

Genesis 12

Our Prototype Believer

Genesis 12 may be one of the most important chapters in the bible. Prior to this chapter we skip long periods of time in the biblical narrative. Once we meet Abram, we begin to track the life and times of various characters of faith. Abram is our faith example to pattern our lives after. It begins with God making the first move to create holiness and separation from this world.

just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”⁷ Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. (Galatians 3)

This is another *start-over* for mankind. God replaced Able with Seth, then he used a flood and then he created a separation away from Babylon-central. Now he takes a man out of his culture to start a new nation. God had to remove Abram from any controlling influence to re-mold him. Abram is our best faith example for many reasons. He changed his life and commitments and went out of his way to meet God personally. We can go through our religious rituals without really trying to meet God in a more personal way. In the end, that is all we have. Religion cannot save you. We have to know each other (like friends do).

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.¹¹ By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. (Hebrews 11)

Abram is an example of a former idolater whom God transformed to build a new spiritual family. We all need to be transformed to walk according to our calling.

And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on

the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. ³ Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. (Josua 24)

Read Genesis 12:1-4: We find Abram in a distant land, before he became a believer. He was a Semite, because he was a descendant of Shem. The Semitic nations are pretty much everyone in the middle east. He was a Hebrew, because he was a descendant of Eber. The descendants of Eber also include some Arabs. He is not a Jew in the strictest sense; but he is their ancestor. He is the starting point of the nation of Israel. Some Jews refer him to the only man who was both a Jew and a Gentile. That is good to visualize to make a point; but not precisely true. God plucked Abram out of his Chaldean culture to go out and start a faith-based nation. He founded Israel.

This is the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot. ²⁸ And Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹ Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. ³⁰ But Sarai was barren; she had no child. ³¹ And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. ³² So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran. (Genesis 11)

One reason that Abram provides a good faith pattern for us is by his calling. He was nowhere spiritually. *He did not know what he did not know.* We too begin as ignorant and sinful people who need to see the light. God is the creator of the universe who specializes in creating something out of nothing. God cannot make you into something unless you understand and agree that you need his help. Pride and self-confidence are faith killers.

(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; (Romans 4)

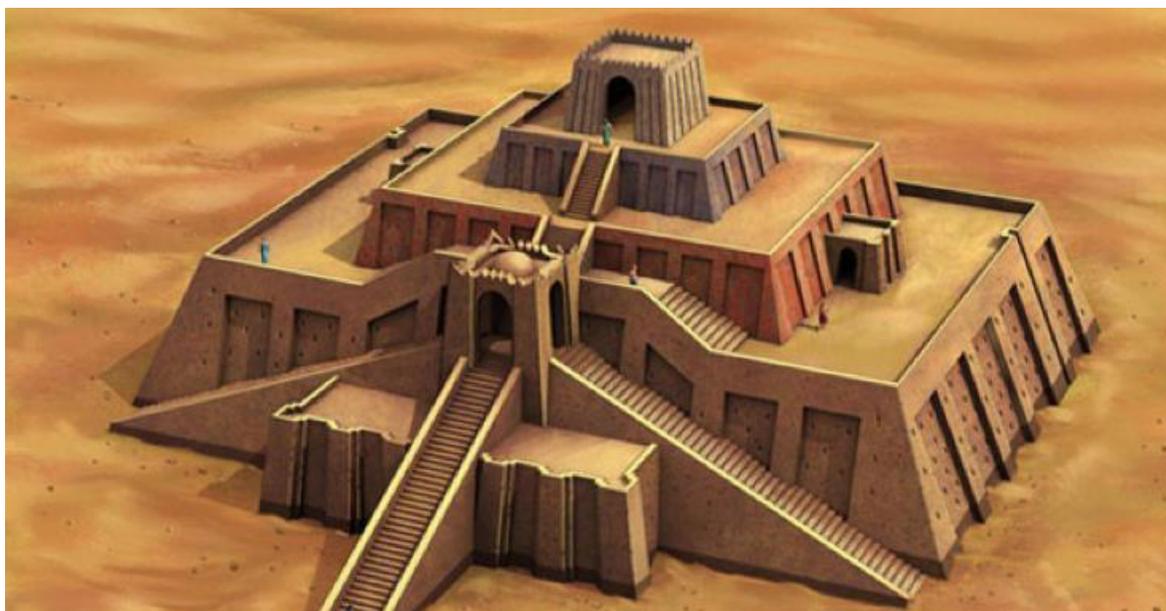
It was not Abram's efforts and actions as much as it was about his faith in what God would do what he promised. He believed before he took his journey.

