

GENESIS

BEGINNING OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

THE CALL OF ABRAM

EXEGESIS VERSE 1:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ־לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ
וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאֶךָ

^{NAS} Genesis 12:1 **Now the LORD said to Abram,** (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל אַבְרָם [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar + proper n: yahweh + prep: 'el + proper n: 'abram; "and He said, Yahweh, to Abram"])

"Go forth from your country, (לֵךְ־לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ [v/qal/imp/m/s: halak + prep. w/2ms suff: lamed + prep: min + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2ms suff: 'erets; "You Walk/Go forth for yourself, from your land/country"])

And from your relatives (וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ [waw conj. + prep: min + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2ms suff: moledeth {same as 11:28 - falsely transl. "birth"; "and from your relatives/kin"}])

And from your father's house, (וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ [waw conj. + prep: min + n/com/m/s/constr: bayith + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: 'ab; "and from the house of your father"])

To the land which I will show you; (אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאֶךָ [prep: 'el + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'erets + rel.pro: 'asher + v/Hiphil/1cs w/2ms suff: ra'ah; "to the land which I will cause you to see"])

ANALYSIS VERSE 1:

1. As already addressed in the analysis of Gen.11:27-32, the call of Abraham was while he was living with his family in Ur of the Chaldeans (Cf.Gen.15:7; Neh.9:7; Act.7:2).
2. Yahweh appeared to Abraham with Divine directives and attached promises a.k.a. the Abrahamic Covenant.
3. This took place shortly after he married Sarah and before Terah moved the family to Haran (11:29 cp.vs.31).
4. That the initiation of the Covenant is contingent upon Abraham's obedience to God's directive will means the promises were conditional.
5. This in contrast to the unconditional Noahic Covenant (Cp.Gen.9:11ff).
6. Once the conditions are met, the Abrahamic Covenant is ratified and from that point on becomes unconditional. Cp.Neh.9:7-8
7. We define "unconditional" as that there is absolutely nothing that man has to do from the point of God offering the covenant forward such as Gen.9:11 and Davidic Covenant in 2Sam.7:12-16 (the pact is "one-sided").

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8. The conditions of Abram's Covenant included an itinerary for him to go to Canaan (cf.Gen.12:5; Act.7:4).
9. The route would be via Haran (11:31; 12:4), to Shechem in the north, to Bethel in the middle, towards the Negev in the south (12:6,8,9).
10. The phrase "**YHWY said to Abram**" marks a new development in the POG.
11. With it came the introduction of a new dispensation – the age of the Jews.
12. **Abram** was born into this world a Semitic Gentile.
13. **YHWY** gives a 3-fold command stark and crisp in its formulation.
14. The singular imperative "**Go forth/halak**" demands application of the doctrine of separation.
15. The 1st application, "**from your country**/lamed min 'erets" shows God had a geographical will for Abraham.
16. The imperative of the verb "**go forth**" followed with the preposition *lamed* with a 2nd masculine singular suffix "**for yourself**" means **Abram** was to take the initiative and make the application himself.
17. Principle: This is true for every believer; no one can execute the POG for you, you are responsible to apply **for yourself**.
18. As previously noted in Gen.11:27-35, Ur was a center devoted to pagan religion, in which Abraham's relatives were heavily involved (cp.Jos.24:2).
19. A total separation from this religious apostasy was necessary for Abraham's spiritual well-being.
20. This is the nature of religious apostasy: You cannot reform it, you must totally disassociate yourself from it.
21. Those that do not separate from religious reversionism will hamstring their own spiritual life.
22. You cannot serve 2 masters. Mat.6:24
23. The separation was not only to be geographical, but inclusive of those that practiced religious idolatry.
24. This included for Abram the 2nd order for separation "**from your relatives**/min moledeth".
25. The noun "**relatives**" was incorrectly translated "*birth*" in 11:28 as pointed out in lexicons and means one's extended family or clan.
26. These are those that one naturally has close social ties.
27. Separation is not partial to relationships, including familial.
28. The problem with many religious reversionists is that they are not content to do their thing and let you do yours, but wish to maintain an association with you in order to drag you down spiritual (intentionally or otherwise). Cp.Rom.16:17-18
29. Even Abram's closest of kin was not immune to the doctrine as noted in the final command, "**and from your father's house**/waw min bayith 'ab".
30. The quick progression from "**country**" to "**your father's house**" draws attention to the price of obedience.
31. For Abraham, it meant to detach himself from the authority and affection of his parent to cling to the authority of BD.
32. Principle: One not willing to put BD over even the closest of relationships is not worthy of sharing in Christ's inheritance. Mat.10:37
33. As already implied (cf.10:31), it was an application that his father wouldn't allow and an immature Abraham wouldn't counter in resolve.
34. As consequence, Abraham wasted time and blessing residing in Haran for sake of family.

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35. God ultimately had to intervene and killed Terah to motivate Abraham to advance in application.
36. The Divine imperative thrust upon this man was a test of faith. Cf.Heb.11:8
37. He is to give up all that he holds dear for an unknown land promised him by God.
38. Abraham's family and father were reversionists and to be excluded from the blessings God had in store for Abraham's +V.
39. Until he separated, blessing only remained potential for Abraham.
40. "**Land**/'erets" is a key term in the section dealing with the call of Abraham.
41. We know that he was 75 years old when he finally exited Haran (cf.12:4).
42. Apart from Abraham's family ties (11:27-32), the narrator blanks the first 75 years of his life.
43. Thus a veil is drawn over Abram's slowness to comply.
44. When +V does finally get its act together, their past failures remain of no real concern in the scope of God's plan. Cf.Luk.9:62
45. Further the narrative blanks out the reason why Terah pulls up stakes to go to Haran.
46. This illustrates that any excuse for his actions are vanity and not worth the space it would take to record.
47. The migration of the family from Ur was intended to make its final destination Canaan according to 11:31.
48. When Abraham, Sarah and Lot finally left Haran they did so leaving Terah there.
49. The promise of **YHWY** to "give" the **land** in vs.7 is preceded by the promise to first "**show**/ra'ah" **Abram** the **land** in our verse.
50. "**Show**" only becomes "give" when **Abram** makes his move.
51. Though Abraham separated from Ur, his failure to separate from a reversionist obviously holding influence over him facilitated catering to an agenda that otherwise kept him from even "seeing" the promise (even the potential of blessing is compromised).
52. This illustrates that the doctrine of separation is essential to becoming benefactors of maximum blessing by God.
53. Blessings associated with the Covenant were contingent on Abram's Ph₂ faith aligning with God's geographical and directive will underwritten by the doctrine of separation.

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PROMISES OF THE COVENANT

EXEGESIS VERSES 2 – 3:

וַאֲעֲשֶׂה לְנֹוֹי גְדוֹל וַאֲבָרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדַּלְהָ שְׁמוֹךָ וְהָיָה
בְּרַכָּה: ^{WTT} Genesis 12:2

^{NAS} Genesis 12:2 **And I will make you a great nation,** (וַאֲעֲשֶׂה לְנֹוֹי גְדוֹל [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/1com/s w/2ms suff: -asah + prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/abs: goy + adj/m/s/abs: gadol; "And I will make you to a nation, a great one"])

And I will bless you, And make your name great; (וַאֲבָרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדַּלְהָ שְׁמוֹךָ [waw conj. + v/Piel/1com/s w/2ms suff: barake; "and I will bless you"; + waw conj. + v/Piel/IPF/1com/s: gadal + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: shem; "and I will utterly make great your name"])

And so you shall be a blessing; (וְהָיָה לְךָ בְּרַכָּה דְּהָיָה [waw consec. + v/qal/Impera./m/s: hayah + n/com/f/s/abs: berakah; "So become a blessing"])

וַאֲבָרַכְהָ מִבְּרַכְיֶיךָ וּמִקְלָלֶיךָ אֲרַר וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְּךָ כָּל
מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה: ^{WTT} Genesis 12:3

