

## A Blessing for All Nations

Lesson Text: **Genesis 12:1–9**

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **ANALYZE** the story of God’s call and promise to Abram; **EMBRACE** the joy that **Abram and Sarai’s** faith gave to them from obeying the Lord; and **DECIDE** what we are willing to sacrifice to claim the promises of God.

### In Focus

*As we will see with Abram and Sarai in today’s lesson, a decision to follow God’s command continues to reap a reward for those who by faith in Jesus Christ become His seed.*

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### Keep In Mind

*And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” (Genesis 12:2, KJV).*

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### NOTES

## Lesson Text

### Genesis 12:1–9~NKJV

1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.

**2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.**

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

**4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.**

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls whom they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.

**6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.**

7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, “Unto thy seed will I give this land.” And there built he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

**8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.**

9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

## NOTES

## The Lesson

### **The People, Places and Times**

**Abram:** The Bible depicts a detailed review of Shem’s descendants—Noah’s eldest son. It is out of Shem’s lineage, through Abram, God would call out a people unto Himself to be witnesses in the earth of His greatness. They would receive the blessing for serving the one true and living God during universal idolatry. Ultimately, Abram’s seed through 42 generations would bring forth the Messiah who would reconcile the world back to the **Father (Matthew 1:1–17)**. Abram exemplifies the faith necessary to obtain righteousness and access to the promises of God through Jesus Christ.

**The Land of Canaan.** The Hebrew word for “Canaan” (Kena`an, ken-AH-an) means low region or lowland. Its name denotes the land which resides west of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, between those waters on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Named after Noah’s fourth son Ham, the land was given by God to Abram’s posterity, the Children of Israel, as promised. In modern geography, Canaan is now Palestine.

### **Background**

In chapter 11, (Genesis 11:10–32), we learn of Abram’s lineage as a descendant of Noah’s son Shem. In Genesis 9:26, Noah prophesied over Shem, after he and his brother Japheth covered his nakedness, declaring that he would be blessed and that Canaan would be his servant. Genesis 11 ends with Abram’s father, Terah, leading his family’s migration from his native land Ur of the Chaldees to make their way to the land of Canaan, but instead, the group settles in Haran (Genesis 11:31). It is noted in verse 32, however, that Terah remained in Haran until his death. Geographically, scholars maintain Haran was perched between Ur and Canaan, so they were in the middle of their intended destination. Terah’s name was believed to mean “delay,” and as referenced in a review of Israel’s history (Joshua 24:2), he was an idol worshiper. We will see why Abram and Sarai’s faith and obedience were pivotal to the blessing for all nations as God separates him from his people.

## **NOTES**

## In Depth

**1. God's Call for a Blessed Nation (Genesis 12:1–3)** Abram was the youngest son of Terah. He was a descendant of Noah's son Shem. According to Stephen's account in **Acts 7:2–4**, the God of glory appeared to Abram while he was in Mesopotamia, which was before he settled in Haran. Therefore, when Abram heard God's call in Genesis 12:1, this was his second encounter with the Lord Jehovah, and it's believed to be not long after his father's death. Abram was told to leave his country and his family and uproot his home to go to a place the Lord would soon reveal. The Scripture does not indicate there was a discussion after this command was given, but Abram moved at God's word. Abram was surrounded by people, including his own family, who were polytheistic (worshipped multiple gods). For him to hear the voice of the true and living God was monumental. Because of his obedience, Abram is forever etched as "the father of faith." With this second encounter, however, God made Abram a promise to bless him and make him a great nation, to make his name great and for him to be a blessing (v. 2). This promise from God was astounding due to Abram's age (v. 4), and as first noted in Genesis 11:30, his wife Sarai was barren. God gave Abram further motivation to adhere to His command with the pronouncement of future blessings. For leaving his father's house, Abram would receive a father's blessing, a namesake. God told Abram His sovereign promise to fulfill His word to make a great nation from him and to make his name great. Abram went from not having any children and with no hope of ever being a father to having the promise of an entire nation coming from his loins.

