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Abram Left Haran, He Took His Wife Sari and His Nephew Lot 12: 4-9

Abram left Haran, he took his wife Sari and his nephew Lot DIG: Why did Lot go with him? Why didn't ADONAI speak to Abram in Haran, but spoke to him in the Promised Land? What were the Canaanites like? Who was supposed to influence whom? What did he do once he got there? What was the purpose?

REFLECT: Have you ever been disobedient to God and felt that He was silent in your life? Who moved away from whom? Have you left your Ur of the Chaldeans? Have you left your place of unbelief? What is your testimony to the Lord?

**When God spoke, Abram listened,
when God promised, Abram trusted,
and when God commanded, Abram obeyed.**

In this section, **God** speaks and Moses, the narrator, speaks, but **Abram** is silent.



So Abram left Haran, as ADONAI had told him (12:4a). The LORD called and Abram responded. Though he could see nothing that would encourage him to obey, he trusted God and stepped out in faith. By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and

went, even though he did not know where he was going (see the commentary on **Hebrews**, **to see link click Cp - The Faith of Abraham**). The word **know** here, from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the TaNaKh, is *epistamai* and means *to fix one's attention on, or to put one's thoughts on*. But it wasn't that **he did not know where he was going** because **ADONAI** had already called **him to go to Canaan** and the next verse tells us that is exactly where **he** was going, but willing to live *once he got there*. **He** was totally surrendered to the will of **God**. And we can see the wisdom of that approach later in the next chapter when **the LORD** would say to **him**, **"Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you" (13:17)**.

The life of faith begins with the willingness to leave one's **Ur**, one's own place of sin and unbelief - to leave the system of the world. **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing, and perfect will (Romans 12:2; Second Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:4)**. Giving up the old life is one of the greatest obstacles to coming to **Messiah**, and is also one of the greatest obstacles to faith once we become a believer.²³⁰ We must leave that old life as **Abram** did.

And Lot, Abram's nephew, went with him because **his** own father, **Haran**, had died. When **his father** died, **Lot** came under the authority of **his** uncle. Therefore, **Lot** became very attached to **his** uncle **Abram**, and **Abram** became **his** guardian. So **Lot went with him**.

Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran (12:4b). **Abram** was the youngest son of **his** father Terah, born sixty years after **Haran**, the eldest. But **he** is placed first in this list because of **his** importance (**11:26**). Thus, Terah was 70 years old when he started having children and 130 years old when **Abram** was born.²³¹ As we proceed in this study, **Abraham's** age is always given at the turning points of his life.

He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran. The rabbis say that Abram influenced some of the people of Haran to believe in ADONAI, so that they are regarded as though he had acquired them for Him. And they set out for the four hundred mile trip to **the land of Canaan, and they arrived there (12:5)**. Leaving **Ur of the Chaldeans** was a sacrifice for **Abram** and **Sarai**; it was a great and prosperous city. But **Abram** left all that and came to

the land of Canaan. The Canaanites were not civilized; they were barbarians and heathens, if there ever was any. **Abram's** purpose in coming to **Canaan** was certainly not to better **his** lot in life. **He** came in obedience to **the LORD's** command.²³²

Abram traveled through the Land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at the pagan city of Shechem, which was the center of **Canaanite** idolatry and occult practices. **The Canaanites** had shrines in groves of oak trees, and **Moreh** may have been one of **their** cult centers.²³³ Palestine had been promised to **Abram**, but **at the time the Canaanites were in the Land (12:6).** **Abram** had not come to be influenced by **the Canaanites**, nor did **he** come to worship **their** gods. It is only as we separate ourselves from the world and walk in obedience to **Christ** that we can enter into fellowship with **Him**.

The entire narrative of the patriarchs is an anticipation of what happened to their descendants. This emphasizes the incidents in their lives, such as the digging of wells and their various journeys, which are otherwise unimportant. Thus, Abram's first stop was at Shechem, an indication that this would be the first place to be taken by his descendants, even before the time came for them to conquer the Land. Therefore, the narrative states at the time the Canaanites were in the Land, which means that the time had not yet come for them to be ousted. And in fact, it was Jacob's sons who conquered Shechem (34:27).

Living in disobedience to **God's** Word hurts our relationship with **Him**. **He** does not separate **Himself** from us, but our sin separates us from **Him**! We are not living up to the light that **He** has already given to us. If we would obey **Him**, then more blessing would come. Our fellowship would be restored. We see in **Abram's** experience that **ADONAI** did not appear again to **him** until after **he** had moved out of **Haran** and had begun to obey **the LORD** at the revelation that **he** had been given.

Now **ADONAI** appeared to **Abram** again and said: **To your offspring I will give this land (12:7a).** **Abram** went to **the Promised Land** and **the LORD** showed it to **him**, but it would be given to **his offspring**, not to **him**. **God** gave **him** no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But **God** promised **him** that **he** would possess **the Land**, even though at the time **Abraham** had no children (**Acts 7:5**). When **he** died the only plot of **land he** owned was **Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre (23:17-20)**. After **the LORD** confirmed **His** promise, then **Abram**

lived in **the Land**. **God** appeared to **Abraham** six other times in **Genesis (13:14-17, 15:1-21, 17:1-21, 18:1-33 and 22:1-2, 11-18)**.

In gratitude for God’s promise of children and the possession of the Land, he built an altar at Shechem to the LORD who had appeared to him (12:7b). So in contrast to pagan worship, **Abram built an altar to ADONAI**. The reason **he built** it there was because that was the place **God appeared to him**. After this, the building of altars became a habit of the patriarchs (**12:8, 13:18, 22:9, 26:25, 33:20, 35:7**). That was **his witness to the LORD**, and everywhere **Abram** went **he** left a witness **to ADONAI**. It is fascinating that **Genesis** devotes two chapters to the creation, and one to the Fall, but over thirteen chapters to the account of **Abraham**. It seems that **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** was much more interested in how we relate to **God** than to how the world was created.²³⁴

From Shechem he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel, which means *the house of God*, **on the west and Ai**, which means *a heap of ruin*, **on the east**. In this life we all pitch our **tent** between *the house of God* and *a heap of ruin*. What we do with it is our choice. In **Abram’s** case, **he built an altar to the LORD** as an act of worship, to sacrifice burnt offerings on, **and he called on ADONAI (12:8)**. To **call upon the LORD** means that *he participated in public worship*. **Abram** didn’t pass out any tracts to **the Canaanites**, or have a “Jesus Saves” sticker on **his** camel. But the way **he** lived **his** life soon convinced **the Canaanites** that **he** was a man who worshiped **God** and lived by faith.

Living by faith is not unique to **Abram**; it is common to all who live in obedience to **Christ**. The promise often seems long and delayed, and the believer must simply continue following day-by-day, trusting **God** and knowing that **His** timing is always right. In the meantime, until the opening of the larger door and the accomplishment of **His** specific and ultimate will in our lives, there are daily opportunities for service and witness wherever we are, and whatever we are doing. There is still a time of testing, when **Yeshua** must teach us patience and submission; and such training is often long and slow. **Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much (Luke 16:10)**.²³⁵

After **the LORD** confirmed **His** promise, **Abram** lived in **the Land**. But **the Canaanites** had all the good, fertile **land**. So **he** had to travel south toward Egypt. Then **Abram** set out and continued **toward the Negev desert in the southern part of the Promised Land** where **his** faith would be greatly tested (**12:9**). **The**



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rabbis teach that he journeyed southward and did not turn to the east or west so as to remain on the direct road between **Bethel** and **Ai**, because its inhabitants had already shown some tendency to follow **ADONAI** in His call to true worship.