And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15)

The first thing that God did was to remove the ongoing patterns in Abram's life. He was ignorant to God's plan for his life. He was to exit his ancestral idol-worshipping culture. God considered it to be an act of faith to leave his comforts and provisions, unto some unknown destination. We do not get to call the shots or critique the path ahead if God is driving the bus.

Abram was born into an earthly family in Ur. Ur was a moon worshipping community. There are still archaeological remains from idolatry worship in Ur. Only the base of that ziggurat in Ur remains today. Those people were trying to communicate with the gods. The idea is to create a heavenly being's residence at the top of the pyramid. It is about man looking to meet god.

God was now inviting Abram to join a truly-heavenly spiritual family. That is the idea behind being born a second time. It is a re-start, with God birthing your spirit.



Abram left with a few family members, and he stopped at a midpoint in his journey. A lot has been said about Abram beginning the first leg of his adventure with his dad and his nephew on the journey. How literally was he supposed to leave all of his family (except his wife)? In the same way people question why he stayed in Haran for a while enroute to Canaan. This long term stopover was way out of the way. He stayed in Haran for 60 years, until his dad died. Haran is in Turkey and is about 600 miles from Ur. Shechem (the destination) is about 400 miles from Haran. Ur and Haran were both known for moon worship. Interestingly, many years later, Abram sent a servant to find a wife for Isaac amongst his relatives in Haran. Haran was Abram's brother, so he must have lived there at one time. Was this a compromise to join other family enroute to Canaan; or was this a delay or something else?



What was Abram expecting to find at the end of his journey? He was looking for the city where God lived. A day did come when he had lunch with Jesus.

Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ² So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the

tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³ and said, “My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. ⁴ Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.” (Genesis 18)

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8)

Abram built altars wherever he went, and he practiced the presence of God. Abram was promised that God would bring in Abram on the ground floor on nation building. That was for physical Israel; plus spiritually all people of faith. Abram was the first of his kind. God would build Israel out of Abram’s descendants. God would spiritually bless people of all nationalities, if they shared his faith in God’s promises.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11)

God promised Abram that whoever blessed him would receive a blessing; and whoever cursed him would be cursed. As the progenitor of Israel, Abram and his descendants would bear this out. The rise and fall of many empires were based on how they treated the Jews. America may be living off of goodwill towards Israel. God help us if we lose that. To that end, Satan has resisted Israel and its people more than any nation.

God Has Used World Empires to Affect Israel

From ancient Egypt in the second millennium BC to Great Britain in the 20th century, there has been a three thousand year parade of empires marching across the world stage. One has replaced another on a routine basis. At any given time, there has been a greatest empire on Earth, at least until the end of the Second World War. And all of these empires has had exactly one territory in common: Israel. Israel has been the target, the political football, or represented the 50-yard line between warring nations. Here’s the evidence:

Egyptians and Hittites: The world’s first empires, relatively small though they were, flanked ancient Canaan to the north and south. Both claimed the territory and had colonists there. The first recorded battle in history, the Battle of Kadesh, was

fought for control over the region. The Egyptians triumphed, and Canaan became a protectorate of Egypt for several centuries. God told Abram in advance that his descendants would leave their homeland for 400 years; and then return, because the locals would create an imploding society.

Assyrians: In the 9th century, a new power, the Assyrians, arose to supplant both the Egyptians and the Hittites. The Assyrian realm is generally considered to be the world's first true empire, stretching from Egypt and Turkey in the west to Iran in the east. The northern kingdom of Israel was absorbed in 720 BC, while Judah became a client state. God called Assyria the Rod of His Indignation, raised up to relocate the 10 northern tribes of Israel.

Babylonians: In 612 BC, the Assyrian Empire was overthrown by the Babylonians, who forged an even larger and more powerful, if more corrupt and more short-lived, empire. The Babylonians absorbed almost all of the old Assyrian territory, and in 586 BC conquered the Southern Kingdom of Judah including Jerusalem. God expressly said well in advance, that he raised up Babylon to rule the world primarily as part of his plan to relocate the Jews for 70 years.

Persians (Medes and Achaemenids): In the 8th century BC, an even larger empire was taking shape further to the east. The first Persian kingdom under the Medes overthrew the Babylonians and absorbed its territories, including Israel. These were passed on to the Achaemenids, who built the largest empire to date, and under whom Israel was a client state. God said well in advance that he would make a man to be born who would be called Cyrus, to free his people from Babylon after their 70 years of Babylonian captivity was over.

