

## A Gift Given...A Gift Delayed

### The Amazing Story of Abraham

Lesson 6

Becoming a generous church

January 15, 2012

What's one of the best ways to study the Old Testament heroes of the faith? The answer is, in a word—**Imagineering**. Simply put yourselves in to their shoes (sandals) and imagine what it would be like to walk through their lives incident by incident.

Are you ready? Let's join Abraham. No. We need to more than join Abraham. We have to become Abraham and truly imagine what it would be like to experience what he experienced in his life's journey. As you do, allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you about the faith lessons Abraham had to learn that might apply to where you are, too.

It appears that Abraham was a wealthy man when God called him out of Ur of Chaldea. He was 75 years of age, he and his family worshipped idols but God called Abraham and Abraham had placed his faith in God, becoming the "friend of God" (James 2.23) and "the father of faith of all who believe" (Rom. 4.11).

- Thus, you are now 75 years of age
- You are living in a large, educated, sophisticated city.
- All your extended family and friends live there
- You are living in a beautiful home
  
- But God...has called you to move to a strange, new land
- You have no idea of where that land is...or what it will be like
- You don't know if it will be a safe place for strangers ("foreigners").
- You are told if you do you'll have a family (imagine telling your wife the wonderful news that she is going to have a baby; remember when they began their faith journey Sarah was 65 years old.
- In a word, you are "settled" you may even use the word, "satisfied". But God is giving you and opportunity to trust him—and turn your life upside down.
  
- Question: What will you do? Go? Stay? Wait to see if God really meant what He said?
- Question: What will you tell your friends?
- Question: Is this going to be an easy decision? (You may want to be careful how you answer this question. God is listening...and He may give you an opportunity to live through a similar "easy" decision!)

## Read the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.1-3—

“The Lord had said to Abraham, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’”

- ❖ What was God asking Abraham to do?
- **Live by perpetual faith.** He would not have a network of people to help him in times of need. It would just be Abraham and God.
- **Make a clear choice between contrasting lifestyles.** On one hand Abraham could live a life of comfort, ease and a reasonable amount of stability and security compared to a lifestyle in which he would be tested and tried, living in tents as a nomadic wanderer.
- **Question:** If you had to make this kind of lifestyle choice what would you choose?
- **Question: What did Abraham choose?** Answer. Initially, Abraham, like many Christians today, chose partial obedience. He took his father along when he left Ur of Chaldea even though God told him to leave his family behind. Then, he stopped for a number of years in Haran, another sophisticated, comfortable city.
- **Conclusion:** Abraham loved God and believed God, but like so many who follow Jesus today, he didn’t fully obey God.
- **What we learn from this:** There is a part of faith that is instantaneous. We hear the message of God’s Word, we “see” it and believe it and put our faith in Jesus. But it doesn’t end there. Our faith, like Abraham’s must grow, develop, and mature. Too many Christians are content to embrace saving faith, and then spend the rest of their lives as immature, spiritual infants. This is not what God intended when He called us out of the world, inviting us to join Him in a journey of faith ever walking heavenward. Whenever we study the life of Abraham we should be challenged to ask ourselves, “Where am I in my walk with Jesus?”