

Genesis 12:1-9

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

6 Abram travelled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So, he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

8 From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

9 Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

Notes.

Genesis 12 is a key text for understanding not only the whole book of Genesis, but also the whole Old Testament. The call of Abram raises a key question, it's one that scholars call - The scandal of election

— the scandal of God's choosing of a particular person or a particular nation over any others — Why Abram, of all people? According to the biblical text, he had done nothing noteworthy, nothing to draw attention to himself, nothing to deserve this amazing blessing from God and God chose him.

God gives a three-fold promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 – descendants, land , blessings - continues to reverberate throughout Scripture.

There is tension in the promise – it's not all love and peace.

Abraham and Sarah wait many long years for a son.

And in spite of God's promise, the only piece of the Promised Land that Abraham ever actually possesses is the burial plot he buys for Sarah, the place where he himself is later buried. And yet, Abraham believes in God's promises.

He stakes his life on them.

He leaves his father's household and his homeland and goes to the place that God shows him.

1. Considering the 'scandal of election' how does this make you feel about your own call to follow Jesus? (Ephesians 1:1-11)
2. What promises from the Bible do you hold on to? How do you live with the tension of the now and not yet? (Hebrews 11:13-16)
3. Paul rightly stresses Abraham's trust, not his deeds, in Romans 4. Blessing did not come from what Abraham *did*; he became a blessing to others because he was open to the on-going relationship God offered him. How does that influence our own walk with the Lord?