^{NAS} Genesis 12:3 **And I will bless those who bless you,** (וַאֲבָרַכְךָ בְּרַכְךָ [waw conj. + v/Piel/IPF/1com/s/cohortative: barake + /v/Piel/ptc/m/pl/constr. w/2ms suff: barake; "and I will bless those blessing you"])

And the one who curses you I will curse. (וְאֲרַר קָלָל [waw conj. + v/Piel/ptc/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: qalal; "and those cursing you {weaker form of curse}"; + v/qal/IPF/1com/s: 'arar; "I will curse"])

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (וְהָיָה מִשְׁפַּחַת כָּל בְּרַכְךָ [waw consec. + v/Niphal/PF/3com/pl: barake; "and they will be blessed"; + prep. w/2ms suff: bet; "in you"; + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + n/com/f/pl/constr: mishepachah + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'adamah; "all of the families of the earth"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 2 – 3:

1. There are 7 promises in 3 categories as part of the Abrahamic Covenant upon his meeting the requirements of vs.1:
 - A. National: **And I will make you a great nation.**
 - B. Personal: **And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.**

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- C. Universal: **And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**
2. The promise of **blessing** is central as the verb “**bless(ed)/barake**” and noun “**blessing/berakah**” are used 5x in these 2 verses.
 3. What modern men call “luck” or “success” the OT calls “**blessing**”, for God alone is the source of all good fortune.
 4. God is the one that “*makes/-asah*” (used 2x) the **blessing** happen.
 5. First, Abram is to become a “**great nation/goy gadol**”.
 6. The noun “*goy/nation*” was seen in the editorials of the Table of Nations in Gen.10.
 7. Abraham was the beginning of a new peoples/clan denoting a new racial aspect to be called Hebrew/Jew. Cf.Gen.14:13; 39:14,17; 41:12
 8. “**Nation**” is linked with government and territory.
 9. Israel was first a people and over time became a *goy* among the *goyim* (pl).
 10. The Hebrew race began when God called Abram from Ur; a **nation** was born at the foot of Mount Sinai.
 11. 40 years later the Hebrew race began to acquire the land promised to Abraham.
 12. What makes a **nation “great”** before God is a large population, large territory and spiritual character. Cp.Gen.12:7; 13:14-17; Deu.4:7-8
 13. **Nation** connotes a common law code, a common language and territory.
 14. So the new people that would make up this **great nation** began when Abram was called.
 15. The 2nd through 4th promises focuses on Abraham personally.
 16. The phrase “**I will bless you**” was fulfilled during the lifetime of Abraham as per the epithet of Gen.24:1, “*Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way*”.
 17. The 3rd, “**make your name great/gadal shem**” has as its parallel the promise to David in 2Sam.7:9.
 18. The aspiration of the Babel operators was to “*make for ourselves a name*” (11:4).
 19. What they pursued Abraham attained by humbling himself and obeying the call of God.
 20. Abraham’s fame has extended far beyond his lifetime and he will always be an icon of faith and obedience on into the kingdom of God on earth.
 21. The 4th to be a “**blessing**” is a promise directed to others by association with Abraham.
 22. The Hebrew employs an imperative and is literally “**And become a blessing/waw hayah berakah**”.
 23. The imperative directed to Abram removes any question as to the covenant being conditional.
 24. It follows on the heels of the 1st imperative “*Go forth*” (vs.1) indicating a purpose to “**become a blessing**”.
 25. This implies the necessity of Ph₂ faith.
 26. Only within the geographical and operational will of God could he be a **blessing** to others.
 27. This becomes apparent as study of his life unfolds.
 28. Promises 5 – 7 are universal in nature.
 29. Item 5, “**I will bless those who bless you**” promises reward to those that speak well of and treat Abraham according to his divinely assigned place in the POG.
 30. The promise extends beyond the lifetime of this patriarch to his future progeny.
 31. To “**bless**” Abraham is to teach the truth about his life and times.
 32. We are not to distort what the WOG has to say about Abraham and his role in the POG.

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33. **“I will bless”** is the Divine resolve toward plural recipients **“those blessing you”**.
34. The promise of potential universal blessing upon large groups of people (e.g. nations) shifts in the 6th promise to a singular, **“the one who curses you, I will curse”**.
35. The first “cursing” verb of the guilty *“qalal”* is a weaker verb than the **“curse/’arar”** that is evoked from God.
36. The milder term can be translated **“disdain”** to depict opposition to Abraham.
37. This means to regard someone (or something) with contempt e.g., Hagar toward Sarah in 16:4,5 (verb *qalal*).
38. Disdain often expresses itself in verbal attacks on God and others. E.g., Exo.21:17; 22:28; Lev.19:14-23; Deu.23:5-13
39. **“I will curse”** as with **“I will bless”** is administered by God upon individuals and nations in a plethora of ways.
40. We should always speak of Abraham and his descendants according to the situation at hand.
41. We are not to deviate to the right or left when evaluating the chosen people.
42. The 7th promise represents the grand finale of the Covenant.
43. This **blessing** is available to **“all the families of the earth/kol mishepachah ha ‘adamah”**.
44. Further, the **blessing** is somehow related to Abraham per the prepositional phrase **“in you/bekah {bet}”**.
45. The term **“families”** refers to genetic offspring of parents but less than a tribe. Cp.Gen.8:19; 10:5,18,20, etc.; Gen.24:38,40,41
46. God is telling Abraham that **in** him all **families** (units that make up all nations) of the **“ground/’adamah** (of fleshly descent; cf.Heb.2:16)” will **be blessed**.
47. It was the **“ground”** that was cursed (Gen.3:17-19).
48. In order for such a widespread and long-term **blessing** upon the peoples of the **earth** there must be something more than just the man Abram and the relatively few people he met during his lifetime.
49. The doctrine in view is further articulated in Gen.22:18, **“And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice”**.
50. Paul’s theological understanding of this promise is that it has fulfillment in the advent of Christ. Cf.Gal.3:16 cp.3:19
51. So this **blessing** comes through the seed of Abraham, that is, Jesus Christ.
52. As noted in Gen.22:18, this part of the covenant also reflects the necessity of Ph₂ faith by Abraham to secure the unconditional promise of Messiah.
53. The promise has to do with eternal salvation for all that believe in Jesus Christ.
54. With Abram, the line of Christ took on a specific racial component.
55. From this point forward the line of Messiah would be under the umbrella of the Jewish race and later nation.
56. Racially speaking salvation is a Jewish contribution according to Jesus in Joh.4:22.
57. This premier aspect of the covenant promise brings the greatest of all possible **blessing** to humanity.
58. There is no greater **blessing** than to inherit eternal life.
59. This **blessing** is further restated in Gen.18:18 and 26:4.
60. Applying God’s directive and geographical will under separation secures national, personal and universal blessings.
61. *Review the Doctrine of Separation.*

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ABRAM MIGRATES TO CANAAN

EXEGESIS VERSES 4 – 6:

וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ
לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־חַמֶּשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:4 So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. (לוֹט אִתְּ הַלֵּךְ ו יְהוָה אֶל דִּבֶּר אֲשֶׁר כ אַבְרָם הַלֵּךְ ו) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: halak + proper n: 'abram; "and he walked {went forth}, Abram"; + prep: kaph + rel.pro: 'asher + v/Piel/PF/3ms: dabar + prep. w/3ms suff: 'el + proper n: yahweh; "as which He had spoken to him, the Lord"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: halak + prep. w/3ms suff: 'eth + proper n: lot; "and he walked with him, Lot"])

Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. (בֶּן אַבְרָם ו) חָרָן מִן יָצָא ב שָׁנָה שִׁבְעִים ו שָׁנָה חַמֶּשׁ [waw conj. + proper n: 'abram + n/com/m/s/constr: ben; "Now Abram was a son of"; + adj/f/s/abs: chamesh + n/com/f/pl/abs: shanah; "five years"; + waw conj. + adj/b/pl/abs: shibe-iyim + n/com/f/s/abs: shanah; "and seventy years"; + prep: bet + v/qal/inf/constr. w/3ms suff: yatsa; "when his departing"; + prep: min + proper n: haran; "from Haran"])

