

MZFABC Bible Study

Abraham:

The Father of the Jews

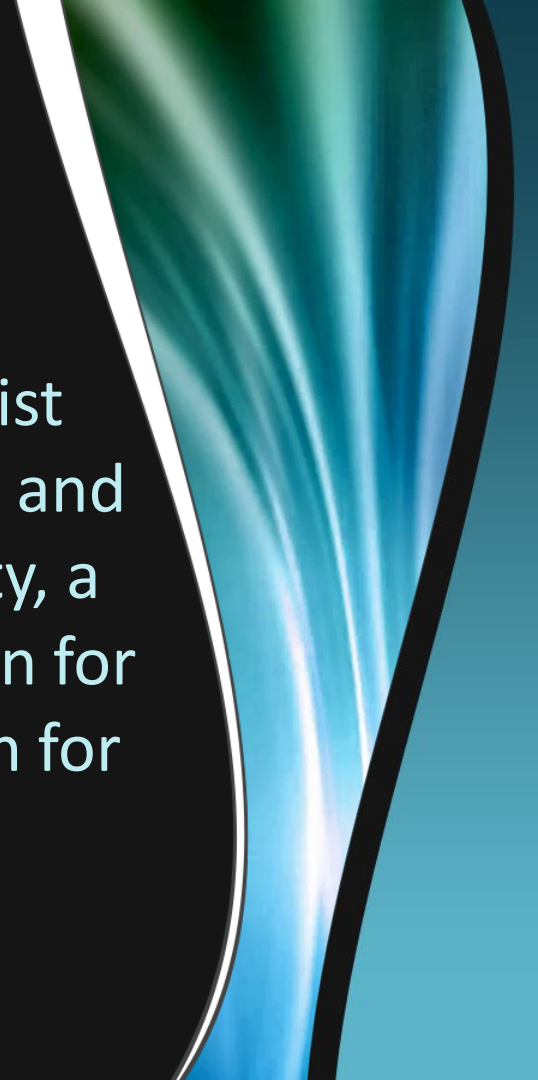
Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 –Chapter 25 v. 10

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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

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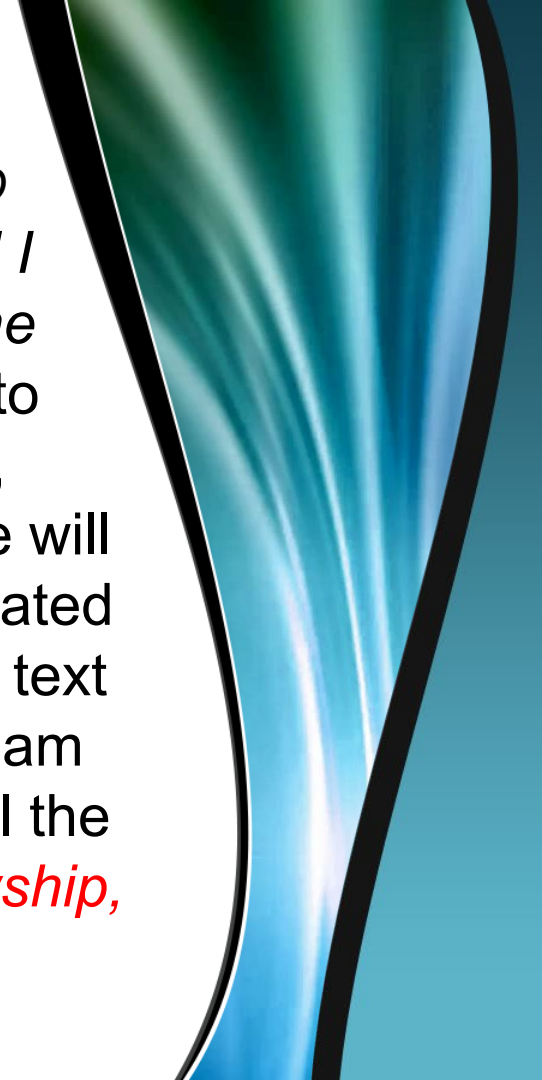
Abraham: **The Father of the Jews**

