

MZFABC Bible Study

Abraham:

The Father of the Jews

Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 –Chapter 25 v. 10

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VISION

The vision of the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia will reach and reproduce within its surrounding community, a people inspired and equipped with a passion for the truth of God's Word and His compassion for others who will be enablers of change.



Moving Forward as a Growing Church: *Believing For It*



Abraham:

The Father of the Jews

Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 – Chapter 25 v. 10

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Synopsis of the *Gospel in the Promise: The Coming Messiah*

- 1) He will be a descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)
- 2) He will be from the Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10)
- 3) He will be a Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15)
- 4) He will be from the House of David (2 Samuel 7:12-13)
- 5) He will be God Himself (Isaiah 9:6)
- 6) He will be born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14)
- 7) He will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- 8) He will come humbly (Zechariah 9:9)

The Response to the Summons

Genesis 11:27-12:9

The Response to the Summons

After a delayed start, Abraham's response to the summons was that of ***obedience***. We will note the various aspects of this obedience as:

- 1) The delay in his obedience
- 2) The dedication in his obedience
- 3) The difficulties for his obedience
- 4) The dividends of his obedience
- 5) The devotion in his obedience

The Response to the Summons

The Delay in His Obedience

Some scholars do not think there was any delinquency in Abraham's response to the summons. They feel that Abraham's summons (as recorded in Genesis 12:1) came in Haran. However, **Acts 7:2,3** makes it very clear that Abraham did indeed receive a call when he was in his native home of Ur. This text is part of Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrin. Stephen said, *"Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran [Haran], And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee."*

The Response to the Summons

Receiving the call in Ur meant Abraham's stay at Haran was an unauthorized delay in his obeying the summons from God. The recording of the call given in Genesis 12:1 was either a **second** giving of the summons to Abraham in order to get him moving out of Haran, or it was a **review of the first summons** in order to explain the action of Abraham departing from Haran to go to Canaan. Whatever the case—and that depends largely on whether the word “**had**” in Genesis 12:1 is justified by the Hebrew or not (which scholars disagree), Abraham was negligent in obeying his summons. Also note, the summons told him to “*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house*” (12:1). He obeyed the part of the summons about getting out of his country, but he did not obey the part about leaving his relatives.

The Response to the Summons

Some defend Abraham by insisting the call was originally given to Terah which is why the Scripture reports that “*Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai, his daughter in law ... and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran and dwelt there*” (11:31). But the **Acts 7:2** text refutes the idea Terah received the call in Ur, for it says Abraham was the one who received the call in Ur. Also, **Isaiah 51:2** says God “*called him [Abraham] alone.*” God did not call his father or brothers or nephew, just Abraham. But Abraham allowed some of his relatives to go; and, furthermore, he even gave up the authority of the venture to his father—which is why Scripture reports Terah as being the leader. (Genesis 11:31).

The Response to the Summons

F. B. Meyer says, “It becomes us to be very careful as to whom we take with us in our pilgrimage. We may make a fair start from our Ur; but if we take Terah with us, we shall not go far. Take care, young pilgrim to eternity, to whom you mate yourself in the marriage bond. Beware, man of business, lest you find your Terah in the man with whom you are entering into partnership.”

The Response to the Summons

Notice now divine intervention to correct Abram's delay in obedience. Although Abraham compromised the summons by including those not called, scripture reports upon reaching Haran the troop stopped! God revealed the hearts and minds of the caravan! They went no further. They were not willing to stay the course. Going on to Canaan was too much. Full obedience is often unacceptable to bodily senses—it is discomfoting and requires discipline and self-sacrifice. Full obedience to the Lord is often greeted with a warning of *not going too far, or to the extreme, or it is impractical, it is not unnecessary, it doesn't require all that*, and other such phrases. But it is never extreme to fully follow the Lord. It is never impractical to obey God in every detail. It is never unnecessary to go all the way with God.

The Response to the Summons

Furthermore, note that “*Terah died in Haran*” (11:32). A New Testament text confirms that his death resulted in Abraham finally getting back on the right track. The text is from Stephen’s sermon to the Sanhedrin. Stephen said that Abraham “*came ... out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Charran [Haran]; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him [Abraham] into this land [Canaan]*” (Acts 7:4). It was only “when his father was dead” that Abraham got moving again. There are two important warnings in this death of Terah. The warning about ***delay in obedience*** and the warning about ***dissuading others from obedience***.

The Response to the Summons

First, *delay in obedience* invites pain. How often God has to take something from us in order to get us back into His service. Abraham was obviously attached to his father. In fact, he was more attached to his father at this point than he was to God. That does not go over well with God—and justifiably so—and the day came when God took away Terah from Abraham. Again, note this quote from F. B. Meyer regarding the death of Terah, *“Here we may get a solution for mysteries in God’s dealings with us, which have long puzzled us; and understand why our hopes have withered, our schemes have miscarried, our income has dwindled, our children have turned against us. All these things were hindering our true development; and, out of mercy to our best interests, God has been compelled to take the knife in hand, and set us at liberty.”*

The Response to the Summons

Second, *dissuading others from obedience* invites judgment. Terah was a hindrance to Abraham so finally God removed him. True, Terah was up in years; and it could be said that he simply died of old age. But his death, even though it may have been simply because of old age, is still too ominous in regard to Abraham's moving on to miss the mention of this lesson. Sometimes ornery church members, who are obstructionists in the work of the church, are removed by God in order for the work to progress. Most churches have some in the congregation who, if they were removed, the work of the Lord could advance much more quickly and effectively.

The Response to the Summons

Beware that you are not one of these obstructionists. God may move up the date of your funeral, or in some other painful way cut you off from the church so it can function as it ought. What a sad commentary it was about Terah that his death resulted in an obstacle being removed so the work of God could go forward as it ought. Let us all pray that our lives will be a great help to the Lord and that our removal will not be ***a removal of*** as an obstacle in the Lord's work.