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־אָחִיו
וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן
וַיֵּצְאוּ לָלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, (אַבְרָם לָקַח ו) אֶתְּ אִתּוֹ [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: laqach + proper n: 'abram + sign of d.o. + proper n: saray; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: ishah; "and he took, Abram, Sarai his wife"; + waw conj. + sign of d.o. + proper n: lot + n/com/m/s/constr: ben + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: 'ach; "and Lot, the son of his brother {nephew}"])

and all their possessions which they had accumulated, (וְ אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ כָּל אֶת ו) [waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: kol; "and all of"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3mpl suff: rekush; "their property"; + rel. pro: 'asher + v/qal/PF/c/pl: rakash; "which they acquired/collected/accumulated"])

and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, (וְ אֶת הַ נֶפֶשׁ הַ אֶת ו) חָרָן [waw conj. + sign of d.o. + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: nephesh + rel. pro: 'asher +

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v/qal/PF/3/c/pl: -asah; + prep: bet + proper n: haran; "and the souls {persons} which they acquired in Haran"])

and they set out for the land of Canaan; (וַיֵּצֵא אֶתְּהֵם אֶרֶץ הַלָּד לְיִצְחָק [waw consec. + *v/qal/IPF/3mpl: yatsa'* + *prep: lamed* + *v/qal/inf/constr: halak* + *n/com/f/s/constr: 'erets* + *proper n: kena'an*; "and they went forth to walk to the land of Canaan"])

thus they came to the land of Canaan. (וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן [waw consec. + *v/qal/IPF/3mpl: bo'* + *n/com/f/s/constr: 'erets* + *proper n: kena'an*; "and they came to the land of Canaan"])

וַיַּעֲבֹר אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֵם עַד אֵילֹן
מִזְרָה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אֵז בְּאֶרֶץ:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:6 **And Abram passed through the land** (וַיַּעֲבֹר אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ הַלָּד [waw consec. + *v/qal/IPF/3ms: -abar*; "and he passed through"; + *proper n: 'abram* + *prep: bet* + *d.a.* + *n/com/f/s/abs: 'erets*; "Abram, over the land"])

as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. (מִזְרָה אֵילֹן עַד שְׁכֵם מְקוֹם עֵד [prep: -ad + *n/com/m/s/constr: maqom*; "as far as the place of"; + *proper n: shekem*; "Shechem"; + *prep: -ad* + *n/com/m/s/constr: 'elon*; "as far as the oak of"; + *proper n: moreh*; "Moreh"])

Now the Canaanite was then in the land. (וַיְהִי כֵּן כְּנַעֲנִי הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ הַלָּד [waw conj. + *d.a.* + *proper n: kena-aniy* + *prep: 'az* + *prep: bet* + *d.a.* + *n/com/f/s/abs: 'erets*; "Now the Canaanite was then in the land"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 4 – 6:

1. With the death of Terah (11:32), “**Abram went forth as YHWH had spoken to him**” as commanded in vs.1.
2. His application is celebrated in Heb.11:8.
3. In spite of earlier distractions and delay, his ultimate orientation to God’s directive is that deemed as most important.
4. While he acclimates to God’s geographical will, he still falls short of God’s command to separate from his family (vs.1) “**and Lot went with him**”.
5. Lot’s continued role in Abram’s life was anticipated in 11:27,31.
6. This prepares the way for the events in chapters 13 and 14.
7. With Terah’s eldest son dead (Haran, 11:28), one son not interested in moving with the family to Haran (Nahor) and a son whose **wife** is barren, this leaves only **Lot** as a possible candidate to perpetuate the Messianic line.

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8. One commentator comments that with **Lot** going with **Abram** may be termed as far as the plot is concerned, “the teasing motif of the presumed heir” (L. Silberman, “Listening to the Text,” JBI.102 (1983) 19).
9. Yet his company simply echoes the immaturity from an otherwise +V believer (Abraham).
10. The first mention of **Lot** going along in vs.4 further implies an insistence on his part.
11. The verb “**went/halak**” or literally “*walked*” used for both Abram’s and Lot’s decisions illustrates two paths in life that humanly decide to maintain a fellowship that God has otherwise determined not to be.
12. Abraham was 75 years old when **he departed from Haran** ~1871 BC.
13. From time to time the narrator pinpoints specific years in the life of a patriarch (cp.Gen.16:16; 17:1,24; 21:5; 25:7).
14. The age notations are given for pivotal events in his life: Departure from Haran, birth of Ishmael, circumcision and covenant, birth of Isaac and death.
15. So **Abram** leaves Haran “*not knowing where he was going*” other than “**the land of Canaan**”.
16. In vs.5, we see whom and all that **Abram** took with him and **his wife Sarai**.
17. The ISBE suggests that the Hebrew “**Sarai/saray**” means “one who strives/rules” or “contentious”.
18. Most other sources translate it as “my princess” that may imply a demanding female.
19. The verb “**took/laqach**” indicates Abram’s authority in the matter.
20. After his father’s death, **Abram** obviously inherited his father’s assets becoming head of the house including responsibility of those living there as with “**Lot his nephew/lot ben ‘ach (son of his brother)**”.
21. The 2nd mention of Lot’s company in this vein illustrates that the burden of separation from **Lot** lay on the shoulders of **Abram**, no matter emotional ties or Lot’s insistence otherwise (cf.vs.1a).
22. Whereas Terah set out for **Canaan**, but settled in Haran, **Abram** actually reached **Canaan**.
23. **Canaan** with its boundaries is loosely defined in 10:19 and more precisely in Num.34:2-12.
24. During Abram’s stay in Haran, he acquired much wealth through inheritance as well as acquisition.
25. This sets a pattern for his prospering in other foreign parts (cf.12:16; 20:14).
26. His wealth was inclusive of “**possessions/rekush**” as real property including herds (cf.14:11,12,26; 31:18) and slaves, literally “people/**persons/nephesh**”.
27. The itinerary of travel is depicted 3-fold with the 1st 2 in the plural and 3rd singular:
 - A. “**They set out for the land of Canaan/yatsa’** lamed halak ‘erets kena’an”.
 - B. “**They came to the land of Canaan/bo’** ‘erets kena’an”.
 - C. “**Abram passed through the land/-abar** ‘abram ‘erets”.
28. This illustrates that while the entire company may have been engaged in a unified effort to get to **Canaan**, their right of occupancy was blessing by association with **Abram**.
29. Apart from his role, their travels in the land held no real purpose before God.
30. His route from Haran to **Canaan** took him through Damascus, along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and then on to **Shechem**.
31. This has been positively identified with Tell Balata, just east of modern Nablus.
32. **Shechem** was a very important center in the 2nd millennium BC.

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33. It is mentioned often in the OT (e.g., Gen.33:18; 35:4; 37:12-13; Jos.24:1; Jdg.9:6; 1Kgs.21:1).
34. Jos.20:7 says it was regarded as being in the center of the land.
35. The “**oak**/’elon” of **Moreh** refers to a very large tree in the area (cf.Gen.35:4).
36. The noun ‘*elon* is a derivative of the Hebrew ‘*elam* that means “portico/porch”.
37. The NAS consistently translates the word as “**oak**” though some Lexicons associate it with the “terebinth”, a pistachio tree of the cashew family, yielding Chian turpentine.
38. “**Moreh**” literally means “teacher”. Cp. Job 36:22; Pro.5:13; Isa.30:20 (2x)
39. This suggests a place where divine oracles occurred.
40. Cf.”palm of Deborah” (Jdg.4:5).
41. Possibly the same tree is mentioned in Jdg.9:37.
42. Trees and large stones were connected with oracles in Ugarit (city-state of **Canaan**).
43. Similar associations are to be found in Gen.28:18-22; Jos.24:26; Jdg.6:11,19-20.
44. Sacred trees are still known in the Near East.
45. Other trees mentioned in the patriarchal narratives include Gen.13:18; 18:1; 21:33; 35:8.
46. It is not stated that any of the patriarchs in Genesis engaged in religious rites at these trees.
47. Later, the Law prohibited worshipping YHWY “*on high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree*”. Deu.12:2 cp.1Kgs.14:23; Jer.2:20; Hos.4:12-13
48. “**The Canaanite was then in the land**” suggests why **Abram** could not take immediate possession of the **land** promised to him, as it was already occupied.