January 31, 2024

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

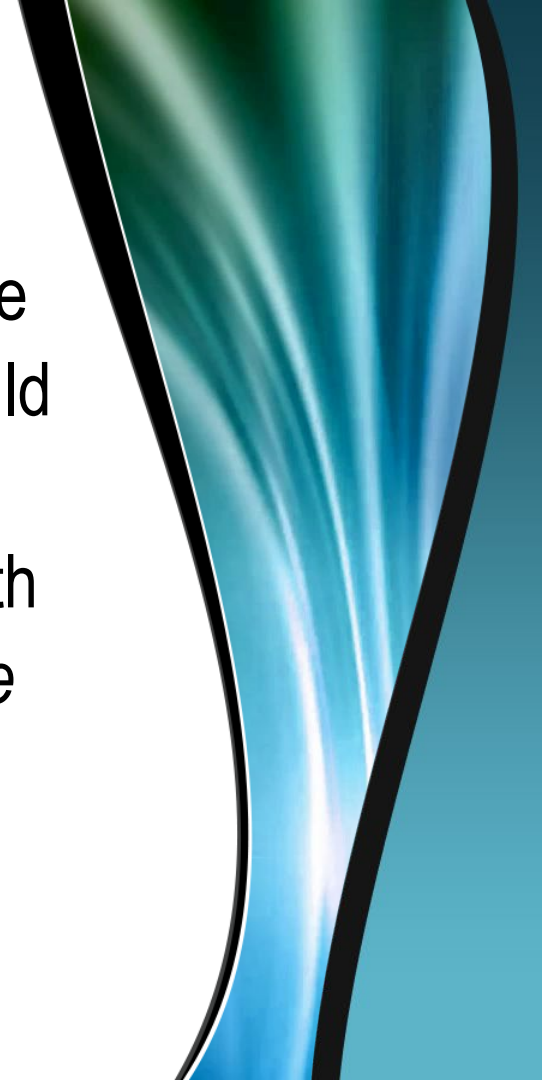
The Dividends of His Obedience

After Abraham had gotten to Canaan, “...*the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him*” (12:7). Obedience to the Lord pays great dividends. As we noted earlier, obedience required much sacrifice. But no sacrifice will be made that is not eventually more than compensated for by the dividends God gives for obedience. The text here mentions some choice blessings which Abraham received after he obeyed the summons by going all the way to Canaan. Four of these blessings are: *fellowship, revelation, assurance, and inheritance.*



Fellowship

“The LORD appeared unto Abram.” Abraham had to give up friends and relatives to serve the Lord, but he still had the Lord with him. He could still fellowship with God. Never discount the blessing of having the presence of the Lord with you. It is a choice blessing, for *“in thy presence is fulness of joy”* (Psalm 16:11). The world is constantly seeking happiness and having no success in finding true joy. **Why?**



Because they leave out God. Abraham did not leave out God in his life. His life was concerned about doing God's will. Therefore, he enjoyed the great blessing of continued fellowship with God. In fact, Scripture records some special and lengthy times of fellowship between God and Abraham, and the fellowship was so good that Abraham had the distinction of being called God's friend (2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23). This is a great blessing that comes only by obedience to God.



Revelation

When Abraham reached Canaan, he received further revelation from God. The Lord said, *“Unto thy seed will I give this land.”* Obedience has much to do with our spiritual learning. When we obey, God opens our eyes to understand His Word, to learning more from Him and about Him. When we disobey, He closes our eyes; and we walk blindly in spiritual darkness and ignorance.



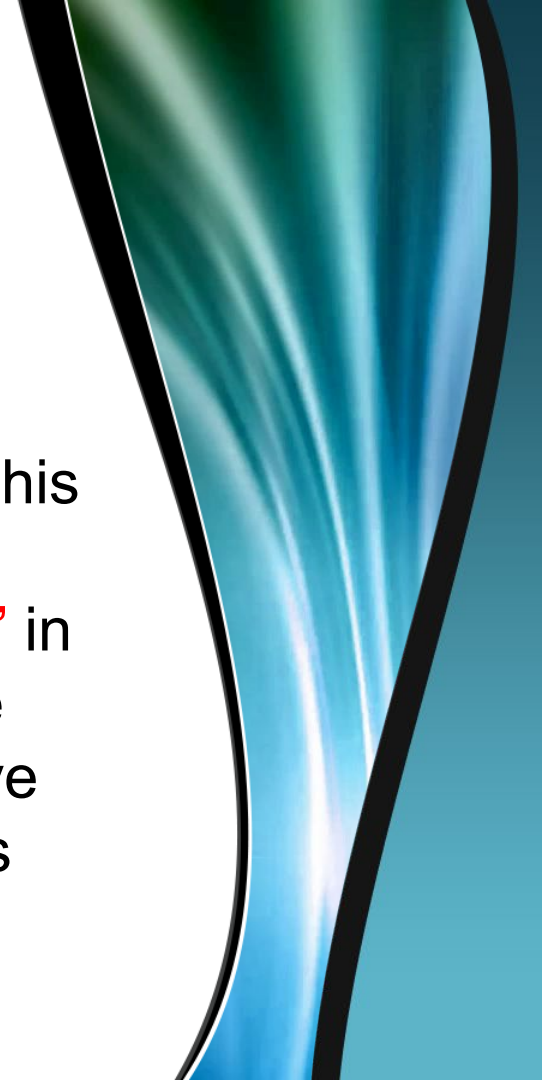
Assurance

“Unto thy seed will I give this land,” was a promise which told Abraham very plainly that he had done the will of God. He had gone to the right land. He was where God wanted him to be. Obedience is accompanied by assurance. When Abraham arrived in Canaan, God gave him assurance that he had indeed done the will of God. The will of God will always be vindicated sooner or later. God does not leave you in uncertainty as to whether or not you have done as He has instructed. By various ways and means, He gives you assurance. Obedience will discover that fact.