In Genesis 12:3, God established His relationship and the power of this connection by stating that He would bless those who blessed Abram and curse those who cursed him. God's presence is marked in the lives of those chosen by Him. Verse 3 ends with the most important component of this promise: God commits to blessing all the families of the earth through Abram. Abram's seed birthed three world religions; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (**Ishmael**) all lay claim to him as father. However, the ending of this verse points to the coming Christ who would bring salvation and restoration to the world. Abram's seed is the divinely appointed channel through which blessing would come to all humankind by faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:6–7, 14)

**2. Abram's Response to God's Call (vv. 4–6)** Abram followed God's spoken command and departed from his familiar surroundings to a place unknown. Abram, after having departed once with his kindred from his native land of Ur, was once again a nomad at the age of 75, leaving Haran. He took with him his wife, all their possessions, his nephew Lot, and his servants. We can imagine how very unsettling it must have been for Abram to be uprooted again and to move everything he owned to answer God's call. However, despite the circumstances, Abram walked in obedience and trusted God based on what God had revealed to him. He went forward and began the journey. His father, Terah, stopped short his migration to Canaan (**see Genesis 11:31, NIV**). When God declares a call on your life, not everyone is privy to seeing the revelation of God's plan. Therefore, even close relatives may need to be left behind.

In Genesis 12:6, Abram arrives in Canaan and the land is already occupied by the Canaanites. He is yet again a stranger in a strange land. He was put in an uncomfortable position by coming into a land that was promised to him but was already inhabited, which could have been a reason to give up. But Abram continued to follow God and remain confident he heard God correctly. Oftentimes, when God gives us a directive, it may not come with full disclosure of the details—like what we must go through to get to the promise. Just like Jesus, Abram teaches us to keep moving forward by focusing on God’s promise (Hebrews 12:2)

**3. God’s Promise of Generational Blessings (v. 7)** In this instance, rather than just speaking to Abram, God appeared in the form of a theophany—God appeared in human form. Some scholars believe this appearance was Christ in His pre-incarnate state. He showed Abram once again the land He was going to bless Abram with and reinstated His promise to give him seed or offspring. Abram yet again heard a word from the Lord declaring that he would not only receive this land that is already occupied but that his children would live in it. In response to God’s appearance, Abram built an altar unto the Lord. The proper response to God’s presence and confirmation of His promise is worship. Abram had God’s continued assurance that he would receive that which God had spoken, and by making a personal appearance, it further sealed the guarantee.

**4. Abram’s Obedience in Answering God’s Call (vv. 8–9)** Abram continued to move forward at God’s command and thus declared his own allegiance to serve God alone. In spite of the culture around him, which had a god for everything, Abram is the father of a monotheistic religion that is based on a relationship with the true and living God. Abram pitched his tent, and wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar unto the Lord. He remained in constant contact with Him through worship and prayer as he called on the name of the Lord. Abram lived a disciplined life of worship and walked in obedience by listening for the voice of the Lord God. Abram’s faithful response to God’s promise to make him a great nation required a close relationship and strict adherence to God’s instructions. Abram would have been shortsighted if he thought only of the personal impact of this promise, but because the call was greater than he could ever imagine, he was willing to make the sacrifice with his wife by his side.

### **Application for Activation**

As you reflect on today's lesson, what has God promised in your life that will bless you and others now as well as in generations to come? What are you willing to risk to follow through with God's plan and bring Him glory, even at the risk of your own comfort? Pray and assess your own ambitions, goals, and interests to see if they line up with God's Word. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you about anything that needs adjustment.

### **Take Aways**

### **Closing Prayer**

## **NOTES**



**Our Read-Ahead for: 03 Sep 2023**

## **A Blessing for All Nations**

**Monday:** Genesis 1–3

**Tuesday:** Genesis 4–7

**Wednesday:** Genesis 8–11

**Thursday:** Genesis 12–15

**Friday:** Genesis 16–18

**Saturday:** Genesis 19–21

**Sunday:** Genesis 22–24