to go**. As Yahweh had commanded him to go. Here is another **step by faith**, a **baby-step**, but a step.

**APPLICATION:** Walking by faith...

*“for we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2Co 5:7 ESV)*

Notice in passing: **He brings Lot with him**. If you remember, Lot’s father had already passed away, so Lot is **following**, for whatever reason, **uncle Abram**.

**APPLICATION: Tagging along** is not how you officially enter God's kingdom. Then or now. Lot seemed to be tagging along, but on the face it seems he lacked a real **relationship with God**. We see this today. Some people, some family members **tag along**. That is not enough.

Here we also see additional details about Abram, namely that he is **75 years old** when he departs from Haran. **Sarah his wife is 65**, but as we will see she is still a beautiful woman. We will see this in just a moment.

**APPLICATION:** God can call us even as older adults to a **greater commitment** and a **greater obedience**, will we follow? Abraham was 75, when God called (again) follow me to a place where I will show you!

You see, sometimes the **greatest call** will come when we are older and even weaker. **Where or what is God calling you to?**

**One other point.** If Abraham was the firstborn of the three brothers. He would have been born when Terah was **70 (Gen 11:26) + 75 (Abram's age now, thus Terah is 145 years old when Abraham left Haran.**

**In Gen 11:32** - We were told plainly that **Terah died in Haran at 205 years old**. This means that Terah would live for an additional **60 years** (in Haran) without Abram, Saria, and Lot before he died.

**NEWS FLASH:** We are not necessarily called to follow our parents, our children, or our grandchildren. We are called to follow God by faith.

**Vs 5** - So **Abram, leaves Haran** and he takes with him, his wife **Sarai**, and his brother's son (Lot) we can almost imagine that uncle Abram takes on the responsibility of **raising his nephew following the death of his father.**

It is worth noting that God had told Abraham: **Gen 12:1** *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.*

Notice, they **collected all their possessions** that they had gathered in Haran, and well as the people. This likely included **both employees** as well as **possibly slaves**. **Clearly** God has blessed Abram with **physical, earthly blessings** and he is now a **wealthy man**.

Abram is growing in **possessions**, and he is growing in **persons**. One we will learn about later is **Eliezer of Damascus**. We will read about him in **Genesis 15:2**. This will be another test of Abram's faith.

**From Haran to Canaan:** This is over **400 miles**. Abraham will now be moving into a land that is inhabited by people that as best we can tell **are not following Yawheh**. He is moving into the land of the Canaanites.

They are moving into a **potentially dangerous leg** of this journey.

We should imagine it was a **difficult journey**, we should suspect that there were **challenges along the way**.

We should keep in mind God's amazing promises. Especially: ***I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse!*** God has promised to care for Abram and there is still the promise to make Abram a **great nation**.

**APPLICATION:** In our journeys for the glory of God and to do the will of God. **GOD is with us!**

**Vs 6** – Abram passed through the land and stopped in **Shechem**, in the **land of Canaan** (Gen 33:18).

First the word oak, is the Hebrew word that is normally translated **"plain."**

So, although the exact location of the **oak of Moreh** or the **plain of Moreh** has been **lost to time**, ancient readers likely knew **exactly where this was that Abram** initially arrived in the land of Canaan.

This is the **first mention of Shechem**. It will be mentioned another **60+ times** in the Old Testament.

Also, the author is clear... *At that time the Canaanites were in the land.* The land was filled with wickedness!

**Vs 7** - Then the Lord (Yahweh) **appeared to Abram.**

The Hebrew word means to **look, see, or perceive.** What comes to mind when you read this? I believe that it was a preincarnate appearance of Christ. A **Christophany** or a **Theophany.**

By the way... This is the first time in the Hebrew Bible we are told that Yahweh **“appeared”** to anyone.

God has walked with people, spoken to people, and possibly even visibly presented Himself to them.

But here, we are clearly told that Yahweh **“appeared”** to Abram. Can you imagine what it would be like to see God, veiled in human form?

**Promise #8** - Here tucked away in verse 7 is the **final promise.** Here God tells Abram: **“To your offspring I will give this land.”**

God makes this promise to give the land, presumably the land of Canaan to the off-spring of Abram.