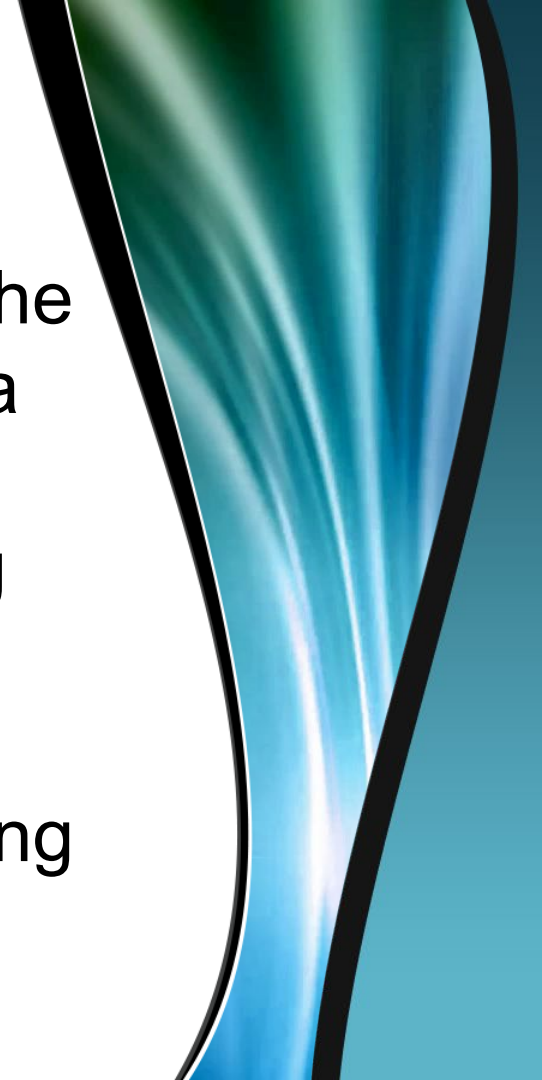


Inheritance

“Unto thy seed will I give this land.” Obedience also brought Abraham a great inheritance. It brought him the land of Canaan. This is the first time Abraham is told by God that the land of Canaan is his inheritance, that it will be given to his seed (which also included him (13:15, 17 and 15:7)). It is interesting to note that the word **“give”** in verse 7, appears over one thousand times in the Bible. A good number of these appearances have to do with God giving the land of Palestine to His chosen people. Our text is the first place in Scripture where this promise is made.

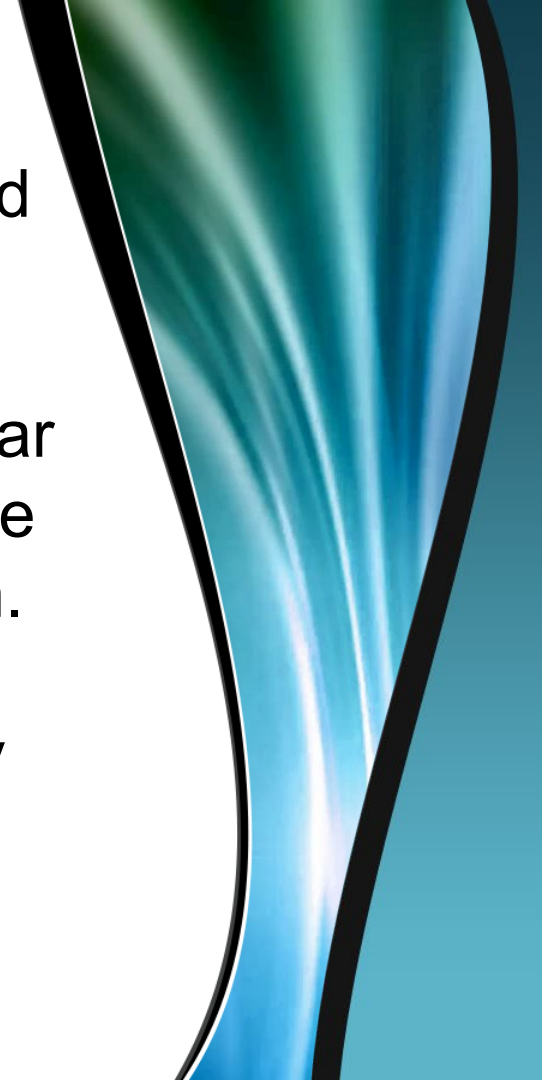


This promise *“Unto thy seed will I give this land”* will be made in nearly 150 passages in the Old Testament—from the time of the patriarchs to the time when a remnant returned from exile (Nehemiah 9:35, 36). It even shows up in the giving of the ten commandments (Exodus 20:12). This gift of land needs to be understood well, for there is much fighting in the Middle East about the land to this day.



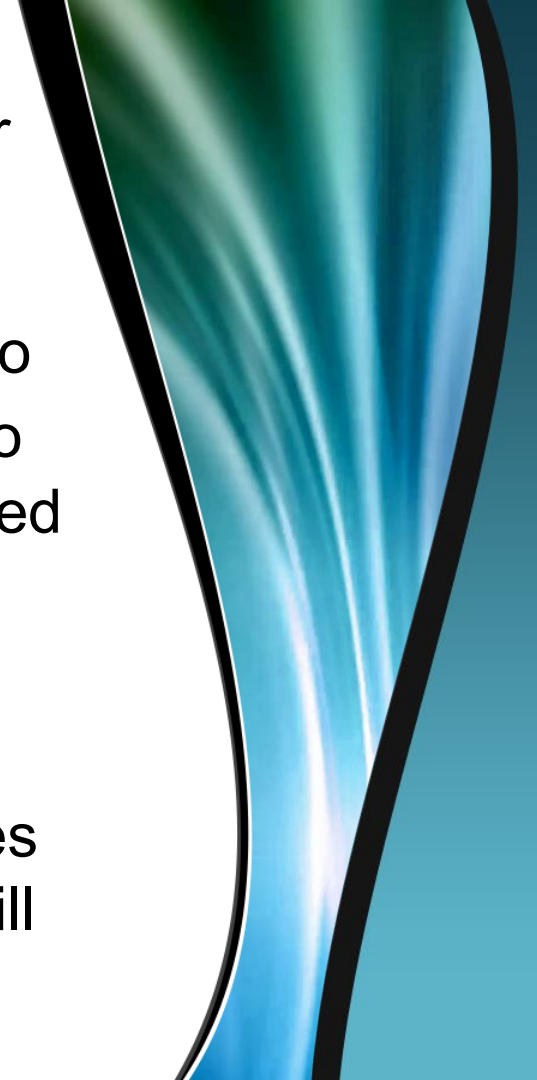
The Devotion in His Obedience

When Abraham reached the land where God had sent him, *“there builded he an altar unto the LORD”* (12:7). How well this reveals his great devotion to the Lord. Why does this altar show great devotion on Abraham’s part to the Lord? Because he built it in heathen Canaan. He was not afraid to own his faith and to worship God before the heathen. He publicly and unashamedly professed his faith in God before those not sympathetic to his faith. It takes great devotion to God to do that.