Greeks: In 334 BC, Alexander the Great led the greatest war of conquest in ancient times. He conquered the Persia and extensive additional territories as well. Israel, which had enjoyed a brief period of autonomy under the Achaemenids, was now part of Alexander's Empire. It was fought over by the Seleucid and Ptolemaic successor empires until the Maccabean Revolt. The New Testament was written in the first worldwide, sophisticated language (Greek).

Romans and Byzantines: From humble beginning on the Italian peninsula, Rome grew into the greatest and longest-lasting political entity in world history. In the 1st century BC, they annexed Judea under the pretense of putting down civil unrest. They stayed there for over nearly four hundred years, before passing it on to the Byzantines for an additional three hundred years. The Romans built roads around the world to more efficiently take the gospel from Jerusalem to the whole world. Emperor Constantine noted that the sign of the cross seemed to provide him with military victories, so he legalized Christianity. The Roman persecution spread the gospel better than any purposeful effort of believers.

Persians (Sassanids): After a millennium in the shadow of the Greeks and Romans, the Persians finally reemerged as the world's major empire in the 6th century, at least for a few decades. During their brief years of re-expansion, the Sassanids reconquered Israel after a hiatus that lasted nearly a thousand years, but they would only hold it for a few decades.

Arabs, Umayyads, Abbasids and successor states: Almost immediately on the heels of the Sassanid conquest, the forces of the Islamic Caliphate swarmed out of Arabia and conquered everything from Spain to India. From this time until the Crusades, Israel was part of a succession of Muslim empires, all of which were the largest of their times. Islam basically captured Europe, raped the women, killed 30% of the Christians, and held Europe on its knees...until the Crusades.

Mongols: In the 13th century, the Mongols arose in Central Asia and laid waste to everything in their path, creating the largest contiguous land empire in history. They crushed most of the Muslim territories in the Middle East, and were on their way to Egypt, when they were stopped at the Battle of Ain Jalut in Israel, which marked the farthest point of the Muslim advance.

Ottomans: In the wake of the breakup of the Mongol Empire, a new Muslim power emerged under the Ottomans. The Ottomans re-established the pre-eminent empire in the Middle East, expanding it deep into Europe and across Africa. It occupied Israel in the early 1500s and held on to it for four centuries.

British: At the dawn of the Age of Exploration, the definition of an empire considerably, as the nations of Europe expanded across the oceans of the world. For a brief period the greatest of these was the Spanish Empire, but Spain probably did not surpass the Ottomans before the British the Spanish (okay, I'll admit I'm stretching a bit by excluding the Spanish Empire).

Anyway, by the 18th century, Britannia ruled the waves, and over a quarter of the land area of the Earth. After the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1918, Israel became a protectorate of the British Empire, a distinction not shared by Syria or Turkey (which had heretofore always been in the same empires as Israel). England's Balfour Declaration re-established Israel after ceasing to formally exist for 2,000 years. Israel is the only nation to come back from the dead. No nation has ever left its homeland to return. They even forgot their own language and had to be re-taught. God gets all of the credit for all of this supernatural adventure.

So, following the above chain, it can be seen how Israel, and ONLY Israel, has been part of every preeminent empire in history. Coincidence?

You can see the fall of many world empires based on their treatment of the Jews.

Shechem and Bethel

Read Genesis 12:5-8: Abram lands in Shechem. He noticed that Canaanites were already in this land. There is no connection (other than nomenclature) between Palestine and Philistine, etc... God destroyed every Canaanite. God appeared to Abram and told him that this is now the land that belongs to you and your descendants irrevocably forever. Knowing this is very important to the Hamas hostilities and other international conflicts. This has always been Israel's land. In fact, God gave Israel much more than their current national boundaries. Israel thought (in error) that they could share some property to make peace with their enemies more than once. This has always blown up in their face. The idea that Israel is either an occupier or an aggressor is confusion and inaccurate.