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2ND DIVINE ENCOUNTER

EXEGESIS VERSES 7 – 9:

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזָרְעֶךָ אֶת־
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:7 **And the LORD appeared to Abram and said,** (אֵל יְהוָה רָאָה וַיֵּרָא אֶל אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר) [waw consec. + v/Niphal/IPF/3ms: ra'ah + proper n: yahweh + prep: 'el + proper n: 'abram + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar; "and He appeared {lit. was seen}, Yaweh, to Aberam, and said"])

"To your descendants I will give this land." (לְזָרְעֶךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה) [prep: lamed + n/com/m/s/constr. w/2ms suff: zera-; "to your descendants {seed}"; + v/qal/IPF/1cs: nathan + sign of d.o. + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'erets + d.a. + adj/f/s: zo'th; "I will give the land, this one"])

So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. (וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: banah; "and he built"; + adv: sham; "there"; + n/com/m/s/abs: mizebbecha; "an altar" {a place for sacrifice; same as 8:20}; + prep: lamed + proper n: yahweh + d.a. + v/Niphal/ptc/m/s/abs: ra'ah + prep. w/3ms suff: 'el; "to the Lord, the One having been seen by him"])

וַיֵּצֵא מִשָּׁם הָהָרָה מִקְדָּם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אֹהֶל
בְּיַד־אֵל מִיָּם וְהָעֵי מִקְדָּם וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא
בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:8 **Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel,** (וַיֵּצֵא מִשָּׁם הָהָרָה מִקְדָּם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אֹהֶל בְּיַד־אֵל מִיָּם וְהָעֵי מִקְדָּם וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה) [waw consec. + v/Hiphil/IPF/3ms: -athaq {lit. become old, removed}; "Then he proceeded (after some time)"; + prep: min + adv: sham; "from there"; + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: har; "to the mountain"; + prep: min + n/com/m/s/abs: qedem; "from {on} the east"; + prep: lamed + proper n: beyth-'el; "to Bethel"])

and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; (וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: nathah; "and he spread out {pitched}"; + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: 'ohel; "his tent"; + proper n: beyth-'el + prep: min + n/com/m/s/abs: "with Bethel on the west"; + waw conj. + d.a. + proper n: -ay; "and Ai" + prep: min + n/com/m/s/abs: qedem; "on the east"])

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and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. (**וַיִּבֶן אֶלְטָרָה לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה** [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: banah + adv: sham + n/com/m/s/abs: mizebbecha + prep: lamed + proper n: yahweh; "and he built, at that place, an altar to the Lord"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms; qara' + prep: bet + n/com/m/s/constr: shem + proper n: yahweh; "and he called upon the name of the Lord"])

וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם הַלּוֹךְ וְנֹסֵעַ הַנֶּגֶב: פ ^{WTT} Genesis 12:9

^{NAS} Genesis 12:9 **And Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.** (**וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם נֹסֵעַ וְהָלַךְ** [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: nasa- {lit. pulled up/broke camp} + proper n: 'abram + v/qal/inf/abs: halak; "and he broke camp, Abram; to walk {journeyed on}"; + waw conj. + v/qal/inf/abs: nasa; "and to continue breaking camp {continuing}"; + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: negeb; "toward the Negev {south}"; + end of para: phe])

ANALYSIS VERSES 7 – 9:

1. Yahweh's initial call to **Abram** was auditory in nature (*the Lord said*; vs.1).
2. On that occasion he was given the doctrine to apply necessary for God's fulfillment of terms of the covenant and commissioned to go to an unknown land.
3. Now the mode of revelation is a theophany, "**And the Lord appeared to Abram and said**".
4. The theophany is designed to validate Abram's faith augmenting the verbal aspect with dramatic effect.
5. That is, Yahweh provides overt confirmation to Abram's +V.
6. It portends the supernatural presence of God confirming the truth of His word upon the soul of the positive believer. Cp.2Pet.1:20-21
7. In addition His presence makes the pact personal between **Abram** and Yahweh illustrating God's grace on behalf of +V (blessing by association).
8. The grace is God's right as Creator to bequeath the attendant promise, "**To your descendants I will give this land**".
9. Because of Abram's obedience to God's geographical will, an unconditional aspect of the Covenant emerges.
10. In this case that particular feature of the Abrahamic Covenant is the real estate clause.
11. God first secures that necessary for the remaining aspects of the Covenant to be a reality (as a nation, great name, etc.).
12. This illustrates that God perfectly anticipates all that is necessary for blessings to come to fruition.
13. As simply articulated here the promise is not directed at Abraham, but his future "**descendants/seed/zera**".
14. His **descendants** do nothing to acquire the promise and hence its unconditional nature.
15. One of the clear implications of this promise is that it eliminates Lot as Abram's heir.
16. The heir must be Abram's own **seed**.

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17. This promise cannot be implemented in Abram's lifetime as it requires lots of people to conquer and occupy a territory as large as the land of Canaan.
18. So the promise is extended here as it relates to Abram's offspring.
19. As we know, Abraham left Haran at age 75 (~1871 BC; vs.4).
20. We know that Israel left Egypt in 1446-5 BC and 40 years after they began the conquest of Canaan under Joshua in 1406-5 BC.
21. So not until 465 years after Abraham left Haran would this promise be fulfilled.
22. Further, Gal.3:16-17 records that the Mosaic Law came 430 years after the initial Covenant with Abraham in Gen.12:1-3.
23. 430 years before 1446 BC (giving of the Law) = 1876 BC allowing us to date the Abrahamic Covenant 5 years before he left Haran (1871 BC at age 75) or at the age of 70 years old.
24. Not until after Abraham and Lot separate in Gen.13:14 does Yahweh promise to "give/nathan" the **land** to Abraham himself (cf.Gen.13:17).
25. Yahweh keeps His promise to "show" **Abram** the land of promise in the interim.
26. So "**land**" looks back to the implicit promise of 12:1.
27. All the while Abram's faith is tested and he is now rewarded with a Theophany.
28. "**This land**/zo'th 'erets" is gifted to Abram's racial **descendants**.
29. The pilgrim **Abram** then acts as **Abram** the builder.
30. He does not build a city, or even a house, but "**he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him**".
31. As we know, sacrifice was a ritual engaged by the early patriarchs in the Age of the Gentiles as implied with Abel (Gen.4:4) and explicitly noted with Noah in 8:20.
32. Implicit in the noun "**altar**/mizebbecha" is the offering up of sacrifices clarified in Gen.22:9.
33. Here, vs.8 and in 26:25 the building of an **altar** is connected with invoking God's name.
34. In our verse it is obvious it is in thanksgiving to Yahweh for the promises associated with salvation and as it now is applied to the Abrahamic Covenant producing the promised heir.
35. The **land** at this point is placed in trust to later be legally titled in Abraham's name with actual possession some 465 years later.
36. Vs.7 is the shortest of all the promises related to this covenant and is monumental in that it assumes both a people and nation that will occupy it using only one verb "**give**".
37. Grace cannot be defined as anything less.
38. After offering sacrifice, **Abram** "**proceeded from there (Shechem) to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east**".
39. The verb "**proceeded**/-atahaq" here means "*relocated after some time*".
40. How long he lingered in Shechem we are not told.
41. "**Bethel**" was once called Luz (cf.Gen.28:19), but its new Jewish name is used here.
42. It is identified with the modern el-Bireh, rather than Beitin that does not meet all of the topographical criteria (ISBE). www.Biblearcheology.org/post/2008/04/Further-Considerations-on-the-Location-of-Bethel-at-El-Bireh ; dtd. Apr. 15, 2008 by David Livingston PhD
43. "**Ai**" is mention in Jos.7,8; Ezr.2:28; Neh.7:32 and Jer.49:3
44. Modern Khirbet Nisya is suggested to meet the biblical requirements for **Ai**. *ibid*
45. Abraham "**pitched his tent**/nathah 'ohel" between **Bethel and Ai and there built another altar to the Lord and invoked His name**.