There are those in our midst who are bashful or secretive about their faith. They mix with the world and live like the world, and no one would ever suspect they are a Christian. When they go out with the world to eat, they make no effort to thank the Lord before they eat—too embarrassed to offer the prayer of thanksgiving to God. But Abraham was not that way.

Let the heathen mock, laugh, turn up their noses at this newcomer in their land—but Abraham will still worship God anyway. May we do likewise.

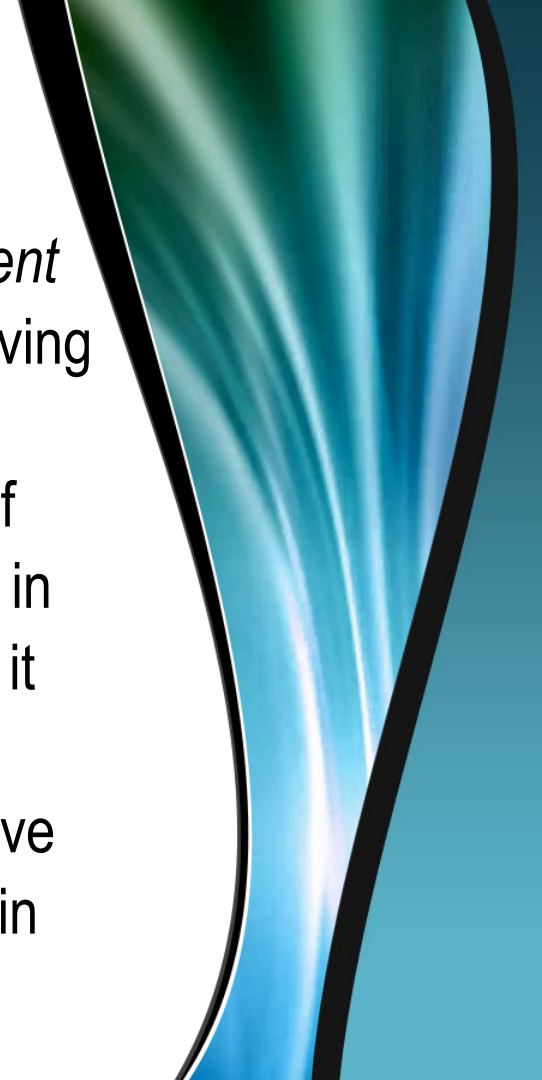


Sojourning In Egypt

GENESIS 12:10-13:4



When Abraham was settled down in Canaan and his traveling days from one country to another seem ended, *“there was a famine in the land [Canaan]: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there”* (12:10). Unlike his moving from Ur to Haran and then on to Canaan, this going to Egypt was not an authorized trip even though the land of Canaan was experiencing a great famine. This traveling in disobedience to God got Abraham in deep trouble. Was it not for the intervening grace of God which turned him around and got him back in Canaan, Abraham would have destroyed himself, lost his calling, and been unheard of in history.



To study this sojourning experience in Abraham's life, we will consider:

- The famine in the land (12:10)
- The forsaking of the land (12:10),
- The folly out of the land (12:11–17)
- The flight back to the land (12:18–13:4)

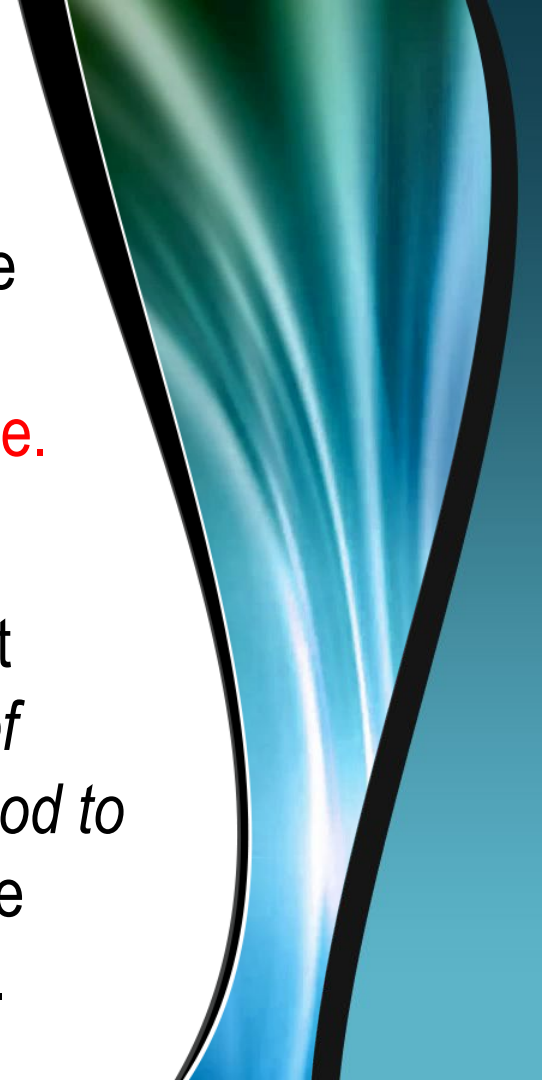


THE FAMINE IN THE LAND

“And there was a famine in the land ... the famine was grievous in the land” (v. 10). We will note three things about this famine: **the site of the famine, the season of the famine, and the severity of the famine.**