The first thing that Abram did when he arrived in the holy land was to build an altar. Something had to die to facilitate any encounter or relationship between Abram and God. We cannot stand in front of God and stare at his face, because nothing sinful can even exist in his presence.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1)

You are of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on wickedness. (Habakkuk 1)

But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." (Exodus 33)

The screenshot shows the Blue Letter Bible website interface. The main content area displays the lexicon entry for the Hebrew word זָבַח (zābāḥ). The entry includes the following information:

- Transliteration:** zābāḥ
- Pronunciation:** zaw-bakh'
- Part of Speech:** verb
- Root Word (Etymology):** A primitive root
- Dictionary Aids:** TWOT Reference: 525
- KJV Translation Count — Total: 134x**
- The KJV translates Strong's H2076 in the following manner:** sacrifice (85x), offer (39x), kill (5x), slay (5x).
- Outline of Biblical Usage [?]**
 - to slaughter, kill, sacrifice, slaughter for sacrifice
 - (Qal)
 - to slaughter for sacrifice
 - to slaughter for eating
 - to slaughter in divine judgment
 - (Piel) to sacrifice, offer sacrifice
- Strong's Definitions [?]** (Strong's Definitions Legend)

זָבַח zābāḥ, zaw-bakh'; a primitive root; to slaughter an animal (usually in sacrifice)—kill, offer, (do) sacrifice, slay.
- Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon [?]** (Jump to Scripture Index)

STRONGS H2076: Abbreviations SHOW ALL

זָבַח 134 verb slaughter for sacrifice (Late Hebrew *id.*, Phoenician זָבַח; Assyrian *Zūbu* D¹⁸ 174 compare Lotz^{7P} 174, Arabic ذَبَحَ Sabean דָּבַח C^{1S}v. 1, 2, No. 741, 11, 12, Aramaic H1684 זָבַח ܙܒܚܐ, Ethiopic ደብረ) **Qal**₁₁₂ Perfect 7 1 Kings 8:63; 1 Kings 13:2, 7; Exodus 20:24 + 3 times, זָבַחְתִּי Ezekiel 39:19, זָבַחוּ Exodus 34:15; Leviticus 17:5, זָבַחְתֶּם Exodus 8:24, זָבַחוּ Exodus 8:23; Imperfect זָבַחְתָּ Genesis 31:54 + 14 times; 2nd person masculine singular suffix זָבַחְתְּ Deuteronomy 15:21, 2nd person feminine singular suffix זָבַחְתְּ Deuteronomy 15:21, 1st person singular זָבַחְתִּי Psalm 116:17, זָבַחְתִּי Psalm 27:6, Psalm
- Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon [?]**

The right sidebar contains several utility sections: Sponsors, Search Results by Book (with a grid of book counts), BLB Searches, Multi-Verses Retrieval, Let's Connect (social media links), Daily Devotionals, and Daily Bible Reading Plans.

Jesus made a way to communicate and stand before God and see him in human form. Jesus became that sacrificed lamb (so to speak) to cover up our sinfulness. God the Father can look at Jesus, because he is sinless. If Jesus is alive within our spirit; God can look at him (in us). To say that God appeared to Abram here is to say that he saw Jesus. The Holy Spirit is invisible...and you cannot see God the Father, outside of Jesus and survive.

Generations later, Jacob re-entered Israel at Shechem. He may have been following in Abraham's footsteps of faith, as he looked for a fresh start. He went to the tree of

Moreh. Moreh means the place of instruction. Abram needs a download and some introductions in his new home. Shechem became a city of refuge; to protect the unfortunate from retribution. Abram also built an altar between Bethel and Ai. Bethel is where Jacob saw the stairway to heaven years later.

Read Genesis 12:10-20: As Christians, our faith journey does not plateau. it keeps ascending. Abram made this monumental life change to be faced with a massive famine. An unbeliever might say that if he was God, there should not be an issue with provision. The idea was that we need to punch our train ticket at a number of stops that we have no intention of ever visiting. We do not get to make our own testing criterion. God intervenes and derails our plans to truly get us on to his track to advancement, and to higher faith. This trip exposed Abram's most prized possession (his stunningly beautiful wife). He did not trust God's providence to keep her from being kidnapped in a foreign land. Abram came up with a partially-true white lie to call her his sister, instead of his wife. She was his ½ sister, as there was no law against that marriage as of yet. Any suitor would look to enrich her brother instead of just killing her husband for her. We may excel in one type of test and fail miserably in another. We may do well in head-on attacks on our faith, but fail miserably to flattery and subterfuge schemes.

God did step in when Pharaoh took his wife away from him. God punished and threatened to destroy the King's family and his court if he did not let Sarai go back to her husband. God paralyzed the leader and world's strongest nation for Abram and his little family. It is always a bad look to save our own bacon and leave a bad taste in the mouth of observing unbelievers. It is better when we let God be God.