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46. That there is not specific reason given for sacrifice on this occasion loudly implies that Abraham's practice of sacrifice was routine.
47. He didn't need a special occasion to appeal to God in thanksgiving and praise.
48. This contrasts many believers today that will readily honor God for the good things in life but when life is routine or mundane (or not going well otherwise), God is sidelined.
49. The language of vs.9 summarizes a series of stages moving ever toward the south of Canaan.
50. The grammar suggests a series of encampments.
51. The Qal verb "**journeyed on**/nasa-" means to "pull up/break camp" and is used in connection with the Qal infinitives of "to walk/halak" and "nasa-" repeated indicating repetitive action.
52. The verb "**journeyed**/nasa-" is used 42x to depict the wilderness wandering of the Jews in the days of Moses in Num.33.
53. The "**Negev**/negeb" is the southern region of Judah between its hills and Kadesh-Barnea.
54. It marks the southern border of Canaan. Cp.Num.34:3-5
55. Thus the brief itinerary of Abraham described in vss.5-9 takes him from the northern to the southern border of the **land**.
56. He not only sees what has been promised; he walks through it and lives and worships in it.
57. God's geographical will is the place He expects believers to execute their Christian lives.
58. Symbolically Abraham has taken possession of the **land**.
59. The end of his journey at the southern boundary prepares for the next episode that takes place in Egypt.

GENESIS

ABRAM IN EGYPT VSS.10-20

A TEST

EXEGESIS VERSE 10:

וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ וְיִרְדּוּ אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם לָנוֹרָא שָׁם
כִּי־כָבֵד הָרָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ׃

WTT Genesis 12:10

^{NAS} Genesis 12:10 **Now there was a famine in the land;** (וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ הָאֲרָץ [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: hayah; "And it came to pass"; + n/com/m/s/abs: ra-ab; "famine/hunger" {used 134x}; + prep: bet + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'erets; "in the land"])

so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, (וַיֵּרֵד אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם לָנוֹרָא שָׁם לְמִצְרַיִם [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: yarad; "and he went down/descended"; + proper n: 'abram; "Abram"; + proper n: mitserayim; "to Egypt"; + prep: lamed + v/qal/inf/constr: gur; "to sojourn/stay for a while"; + adv: sham; "there"])

for the famine was severe in the land. (כִּי־כָבֵד הָרָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ הָאֲרָץ [conj: kiy; "for/because"; + adj/m/s/abs: kabad; "heavy/great/severe"; + d.a. + n/com/m/s/abs: ra-ab; "was the famine"; + prep: bet + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'erets; "in the land"])

ANALYSIS VERSE 10:

1. The real estate blessing has with it a test for Abraham.
2. That is, “**Now there was a famine in the land**”.
3. The **land** was susceptible to fluctuating rainfall and food shortages until the advent of modern methods of irrigation.
4. “**Famine/ra-ab**” placed the residents in positions having to often find an alternative source of food.
5. It was a phenomenon often repeated. Cp.Gen.26:1; Gen.41:27-36, 50,54-57; etc.
6. **Famine** compelled all three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) to leave Canaan at different times. Cp.Gen.26:1 (Isaac); 47:4 (Jacob)
7. **Egypt** was the standard refuge for people facing this situation, as the Nile provided a much more certain food supply. Cf.Deu.11:10
8. **Egypt** on into Roman times was the bread basket of the world.
9. Egyptian texts mention the arrival of hungry foreigners.
10. The inscription on the grave of Horemheb reads: “Certain of the foreigners who know not how they may live have come...Their countries are starving” (ANET; Ancient Near Eastern Texts; James B. Pritchard).
11. It is **Egypt** that **Abram** headed for **so he went down to sojourn there**.
12. The concept of “**went down/descended/yarad**” in the Hebrew mind is to be viewed topographically from the perspective of Jerusalem and immediate area.

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13. The elevation of Canaan was higher than the Nile valley and so the Bible regularly speaks of “descending” to **Egypt**. Cp.Gen.26:2; 39:1; 42:2,3; 43:15; 45:13; etc.
14. What is striking is that Abraham is said to have gone “**to sojourn there/gur sham**” that means he was planning on staying on indefinitely.
15. To live as an immigrant (gur) suggests the intention of long-term settlement that is quite opposite of Abram’s nomadic lifestyle.
16. It is disconcerting to the informed reader to learn that **Abram** is deserting the promised land so soon after it has been promised (vs.7).
17. **Abram** did not make the decision to vacate Canaan until “**the famine was severe (kated) in the land**”.
18. A **famine** of this magnitude is not the result of simply one year of no rain.
19. No doubt **Abram** witnessed the suffering of man and beast and probably suffered losses within his own herds.
20. Forage became very hard to come by and surface water was disappearing.
21. Under extreme pressure from within and without he finally made the decision to relocate his people to a safe haven.
22. He took his eyes off of God and “**went down to Egypt**”.
23. Yes, he was severely tested, but God has promised to never leave or forsake the positive believer that suffers in the geographical will. Cf.Heb.13:5
24. STA fear ruled his soul and so energy of the flesh set in.
25. Fear is introduced regarding the patriarch as it will continue to cause bad decisions in his life.
26. Instead of calling on the name of the Lord in his distress, he abandoned the directive and geographical will of God.
27. Or maybe he did petition God (vs.8), but ultimately failed to faith-rest and missed the divine deliverance that would have come.
28. Abram’s action on this occasion makes for a parallel between his Egyptian **sojourn** and the later Israelite **sojourn there** (cf.15:13).
29. Both were prompted by **severe famine** that threatened the survival of the chosen people.
30. Abraham should have kept before him the doctrine of the covenant that implied that he could not die without a male heir.
31. The promises of the covenant meant he would in time be blessed and in time he would father a son that would carry the promises forward.
32. All 3 patriarchs from time to time failed to faith-rest difficult situation and let fear rule their souls.
33. Even though the text does not condemn **Abram** for this move, it is clear from what follows that he, even in **Egypt**, is not being blessed nor is he a blessing to others.
34. Had he stayed put God would have done what was necessary to get him through this **severe** test.
35. As we will see, running from his test just created more testing and ultimately resolved nothing other than rebuke and back to Canaan.

GENESIS

TESTING PERSISTS AND PLAN TO SOLVE IT

EXEGESIS VERSES 11 – 13:

וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לְבוֹא מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶל־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ הֲנִה־נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אִשָּׁה יִפְתַּח־מְרָאָה אֹתָּ:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:11 **And it came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife,** (וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּרַב אֶשֶׁר כִּי הָיָה ו) [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: hayah; "And it came about"; + prep: kaph + rel.pro: 'asher; "the like of which/when"; + v/Hiphil/PF/3ms: qarab; "he caused to approach/come near"; + prep: lamed + v/qal/inf/constr: bo'; "to enter into"; + proper n: mitserayim; "Egypt"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms; 'amar; + prep: 'el + proper n: saray + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: 'ishah; "and he said to Sarai his wife"])

"See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; (יִפְתַּח אִשָּׁה כִּי יָדַע נָא הֲנִה) מְרָאָה אֹתָּ [interj.part: hinney + interj.part: na'; "Behold now!"; + v/qal/PF/1cs; yada-; "I know"; + conj: kiy; "that" + n/com/f/s/abs: 'ishah; "a wife/woman"; + adj/f/s/constr: yapheh; "a beautiful one"; + n/com/m/s/abs: mare'eh; "to look at/in appearance"; + pro/2fs; "you are"])