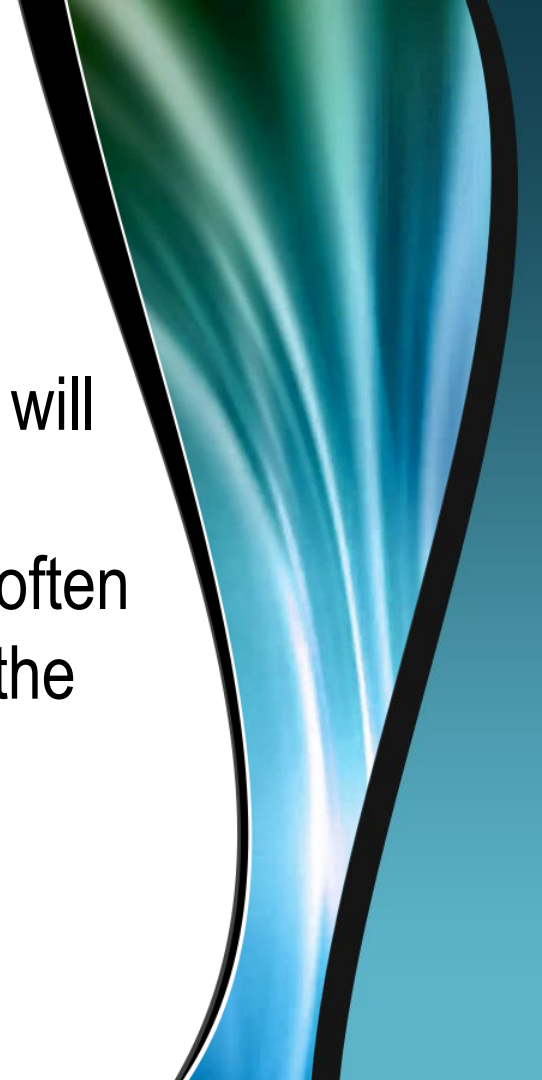
The Site of the Famine

The famine came “in the land” where God had sent Abraham. Coming “in the land” will cause *the will of God, the promises of God, and the dedication to God to be greatly challenged*. Good times do not challenge these things very much, but bad times certainly do.



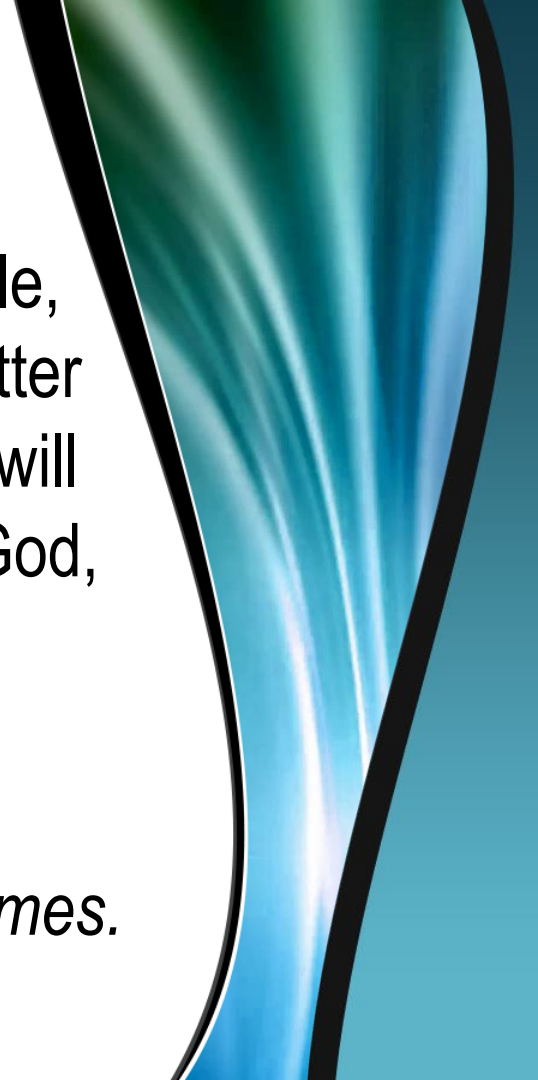
The Will Of God Challenged

The location of this famine would challenge Abraham about whether or not it was really the will of God for him to come to Canaan. If he judges situations the way people (including believers) often judge adverse situations, he will conclude that the famine being “in the land” indicated he made a mistake in coming to Canaan.