Abraham has **no descendants** and the land is **filled with Canaanites.** In this setting, God says: **“To your offspring I will give this land.”**

**How in the world can God make this happen?**

If you received this **amazing string of promises, directly from God, what would you do?**

**Abram’s response:** So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. You see he worshipped God.

**APPLICATION:** This is a good lesson for you and I! God has told you and I something so outside human thinking and outside our wildest imagination, that God offers us eternal life, complete forgiveness of our sins? What should we do? Worship Him!

Abram built an altar to Yahweh, who had **“appeared”** to him.

Abram, there in Shechem (in the land of Canaan) in enemy territory, Abram built an altar to Yahweh.

Noah built an altar to Yahweh in Genesis 8:20, this is the second altar we find mentioned in the Old Testament.

**Vs 8** - From Shechem, Abram moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent.

He built **another altar**, there in the **land of Canaan.** He arrived in a new place, surrounded by **pagans** and he built another altar!

**Abram built an altar and called upon the name of Yahweh!**

It is clear as we read this account that Abram was currently **living like a nomad**, living among pagans, moving around the **land that is promised to His offspring!**

**APPLICATION:** When was the last time you and I “called upon the name of the Lord?”

**Vs 9** - So, he stayed there only **temporarily**, and then **journeyed on.**

He was going to the **Negeb.** It literally means that he continued south, towards the region that would become known as **southern Judah, the Negev desert.**

God is still directing him! God has started him at the top and shown him the expanse of the promised land.

---

---

---

*10 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. 11 When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 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." 14 ¶ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. 15 And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.*

**Vs 10** - Here a **serve trial** enters Abram's life. God has brought Abram into the land and there is a famine.

**APPLICATION:** Trials are the things that are meant to **grow** and **mature** us in our faith. They are not punishment, but a way the **father weans us** off the world and the things of the world.

What would Abram do? There is a famine in the land. This is a chance for Abram to trust God, and his faith to be deepened. This trying of his faith is not to damage him, but to build him.

**APPLICATION:** You and I can step out, feeling like we are hearing from God and it proves to be hard, maybe there is opposition, and so we can wrongly conclude that opposition proves it was not God's will.

Consider the possibility that the **opposition might** likely prove it is **His will**, and a chance for our **trust, faith, and reliance** in Him to be deepened:

*"2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (Jas 1:2-4 ESV)*

As he is moving through the land, it is apparent that there is a famine in the land. Then Abram moves through the land of Canaan and proceeds down to Egypt and sojourns there.

**When we read this, we have questions:**

Did God send him to Egypt?

Did God need Him to move to Egypt for food or protection?

Is Abram showing a lack of faith?

My guess, as best we can tell God had told Abram to go to Canaan, this famine in the land would serve as a **test of his faith**. Would he **trust God**, would he **believe God** even when the circumstances dictated differently that what God had decreed.

At any rate the group... **Abram, Sarai, and Lot** head for Egypt, where the land is not under famine and life will be **much easier**.

**Vs 11-13** - So here they are, on the **outskirts of Egypt**, Abram looked at Sarai (his wife) and said (rich's sanctified imagination): Listen Sarai, you are a gorgeous woman, when these pagan Egyptians see you, they will say she is beautiful, that guy is her husband, let's knock him off and she can maybe marry one of us. **They will kill me and let you live.**

You see, the **first sin**, has created a **problem**, that is now going to need another and more profound sin to attempt to correct.

**APPLICATION:** This is how **sin** often works! This is how **compromise** works.

But, God had already promised to care for Abraham, God had already declared he would care for Abraham, He would bless Abram, He would curse those who dishonored Abram. But here Abram is, using human logic, and what seems (in a worldly sense) will work.

Abram's concerns are **all misplaced**. Equally, he has completely failed to **trust God** to keep his word!

**APPLICATION:**

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." (Pr 3:5 ESV)*

*Because of the fall we are naturally wired to trust in ourselves to want to figure it out ourselves. Abram was a man of like passions just like you and I!*

**APPLICATION:**

*"Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight." (Pr 12:22 ESV)*

**Vs 14-15** - So Abram, if nothing else, was clearly a prophet and as he entered Egypt, the Egyptians took notice of Sarai and concluded that she was indeed a very beautiful woman.