וְהָיָה כִּי־יִרְאוּ אֹתְךָ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַאֲמָרוּ אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת
וְהָרְגוּ אֹתִי וְאֹתְךָ יַחֲיֶי:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:12 **and it will come about when the Egyptians see you, that they will say,** (וְהָיָה כִּי יִרְאוּ אֹתְךָ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַאֲמָרוּ אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת) [waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3ms: hayah; "and it will come about"; + part: kiy + v/qal/IPF/3mpl: ra'ah + sign of d.o. w/2fs suff: 'eth; "when they will see you"; + d.a. + proper n: mitseriy; "the Egyptians"; + waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3cpl: 'amar; "that/and they will say"])

'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. (אֵת הָרְגוּ וְזֹאת אִשְׁתּוֹ) [n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: 'ishah + adj/f/s: zo'th; "His wife is this one"; + waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3cp: harag + sign of d.o. w/1cs suff: 'eth; "and they will murder me"; + waw conj. + sign of d.o. w/2fs suff: 'eth; "and you"; + v/Piel/IPF/3mpl: chayah; "they will certainly let live"])

אֲמָרִי־נָא אַחֲתִי אֵת לְמַעַן יִישַׁב־לִי בְּעַבְדְּךָ
וְחַיְתָּה נַפְשִׁי בְּגִלְגָּלֶיךָ:

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^{NAS} Genesis 12:13 "Please say that you are my sister (אָמַרְךָ נָא אֶחָוֹת אֵתְךָ [v/qal/Imp/f/s: 'amar + interj.par: na'; "Say, I pray/please"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'achoth; "my sister"; + pro/2fs: 'atte; "are you"])

so that it may go well with me because of you, (לְמַעַן לֵיטֵב בִּי לְעִבְרַתְךָ [prep: lema-an; "in order that/so that"; + v/qal/IPF/3ms: yatab; "it will/may go well"; + prep. w/1cs suff: lamed; "for me"; + prep: bet + prep. w/2fs suff: -abur; "by means of on account of you"])

and that I may live on account of you." (וְאֵתְךָ אֶחָוֹת אֵתְךָ [waw consec. + v/qal/PF/3fs: chayah + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: nephesh; "and I will live my life {soul}"; + prep. w/2fs suff: bigelal; "for the sake of you"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 11 – 13:

1. Four scenes arise due to Abram's decision to abandon Canaan (vss.11-13; vss.14-16; vs.17; vss.18-20).
2. The first is set on the border of **Egypt**, "And it came about when he came near to Egypt".
3. A thought grabs his attention and he relates a new fear now facing him to **Sarai** with a scheme to avoid personal harm.
4. No comments of hers are recorded, implying her consent to his plan.
5. Escaping the danger of famine, Abram imagines that in **Egypt** he will face another life-ending situation.
6. Immigrants were subject to abuse by the host nation.
7. The Law speaks against taking advantage of immigrants. Cp.Exo.22:21
8. Abram face a potential death test in Canaan, but now in **Egypt** he is afraid that some powerful person would kill him to take **his wife**.
9. Being out of the will of God as he was due to fear, he is especially vulnerable to human viewpoint actions.
10. He led with emotions and emotions are still driving him as one fear gives way to another.
11. He illustrates the victim that is constantly trying to deliver self rather than trusting in God.
12. A strange environment can be intimidating and often feeds unfounded fears.
13. What is striking to the reader is Abram's perception of **Sarai** as outstandingly attractive, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman".
14. What is arresting is that **Sarai** is over 65 years old (cf.12:4 cp.17:17).
15. The narrative reveals that this is not merely the opinion of a neurotically jealous husband, for the **Egyptians** readily concurred (vss.14-15).
16. **Sarai** possessed uncommon beauty and this was well preserved into middle age, plus she had never born children.
17. Her genetic kept her looking years younger than she actually was.
18. Other women that possessed exceptional beauty include Rebekah, Isaac's wife (Gen.24:16) and Rachel, Jacob's wife (Gen.29:17).
19. Beauty by itself is vain, but the WOG does recognize its existence. Cf.Pro.31:30

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20. Abram feared that Sarai's looks would prove irresistible to the **Egyptians**, "**and it will come about when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live**".
21. Since Abram had no family in **Egypt** to help protect his interests, they might simply **kill** him so they could have her.
22. Abram's plan of defense is even more arresting than Sarai's beauty.
23. That is she should pass herself off as his "**sister**".
24. This appears to have been a standing agreement between Abram and **Sarai** to present themselves as brother and sister. Cf.Gen.20:14
25. While this was a half-truth, it was not the whole truth (cf.Gen.20:12).
26. What Abram hoped to achieve is debatable.
27. Commentators are quick to accuse Abram of committing himself allowing **Sarai** to marry any suitor that sought her hand and by implication was prepared to sacrifice his wife's honor to save his bacon.
28. Medieval commentators suggest that Abram hoped that by claiming to be her brother that he could fend off suitors without actually giving her away.
29. There are other stories of brothers that try to delay their sisters' marriages (e.g.: Laban and Rebekah, Gen.24:55; Dinah and her brothers, Gen.34:13-17).
30. No matter if that the case, the plan still fails and blows up in Abram's face.
31. Assuming the worst if he did not lie about **Sarai**, Abram found himself in a self-preservation mode and God and the promises were not before his eyes.
32. The logic of Abram's proposal to **Sarai** is two-fold:
 - A. **That it may go well with me because of you.**
 - B. **And that I may live *for the sake of you*.**
33. The first is designed to place the burden of Abram's life on the shoulders of **his wife (because of you/bet –abur)**.
34. The second is an attempt to convince her that he is only trying to preserve himself in order for her to avoid the sorrow of losing her husband/soul mate (***for the sake of you***/bigelal).
35. Both are to stir up her affections for him in complicity to his scheme.
36. His approach is designed to appeal to the woman as a helper and stir up her own sin fear in the matter.
37. Again, her silence indicates her consent.
38. Her silence matches her husband's at the end of the episode when rebuked by the Pharaoh.

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COMPLICATIONS BEYOND CONTROL

EXEGESIS VERSES 14 – 16:

וַיְהִי כְּבּוֹא אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְאוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם
אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה כִּי־יִפְּהָ הוּא מְאֹד׃

^{NAS} Genesis 12:14 **And it came about when Abram came into Egypt,** (**בּוֹא כִּי הָיָה וְ**)
בּוֹא [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: hayah + prep: kaph + v/qal/inf/constr: bo' +
proper n: 'abram + proper n: mitserayim; "and it came to pass when he entered into, Abram,
Egypt"])

the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. (**וַיִּרְאוּ הָאִשָּׁה כִּי יִפְּהָ הוּא מְאֹד**)
וַיִּרְאוּ הָאִשָּׁה [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3mpl: ra'ah + d.a. + proper n: mitseriy; "and
they saw, the Egyptians"; + sign of d.o. + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'ishah; "the woman"; +
part.conj: kiy; "that"; + adj/f/s/abs: yapheh; "beautiful"; + pro/3fs: hiy' + adv: me'od; "was she
exceedingly"])

וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּתְּלֶהּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה
וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה בֵּית פַּרְעֹה׃

^{NAS} Genesis 12:15 **And Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh;** (**וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּתְּלֶהּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה**)
וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3mpl: ra'ah + sign of
d.o. w/3fs suff: eth; "and they saw her"; + n/com/m/pl/constr: shar; "princes/officials of"; +
proper n: pare-oh; "Pharaoh" {means "the Great House"}; + waw consec. + v/Piel/IPF/3mpl:
halal; "and they praised/boasted of"; + sign of d.o. w/3fs suff: 'eth + prep: 'el + proper n: pare-
oh; "her to Pharaoh"])

and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. (**וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה בֵּית פַּרְעֹה**)
וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה [waw
consec. + v/qal/pass/IPF/3fs; "laqach; "and she was taken to"; + d.a. + n/com/f/s/abs: 'ishah;
"the woman"; + n/com/f/s/constr: beyith + proper n: pare-oh; "the house of Pharaoh"])

וּלְאַבְרָם הֵיטִיב בְּעַבְדֵּי וַיְהִי־לּוֹ צֹאן־וּבָקָר׃
וַחֲמֹרִים וְעַבְדִּים וְשִׁפְחֹת וְאֶתְנַת וְגַמְלִים׃