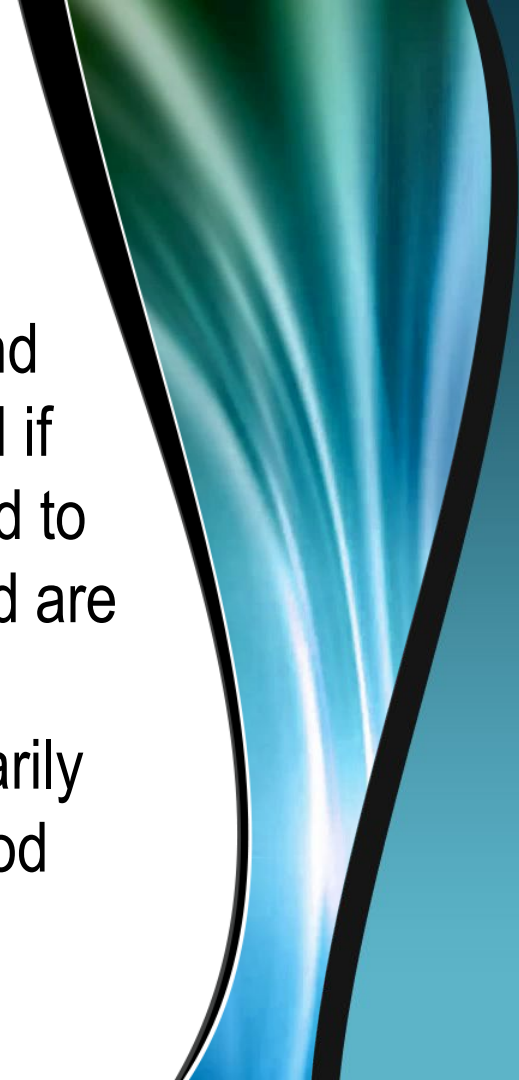


The Will Of God Challenged

For it seems we often judge on the basis of appearances and outward success. For example, if a farmer does the will of God, he will have better crops; if the salesman does the will of God, he will have more sales; if the pastor does the will of God, he will see his church grow in attendance; if a church member does the will of God regarding giving, he will see his finances improve; *and if Abraham goes to Canaan, he will enjoy good times.*



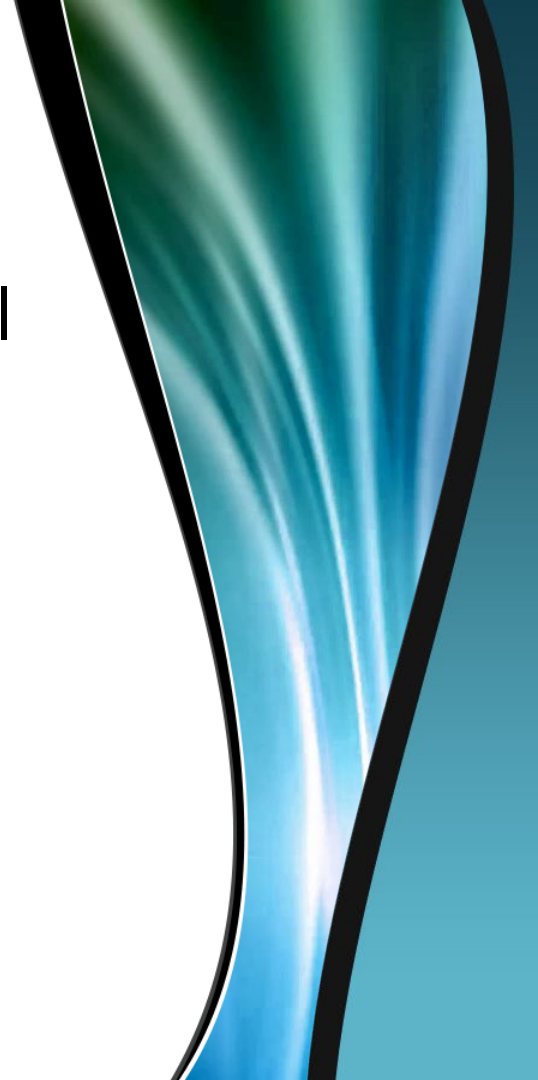
But if the farmer's crops fail, if the salesman loses sales, if the pastor sees his church attendance fall till the church wants to run him off, if the one who liberally gives to the Lord sees a drop in income and the financial situation become very precarious, and if Abraham experiences a famine in the land, we tend to conclude that these folks have made a mistake and are out of the will of God. But *the will of God* is not determined primarily by outward success but primarily by *the Word of God*. And nothing in the Word of God tells us that being in the will of God always means smooth sailing on life's voyage(s).



Just because there was no famine in Ur and Haran does not mean that Abraham should have stayed in Ur or Haran. Abraham had the Word of God to vindicate his Canaan location as being the will of God. Upon reaching Canaan, Abraham was informed by God that *“Unto thy seed will I give this land”* (Genesis 12:7). As previously noted, this statement of promise was tantamount to saying Abraham was in the right place. Whether he experienced a famine or not had nothing to do with determining if he was in the will of God. It was the Word of God that determined that.

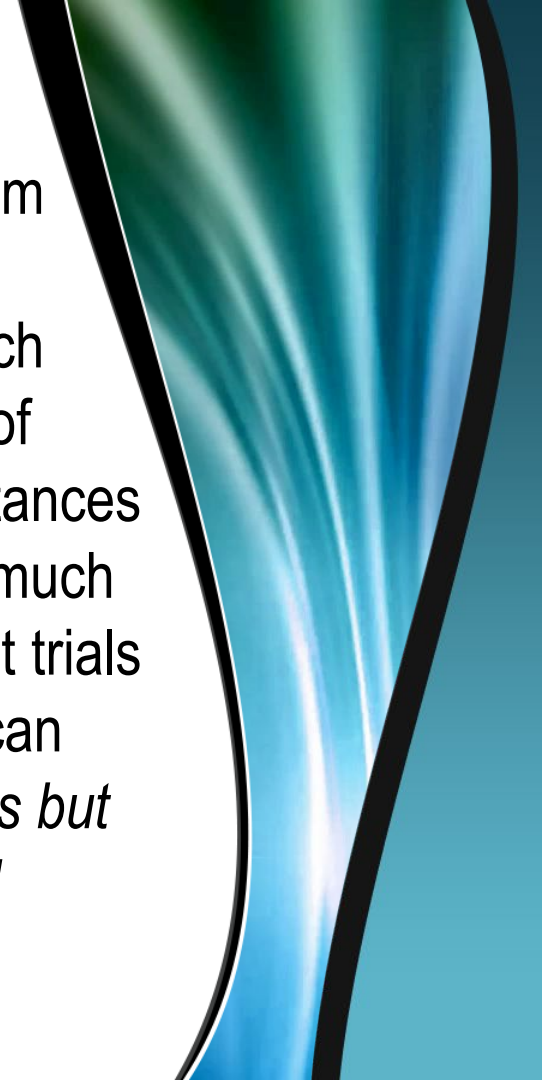


So it is with us. Therefore, we need to know the Word of God well so we will know the will of God well. Otherwise we will draw wrong conclusions about those famines we encounter on the path of obedience and will let them divert us onto the path of disobedience.