The Hebrew is clear at this point, the Egyptians saw that she was very beautiful. The princes of the Pharaohs praised her beauty to Pharaoh. Thus, it appears that Pharaoh gave the command to take her into his house.

**Vs 16** - For her sake "he" likely Pharaoh in context dealt well with Abram. So, Abram's compromise and his lapse in truth telling, on the face, seems to be paying off. It seemed to be going well!

**QUESTIONS:** What was going through Sarai's mind? What was going through Abram's mind?

---

---

---

*17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 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? 19 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." 20 And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.*

**Vs 17 - But Yahweh** took immediate steps to rectify the situation!

**First, Yahweh afflicted**, the Hebrew word is "touched." Yahweh **touched Pharaoh palace** with great plagues, he touched his house with **GREAT DISEASES**.

We are not sure exactly what Yahweh did but **two things** are **obvious**.

- 1) The great plagues that hit **Pharaoh's house was serious**. It was touched with **GREAT PLAGUES**. It was serious and it **seems like it was more than one**.
- 2) Somehow, and we are not told how, **Pharaoh knew it was because of Sarai**.
  - a. Maybe God told him
  - b. Maybe she was the only one in the whole palace that did not have this plague.
  - c. Maybe it was by lot, we simply do not know.

What we do know, is that Pharaoh came to know the PLAGUES that were in his house were because he had taken Abram's wife!

**APPLICATION:** When we have issues and problems of any kind in our house, we need to be sure they are not happening because of some sin in our life. All problems are not because of sin, this one clearly was.

**Vs 18-19** - We can imagine that Pharaoh summoned Abram, I can picture in my mind Abram entering Pharaoh's court, Pharaoh's palace, a palace that is under great plagues.

**Pharaoh looks at Abram** (I wonder who was more fearful at this particular moment)? Pharaoh looks at Abram, I suspect he is **angry** (at Abram) and **afraid** (of Yahweh)! Three rapid fire questions:

- 1) **What have you done to me?**
  - a. Whatever is going down you have done this... WHY?
- 2) **Why in the world did you NOT tell me that this woman was your wife?**
- 3) **Why in the world did you say "she is my sister."**

Seemingly before Abram can answer a word. In fact it appears that Pharaoh does not even provide him time to answer, but instead **says take your wife and go.**

We can imagine that God has "**visited**" **Pharaoh**, and Pharaoh **understands who calls the shots!** What is funny to me is we have no indication that Pharaoh turned to serve the living and true God.

It is clear, God in some way had made his **awesome power known** to Pharaoh, but as best we can tell, Pharaoh was untouched by it all (spiritually)!

**Vs 20** - More than that, Pharaoh gave orders **concerning Abram**, they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

We do not know the sum of those orders concerning Abram.

But we can use our sanctified imagination and imagine that it went something like this. Pharaoh summoned his guards and said:

Listen, that **beautiful woman** is **that man's wife**. And I was visited by God who told me if I **touch her I was a dead man**, if I did not give her back to her husband, I was a **dead man**, if I touched her husband I was a **dead man**. By the way he also told me that these great plagues are upon my house **because** I took this man's wife to be my wife and nothing was going to change until that changed!

If you doubt this possible scenario, We will see something like this happen again in Genesis **chapter 20**.

**Where was God in all of Abram's roaming?** Right with Him.

God has made great and precious promises to Abram, and God is going to fulfill them. He does not need Abram's human wisdom, instead he desires to grow Abram's faith and trust in Him.

The same is true for you and I!

If you are a believer, if you have received Jesus by faith: God has made great and precious promises to you, and the God who cannot lie is going to fulfill them. He does not need our human wisdom, instead he desires to grow our **faith and trust in Him**.

You see nothing is **going to happen to us** that is not filtered through the hands of our loving Father! Abram, has not learned this lesson yet. But you and I can settle it today, all from the Bible and the life of Abram!

---

---

---

*13:1 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.*

We end this week, with our brother's faith being tested, him not scoring so well, but God is with him and next week we will find him back in the Promised land.