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^{NAS} Genesis 12:16 **Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake;** (וַיִּטַב אֲבְרָם לָהּ לְעִבְרָה [waw conj. + prep: lamed + proper n: 'abram; "and for Abram"; + v/Hiphil/PF/3ms; "he caused good/treated well"; + prep: bet + prep. w/3fs suff:-abur; "because of her"]) **and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.** (וַיִּהְיֶה לְאַתּוֹן וְעִבְדָּה וְחַמּוֹר וְבָקָר וְצֹאֵן לְהֵיחָדָשׁ [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: hayah + prep. w/3ms suff: lamed; "and it happened for him"; + n/com/f/s/abs: tso'n; "sheep"; + waw conj. + n/com/m/s/abs: baqar; "and oxen/cattle"; + waw conj. + n/com/m/pl/abs: chamor; "and male donkeys/he-asses"; + waw conj. + n/com/m/pl/abs: -ebed; "and male slaves/servants"; + waw conj. + n/com/f/pl/abs: shiphechah; "and maids/female servants"; + waw conj. + n/com/f/pl/abs: 'athon; "female donkeys/she-asses"; + waw conj. + n/com/m/pl/abs: gamal; "and camels"])

ANALYSIS VERSES 14 – 16:

1. The second scene finds **Abram** and company in **Egypt**.
2. At the onset, it appears Abram's foresight was accurate and that his plan was somewhat ingenious.
3. As he anticipated, the **Egyptians** noticed Sarai's beauty (vss.11-12), yet without incident.
4. He tells the **Egyptians** that might inquire that Sarai is his sister.
5. To add to the potential intensity to the situation, the narrator adds that the **Egyptians** viewed Sarai beyond just "pretty" as described by **Abram** in vs.11, but "very beautiful/yapheh me'od".
6. How often it is more desirable to those without than those with or familiar with a person or thing. Cp.Exo.20:17
7. Then an unforeseen complication arises: Her **beauty** was reported to the **Pharaoh**.
8. There was a consensus among **Pharaoh's officials** that saw Sarai's beauty that it was of such caliber as to belong in **Pharaoh's house/harem**.
9. That none of the "officials/princes/shar" sought her for his self suggests strongly that her beauty was such that none wanted to be in the position of having a bride that would outclass the king.
10. They "praised/lauded/boasted in/halal" her with such fervor that it convinces the king to check her out.
11. The verb "was taken/laqach" has an underlying meaning of "seizing by force" indicating that her audience before **Pharaoh** was not to be denied.
12. Bet Abraham didn't see that one coming!!
13. The verb *laqach* in the context of marriage denotes the formal taking of a woman as wife and is distinguished from the act of sexual intercourse. Cf.Gen.20:2-4; 34:2; cp.Deu.22:13,14
14. As far as it got between the **Pharaoh** and Sarai was that she was merely introduced to him.
15. A royal wedding would follow.
16. The proper noun "**Pharaoh/pare-oh**" is the Hebrew equivalent of "great house".
17. The plagues that struck **Pharaoh's house** in vs.17 suggests that the act of adultery was forestalled.

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18. It was customary for large presents, dowry, to be given to the bride's family at betrothal. Cp.Gen.24:52-53; Exo.22:16-17; 1Sam.18:22-29
19. The bounty bestowed upon **Abram** in vs.16 represented this sort of payment.
20. While it could have been a mark of Pharaonic goodwill toward Sarai's brother, the phrase "**for her sake**/bet –abur" in his treatment of **Abram** suggests he was trying to impress Sarai and gain Abram's approbation.
21. The strange order of gifts, "**male and female servants/slaves and slave girls**"/-ebed waw shiphechah" interrupts the list of animals.
22. Is this a hint as to where Sarai picked up her maid servant Hagar?
23. While "**sheep and oxen/cattle**/tso'n waw baqar" indicate flocks and herds, the mention of both male and **female donkeys**/chmor waw 'athon" indicates the ability to expand and grow as to the wealth acquired.
24. It is clear that the gifts were intended to set Abraham up for a secure financial future.
25. "**Camels**/gamal" represent among the animals a luxury item.
26. **Camels** are one of several features that emphasize the wealth of the patriarchs.
27. Each of the wife-sister episodes mentions the enrichment of the patriarch as the result of his deception. Cp.Gen.20:14-16 cf. 26:12-14 *of Isaac*
28. We can only imagine the misery of soul that **Abram** and Sarai experienced during this ordeal.
29. What seemed to be a brilliant scheme to avoid physical danger was nothing more than a human viewpoint STA driven plan that put the entire plan of God at risk.
30. This we know from the subsequent narrative (vs.7) that she was designated to be the mother of the child of promise.

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DIVINE INTERVENTION

EXEGESIS VERSE 17:

וַיִּנְנֶע יְהוָה אֶת־פַּרְעֹה נִגְעִים גְּדֹלִים וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ
עַל־דְּבַר שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲבֵרָם:

^{NAS} Genesis 12:17 **But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.** (וַיִּנְנֶע יְהוָה אֶת פַּרְעֹה נִגְעִים גְּדֹלִים וְאֶת בֵּית אֲבֵרָם אִשְׁתּוֹ שָׂרַי דְּבַר יְהוָה) [*waw consec. + v/Piel/IPF/3ms: naga-; "and He utterly struck"; + proper n: "Yahweh"; + sign of d.o. + proper n: Pare-oh; "Pharaoh"; + n/com/m/pl/abs: nega-; "with plagues/disease"; + adj/m/pl/abs: gadol; "great ones"; + waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr. w/3ms suff: bayith; "and his house"; + prep: -al + n/com/m/s/constr: dabar; "over the matter of"; + proper n: saray + n/com/f/s/constr: 'ishah + proper n: 'abram; "Sarai, the wife of Abram"])*

ANALYSIS VERSE 17:

1. As unexpected to Abram was **Sarai** being taken to **Pharaoh** (vs.15), so probably is the matter of her deliverance from the situation.
2. Yahweh intervenes marking the 3rd scene and turning point of Abraham's debacle.
3. God unloads His wrath on **Pharaoh and his house with great plagues**.
4. The nature and type of punishment on the Egyptians is not precisely defined and can range from bodily sickness to a variety of other maladies.
5. What we do know is that these "**plagues/nega-**" were not minor in nature as noted by the descriptive adjective "**great/gadol**".
6. The sicknesses were of a most severe nature and adverse circumstances otherwise had their attention.
7. **Pharaoh** was not exempt from the suffering that in turn motivates him to try and resolve these adversatives to the extent possible.
8. All of this was done "**because of Sarai/-al dabar saray**".
9. She was a victim of her husband's cowardice and Pharaoh's lusts.
10. Though her husband wouldn't protect her, God did.
11. Even though complicit in Abram's scheme, the situation now was not part of the bargain.
12. Her silence coupled with the entire picture of God intervening on her behalf suggests that her authority had probably assured her that things would never get this far.
13. Skin disorders and all manner of illness stalked the corridors of power and wealth.
14. Sarah was exempt from God's wrath and it became apparent to **Pharaoh** that the taking of her as his prospective **wife** was key to all the misery in the royal palace.
15. God intervenes to protect His word even though Abraham placed the covenant in jeopardy.
16. This incident is prelude to Israel's exodus from Egypt when again the **house of Pharaoh** would come under severe **plagues**.