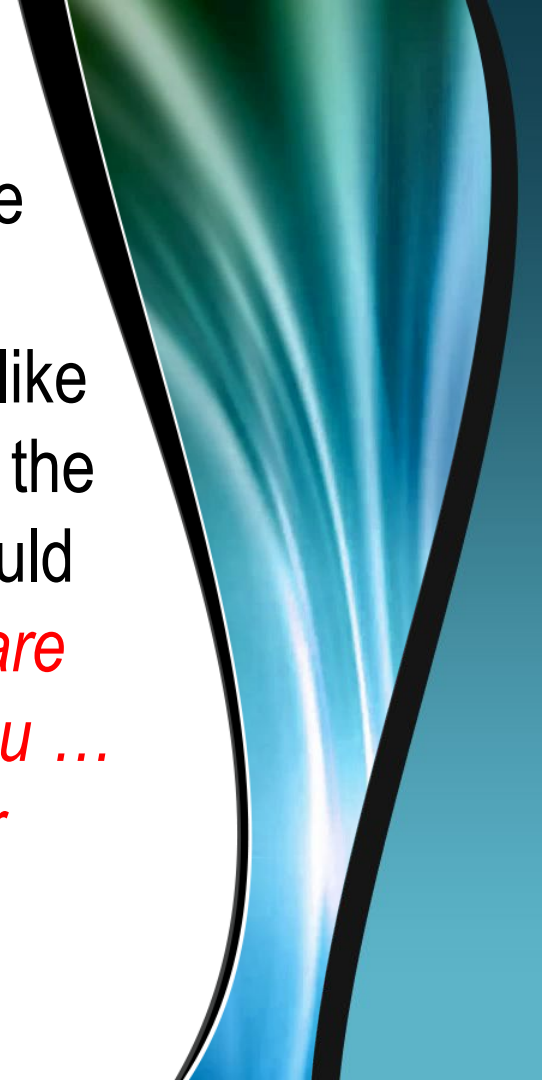


The Promises Of God Challenged

The coming of the famine would also challenge Abraham about the validity of God's promises. God had said He would bless Abraham, but now there was a famine which seemed to curse instead of bless. In the natural realm of thought or reasoning, people will look at these circumstances and mock God and His promises. But the wise will act much differently. They will hold their peace, for they know that trials are often the only way some of the greatest blessings can come to man. Paul said, *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* (2 Corinthians 4:17).



If our light afflictions do so much for us, think what heavy afflictions will do! Peter described the trials of our faith as *“being much more precious than of gold”* (1 Peter 1:7). That does not sound like a curse but like a great blessing. Jesus spoke of the rugged trial of persecution as something that would prove to be a great blessing. He said, *“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you ... Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven”* (Matthew 5:11, 12).



Trial for God's obedient children may seem on the surface to mock the promise of blessing, but time will definitely prove otherwise. That fact should greatly encourage us when we are in the midst of trial and cannot perceive in our own human thinking any blessing whatever coming from it.

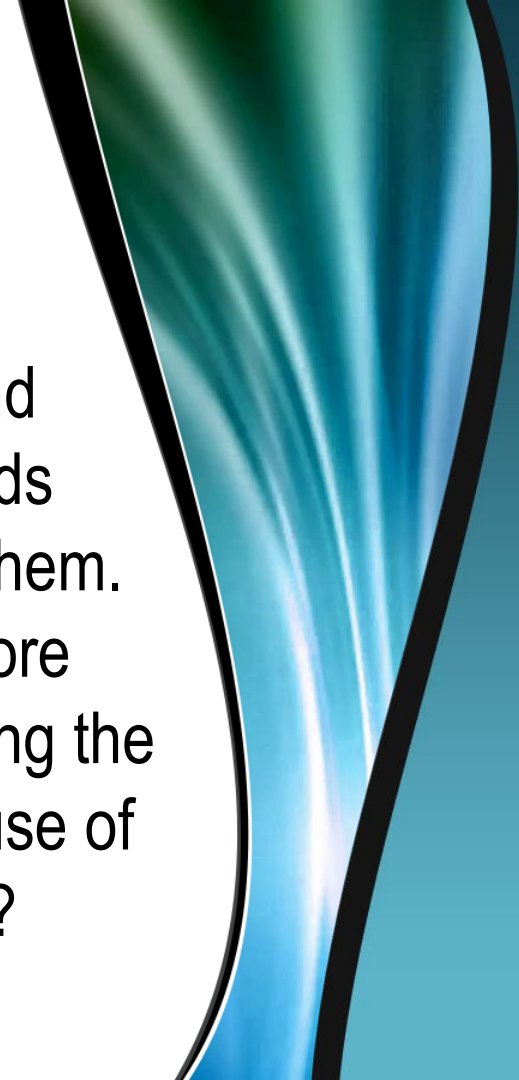


The Dedication To God Challenged

The famine experience in Canaan really challenged the dedication of Abraham to obeying God. In fact, it was a stronger challenge than Abraham could handle; for his dedication to obedience at that time was not strong enough to survive the famine. Nothing challenges our dedication to obeying God like hard times. Many folk are willing to obey God when it results in good times; but if obedience brings upon them rough experiences, they are ready to quit.



