

From Ur to Eternity

“Where is Ur”...err, I don’t know? Ok, there is no longer a place called “Ur” – but this once-place is thought to be located northwest of the Persian Gulf in what was a great nation called Babylon. In the contemporary, much of this land is Iraq; and Ur was likely southeast of Babylon or what is today near the capital city of Baghdad.

With some understanding of where Abram (or Abraham) came from, where was he going to – or where was God sending him? Abraham was being sent to a land called Canaan, later Palestine, and today is Israel. In all, Abraham would travel more than 1,000 miles or 1500 kilometers to reach this place, this eventual “great nation”. Do you think it was an easy journey traveling on foot with his wife, Sarah? I don’t think so and, furthermore, think that it was a tough trip or journey. Though Abraham had many questions himself, he listened (or obeyed) God and, for that reason alone, was destined to complete the trip – or the see God’s promise(s) fulfilled in his life.

Genesis 12

God told Abram: “Leave your country, your family, and your father’s home for a land that I will show you. I’ll make you a great nation and bless you. I’ll make you famous; you’ll be a blessing. I’ll bless those who bless you; those who curse you I’ll curse. All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you.”

- *The Message*

Before embarking on his journey, Abraham was given seven (7) promises by God; and those promises (called a covenant) were:

1. I (God) will make you into a great nation.
2. I will bless you.
3. I will make your name (Abraham) great.
4. You (Abraham) will be a blessing
5. I will bless those who bless you.
6. Whoever curses you, I (God) will curse.
7. All peoples on earth will be blessed by you.

With these promises made (and God never breaks a promise), Abraham and his wife began their journey. Along the way, they would go out-of-the-way with a brief detour to Egypt – in search of food because of famine elsewhere.

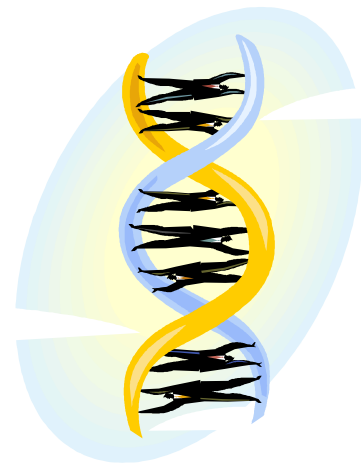
I have mentioned a covenant – which is a binding promise; but what I have not mentioned is the continued obedience of Abraham. It's one thing to make a promise; but it is another thing to keep or reciprocate the promise. What is true about promises is that they involve at least two more people and if one does not honor or hold to the promise, than it might as well be broken.

Among the ways that Abraham kept the promise was to tithe, or to give a tenth of everything of his possessions. Realizing that all things come from God, and that he was merely the recipient of God's promises, Abraham obediently returned a portion called a tithe. To give our possession to God is more than simply money, but is our time, our will, our selves; and called stewardship, this giving of all – that we are truly given – is a mark or indication of faith, of the believer. God does not need such things (from us) but still, it pleases him when we are obedient and serve him in this way.

Not in this writing, but elsewhere I have talked about the subject of fear; indeed, I have even dedicated a Web page, "Falling Rocks" to this very subject. As another question, do you think that Abraham (or his travel companions) was ever afraid? Oh yes, they were known to be afraid more than once.

Knowing that Abraham (and his companions) was subject to fear, God addressed him with the introduction, "Do not be afraid"; and more than once, God delivered him (or them) out of a bind or crisis. When Abraham was afraid of the Egyptian Pharaoh, and poised his wife as his sister (rather than his wife) with the thinking that it would save his own life, God stepped in to "clean-up" the misunderstanding. When Lot, a traveling relative of Abraham, was in fear for his life (and families) in Sodom, God sent angels to assist him out of the city. When Abraham and Sarah were thought to be too old to bear children, God gave them a child; and when God tested Abraham's faith with his only son, Isaac, God provided a ram as the atonement for sins. God calmed their fears and provided for their needs.

On the promise that he would have as many offspring (or descendants) as the stars in the heavens, don't you think Abraham had doubts – considering his age and the fact that they (he and Sarah) had no children? It is amazing what God can do and, holding true to his promise, was gracious with the arrival of Isaac. Yes, even though an old couple, they had a child.



The arrival of his first born (by Sarah his wife) was not the end of this long journey – or fulfillment of the promise (s). A familiar addition to this story of Isaac is the testing of Abraham's faith as mentioned before. Was Abraham afraid when instructed to sacrifice his son, Isaac? Whether afraid or angry, Abraham did not understand what God was doing – but he obeyed God by faith! How true it is that God's believers do not (and cannot) always understand God but, even so, are called to obey.

There is much more to this story or journey but, above all, Abraham was found righteous by faith in God. Though he had reason to doubt God – and even disobey him – he continued to be faithful and was, consequently, found righteous. Abraham is indeed a blessing for so many; and in fact, all have been blessed by his obedience to and acceptance of God's plan from Ur to Eternity.