GENESIS

THE HUMILIATION

EXEGESIS VERSES 18 – 20:

וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה לְאַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי
לְמַה לֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי כִּי אִשְׁתְּךָ הוּא׃

^{NAS} Genesis 12:18 **Then Pharaoh called Abram and said,** (וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה לְאַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי [waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: qara' + proper n: pare-oh + prep: lamed + proper n: 'abram + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/3ms: 'amar; "and he called, Pharaoh, to Abram, and said"])

"What is this you have done to me? (לְמַה עָשִׂיתָ לִּי [interr.pro: mah; "What?"; + adj/f/s: zo'th; "is this"; + v/qal/PF/2ms; -asah + prep. w/1cs suff: lamed; "you have done to me"])

Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? (הֲיָא אִשָּׁה כִּי לֹא נִגַּדְתָּ לִּי [interr. part: lammah; "Why?"; + neg. part: lo' + v/Hiphil/PF/2ms: nagad; "did you not make known/tell"; + prep. w/1cs; lamed; "to me"; + conj: kiy + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2ms suff: 'ishah + pro/3fs: hiy; "that your wife was she"])

וַעֲתָה הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קַח וְלֵךְ׃

^{NAS} Genesis 12:19 **"Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife?** (לְמַה לֹא אָמַרְתָּ לִּי הִיא אִשְׁתִּי כִּי לָקַחְתִּי וְלָקַחְתִּי לִּי [interr. part: lammah; "Why?"; + v(/qal/PF/2ms; 'amar; "did you say"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/1cs suff: 'achoth + pro/3fs: hiy; "My sister is she"; + waw consec. + v/qal/IPF/1cs: laqach; "so I took"; + sign of d.o. w/3fs suff: 'eth; "her"; + prep. w/1cs suff: lamed; "for me"; + prep: lamed + n/com/f/s/abs: 'ishah; "for a wife"])

Now then, here is your wife, take her and go. (וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קַח וְלֵךְ [waw conj. + adv: -attah; "and now"; + interj. part: hinneh; "here/ behold!"; + n/com/f/s/constr. w/2ms suff: 'ishah; "your wife"; + v/qal/imp/m/s: laqach + waw conj. + v/qal/imp/m/s: halak; "take and go"])

וַיִּצְוּ עָלָיו פַרְעֹה וְאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ
וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֵׁר־לוֹ׃

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NAS Genesis 12:20 **And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him;** (עַל צֹוֹהוּ ה' וְ) פָּרַעְהַ אִישׁ [waw consec. + v/Piel/IPF/3ms: tsawah; "and he commanded"; + prep. w/3ms: -al; "concerning him"; + proper n: pare-oh + n/com/m/pl/abs: 'ish; "Pharaoh to the men""]
and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him. (וְ אֵת שְׁלָחַהּ וְ) אֵת אִשְׁתּוֹ וְ אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לְ אִשְׁרָהּ [waw consec. + v/Piel/IPF/3mpl: shalach; "and they sent away/escorted"; + sign of d.o. w/3ms suff: 'eth; "him"; + waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/f/s/constr. w/3ms suff: 'ishah; "and his wife"; + waw conj. + sign of d.o. + n/com/m/s/constr: kol + rel.pro: 'asher + prep. w/3ms suff: lamed; "and all of that which was for him {belonged to him}"])

ANALYSIS VERSE 18 – 20:

1. In the 4th and final scene, **Abram** is summoned front and center before **Pharaoh**.
2. **Pharaoh**, himself suffering the effects of divine wrath, is not in a good mood.
3. Abram's divine discipline, starting with the loss of Sarai, continues.
4. It now comes in the form of complete humiliation as he is rebuked by an unbeliever that demonstrates more character than **Abram**.
5. This for violating God's geographical will and energy of the flesh regarding his life.
6. A triplet of accusations blanketed as questions follow: "**What/mah...Why...Why/lammah?**"
7. Pharaoh's sense of grievance and surprise is detectable in the Hebrew phrasing.
8. "**What is this you have done to me?**" begins the salvo of verbal dissent.
9. The same manner of question was put to Eve (3:13) and Cain (4:10).
10. Here the question is personal as a direct attack against **Pharaoh** per the phrase "**to me/lamed w/1st person suffix**".
11. This question asserts Pharaoh's innocence in the matter.
12. The 2nd question, "**Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?**" suggests that **Pharaoh** was not a man that would resort to adultery.
13. Adultery was frowned upon in ancient societies and the penalty was often execution of the guilty parties.
14. Some kings would simply kill the husband to avoid the charge of adultery!
15. This **Pharaoh** was not that kind of man, nor did he like to be in a position of comprise.
16. He may have a harem of many women, but they would not be married women.
17. One can almost hear Pharaoh's anger and frustration escalate as he addresses this fact with the final query in vs.19, "**Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife?**"
18. This question embeds an assertion that **Pharaoh** would not have allowed Sarai being brought to him if **Abram** had been forthright to begin with.
19. That Abraham lied eliminates any proof otherwise no matter the reputation of the Egyptians (cp.vs.12).
20. **Pharaoh** rightly feels used and set up.

GENESIS

21. “**Now**/-attah” in vs.19b is used to introduce a decision based on the immediate preceding statement with often a judicial evaluation or sentence for some sin (e.g., 3:22; 4:11; 11:6; 20:7).
22. The sentence on **Abram** is barked out in 4 Hebrew words: “**Here!**/hinneh...**wife**/**’ishah**...**take**/laqach...**go**/halak”.
23. The royal leniency is remarkable.
24. The king was an intelligent and honorable man and he ascertained that Abraham was being protected by God.
25. He was not about to take extreme measures to punish **Abram** as he might of under different circumstances.
26. He takes no revenge on **Abram**, a guest in his land, who grossly abused the hospitality offered him.
27. **Pharaoh** illustrates that just because things may be reported to be a certain way (Egyptians had the reputation of abusing foreigners), is not always true; **Pharaoh** is just the opposite.
28. **Pharaoh** does not make mention of the dowry given **Abram** as it means little to him.
29. Another parallel to the Exodus is checked as the Israelites left Egypt with gold and jewelry given to them by the Egyptians. Cp.Exo.11:1-2; 12:35-36
30. What were important to **Pharaoh** were honor and the humiliation he and his own house experienced.
31. Abram’s sin humiliated others; **Abram** is humiliated. Cp.Gal.6:7
32. **Abram** does not respond to the rebuke with even an apology.
33. This is the first smart thing he has done during this ordeal as words would be pointless and probably only serve to incense **Pharaoh** more.
34. **Abram** leaves the last word to **Pharaoh** with his silence acknowledging his guilt and the justice of the royal anger.
35. **Pharaoh** wants the ordeal as far away as possible and thus “**commanded his men concerning Abram and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him**”.
36. The verb “**escorted away**/shalach” means to “set someone on their way”, accompanying them in the first part of their journey.
37. The piel stem carries the notion of expulsion (cf.Gen.3:23) and is the verb most often used to describe Israel’s exodus from Egypt (Exo.3-11 used 54x).
38. Pharaoh’s main concern is that the troublemaker should leave.
39. **Abram** was a rotten witness during his stay in Egypt and he certainly was not a blessing to others.
40. **Pharaoh** nevertheless received a witness that should have provoked him to reconsider spiritual things.
41. **Abram** leaves Egypt with more property than when he arrived as God is still blessing him even in a round-about fashion.
42. This episode happening a relatively short time after Abraham arrived in Canaan jolts us by the unheroic performance of the hero.
43. Here we have an illustration of the extent to which God will go to fulfill his promises.
44. We have an example of the susceptibility of even a very committed believer to the flesh.
45. Even in hopeless situations God can deliver.

GENESIS

46. Abram's time and experiences in Egypt prefigure those of Israel in the days of Moses confirmed by Gen.15:13-16 where the Egyptian bondage is specifically prophesied.
47. There is a stark contrast between the roles of the main characters here and in Exodus.
48. There the **Pharaoh** is an implacable foe of God despite the plagues.
49. Now the **Pharaoh** is shown to be highly respectful and speaks and acts like God.
50. In all the wife-sister stories in Genesis (chptrs.12,20,26) the foreign monarch is more concerned about morality than is the patriarch.
51. Whereas Abraham showed no faith in God the **Pharaoh** acted like God (grace).
52. This incident shows that the believer should not rely on his own intelligence to deliver from potential disaster but to always do the right things and trust in God for the outcome.
53. Abram's failure in the face of adversity is surely recorded as a warning for later generations and is an illustration of the invincibility of the promises of God. Cp.Rom.11:29
54. *Review the Doctrine of Fear.*