

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

CAN I TRUST GOD?

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PART 5: WAVERING FAITH

In this message we are going to examine Abraham's mindset and how his faith in God developed.

ABRAM'S EARLY YEARS

Terah named his firstborn son Abram – which means “God is Exalted.” Abram was born in the city of Ur – modern day southern Iraq. Terah was the 10th generation from Noah and lived with the descendants of Shem, who had turned into the Chaldean people group.

The Bible doesn't say that Abram had any problems communicating with the people living in Canaan and Egypt. The assumption is that all these people had a common language at this time.

According to the Jewish Midrash (part of the Talmud), Terah had an idol worship factory in Ur and Abram worked in it during his youth. This is plausible since Rebekah's brother, Laban, had house gods. Their father was Bethuel, the son of Nahor, a brother to Abram.

Genesis 31:19, 29-35

It is interesting that Laban told Jacob that the God of Isaac had appeared to him in a dream and warned him not to hurt Jacob. This indicates that the family of Terah had abandoned the God of Noah and turned to idol worship. **Genesis 31:29**

THE CALLING OF TERAH

God did not initially call Abram to go to the land of Canaan. The call came instead to his father, who uprooted his family from Ur, and traveled north to Haran – modern day Turkey. Its location was on the plain of the Tigris River and north of Syria. The city was an important trading center, which meant its inhabitants were not poor.

For some reason – and the Bible does not say why – Terah did not fulfill his call to go to Canaan, but remained in Haran until he died at the age of 205. **Genesis 11:24-32**

THE CALLING OF ABRAM

Abram was 75 years old when God called him to leave Haran and travel to an unknown land that God would show him. There is no mention in the Bible that Abram worshiped idols and my assumption is that he had a special revelation from God which caused him to abandon the religion of his father. **Genesis 12:1-3**

God made such a strong impression on Abraham that he abandoned his father and went out in faith, not knowing where he would end up. **Hebrews 11:8-10**

Abram was rich with cattle, camels and sheep and had around 1,000 persons with him when he left Haran. **Genesis 12:4-6; 13:1-7; 14:14**

God appeared to him again to confirm the calling. **Genesis 12:7-9**



THE TESTING OF ABRAHAM

A person's faith is never tested during good times; the testing always comes during a time of stress and calamity. God created a famine in the land of Canaan which forced Abram to move his operation to Egypt. He did not trust God to protect him and told Sarai to lie and say she was his sister – which was a half-truth. **verses 10-20**

ANOTHER CONFIRMATION FROM THE LORD

God had patience with Abram and sought to confirm the covenant with him. It ended with Abram debating with the Lord and complaining that he was getting older and had no son. **Genesis 15:1-18**

LACK OF FAITH AND PATIENCE

Nine years after God had appeared unto Abram, Sarai became anxious because she was getting older and had not been able to conceive a son. She started to lean on Abram that they could no longer wait for the Lord to do a miracle. It was necessary to take care of things themselves. Abram was not yet strong in his faith and did not fully trust in God. As a result, he agreed to Sarai's scheme and had sexual intercourse with a slave named Hagar. **Genesis 16:1-4**

GRIEF AND SORROW

Failure to trust in God leads to grief, pain and trouble. Sarai was not a nice person after her slave conceived. The situation became aggravated when Hagar became belligerent toward Sarai, who regretted pushing Abram to have sex with her slave. Sarai wanted Hagar gone and did not care what happened to the child Abram fathered. There was no harmony in the household. **verses 5-16**

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

Jesus appeared to Abram fourteen years after the birth of Ishmael. He was told to walk with the Lord and be perfect. Abram fell on his face when he saw Jesus. **Genesis 17:1-3**

Jesus changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "Father of many nations." **verses 4-6**

This was an eternal covenant between Abraham and his seed. **verse 7; Romans 9:4-8; Galatians 3:16-19**

Jesus also provided Abraham with a land covenant which included the ritual of circumcision. **Genesis 17:8-14**

Jesus also changed the name of Sarai to Sarah, which means "Mother of many nations." **verses 15-17**

THE UNBELIEF OF ABRAHAM

Abraham did not have a lot of respect for Jesus at this point and treated Him like a powerless idol. He fell down on his face and began to laugh at the thought that his 90 year old wife was going to give birth to a son. After composing himself, Abraham told Jesus that he was content to have Ishmael as the heir. **verses 17-18**

Jesus continued to be patient with Abraham, knowing that it takes time for faith to develop in a person. **verses 19-22**

FIRST CIRCUMCISION

It must have been quite a sight when Abraham called together all the hundreds of males in his group and told them that God had decreed Abraham would need to cut the foreskins from their penises right away.

Given the environment was not sterile, every man would have come down with a multiple day infection. This act shows the authority Abraham exercised over his people that not one of them objected. **verses 23-27**

SUMMARY

When Abram left his father in Haran at the age of 75, he took the written account of the creation, Adam and Eve, their fall into sin, and life up to the Flood through the books of Enoch. Noah also wrote his life story and each subsequent patriarch recorded their firstborn son.

At the same time, Abraham was not sure whether God was supreme. Were there any other gods? Abraham did not know how much control God exercised over earthly affairs.

It would take several more events and an appearance from Jesus before Abraham had full faith in God.

The same holds true for every Christian. We come to trust God over the time spent in the valley of sorrows. **Romans 10:17**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?