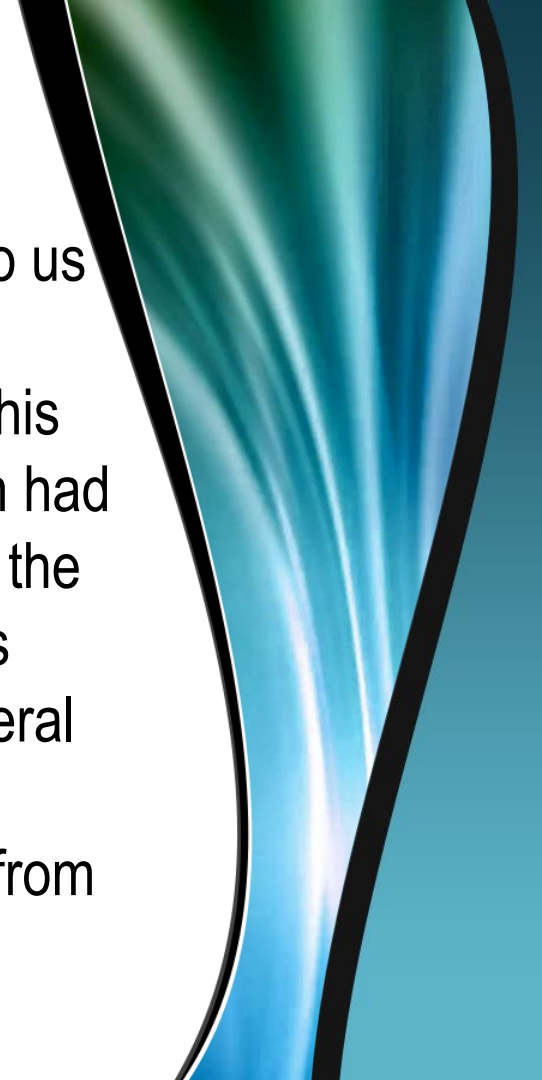
If their obedience is praised and it results in promotion and popularity, they are zealous about God's commands. But let their obedience be criticized or cause them to lose friends or a job, and they will do some rethinking about God's commands and may decide they no longer want to submit to them. We do not walk on the path of obedience long before our dedication will be tested to see if we are obeying the Lord because of delightful circumstances or because of Divine commands. How do you fare in these tests?



The Famine in the Land:

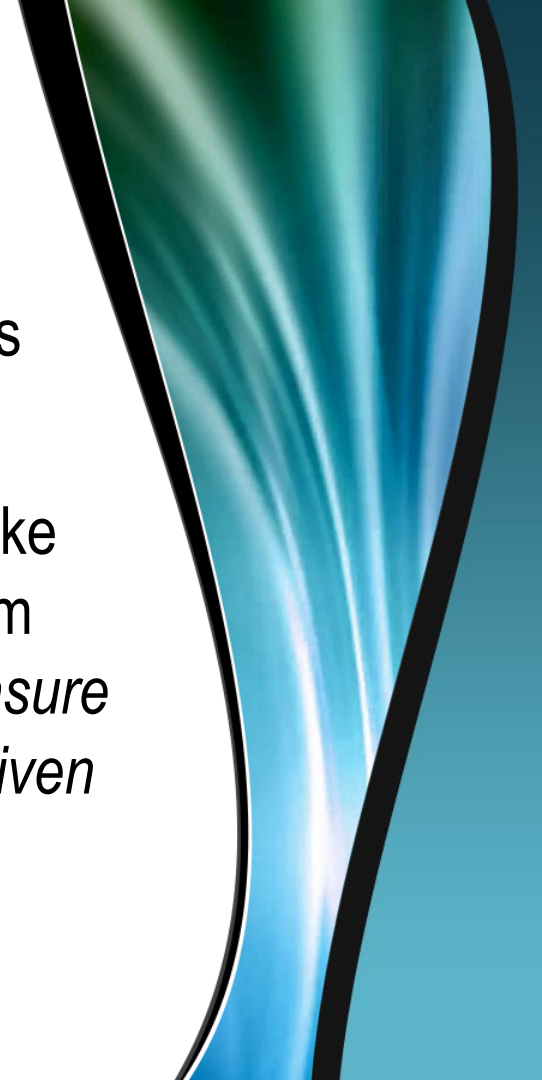
The Season of the Famine

One of the times or seasons in which trial often comes to us is right after we have had some great spiritual victory or mountain peak experience. So it was with the timing of this trial in Abraham's life. The trial came right after Abraham had reached a new high spiritually in his life. He had obeyed the Lord and come to the land of Canaan. Abraham lived his faith unashamedly before the world, for he had built several altars unto the Lord right in public view of the heathen Canaanites. This was accompanied by new revelations from God. All these things spelled a great spiritual high for Abraham—then came the famine.



The time after great spiritual victories and experiences is a very critical time for the believer. It is a time when the believer has a tendency to become proud or self-confident. Therefore after our spiritual highs, two things will frequently occur.

First, God will send trials to keep us humble. Paul spoke about this when, after receiving special revelations from God, he said, *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”*
(2 Corinthians 12:7)



Second, Satan will send **temptation** to harm us because he knows that if our guard is let down because of a spiritual high, he will be more effective in attacking us. He will try to use the **trial**, which God sent to humble us, to instead do such things as ***create in us doubt*** about God's way, and disdain for God for allegedly not taking care of us.

The timing of Abraham's trial brings a strong and important lesson to us to beware of the peril of post-victory and post-blessing problems. Do not let victory or blessing puff you up with pride, for it was God who gave you the victory and the blessing. And do not let down after these experiences either; for the enemy will spot your laxness as weakness, and deliver a knockout punch — if you are not careful!

