

## THE CALL OF ABRAHAM (GENESIS 11:27- 12: 20) AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

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### **Abstract**

*The problem of lack of faith in God in our present generation motivates the author to write about the call of Abraham in Genesis 11:27- 12:20 and its implication on the Christian faith. The research has adopted historical and exegetical approach in the study of Abraham the hero of faith. Yahweh in His grace called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans and made a promise to Abraham who responded to the call in faith and went to the land of Canaan. And God later appeared to him in Canaan and promised to give his descendants the land of Canaan. Abraham responded in worship and sacrifice. The research findings reveal Abraham as a man of great faith who was called by grace. Through God's promises to Abraham mankind is saved through Jesus, the Messiah who came from Abraham's descendants. The call of Abraham is a central passage as the Jewish scripture and the Christian Bible and the gospel are all built upon the event of Abraham's call. The research recommends that the service to God has to be done as a team work hence Abraham did not respond to God's call alone but together with his family and his entire household. The vitality of the research is that it could increase faith in God and religious commitment to people who are called by God.*

**Keywords:** Call, Abraham, Nigeria, Christian, Faith

### **Introduction**

A significant event took place about 4000 years ago, when Yahweh was working with a man called Abraham. Abraham was a remarkable figure, God made astounding promise to him that continued to affect not only his descendants but the whole world. God choose Abraham to be his servant purely by grace not by his worthiness. Abraham responded to the call of God in great faith and devotion. The call of Abraham has great implication on the Christian faith as it resulted to universal blessings for all the nations of the world as Jesus the Messiah of the world originated from the descendants of Abraham. The three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) trace their origin back to

the call of Abraham. The morality of these three religions has significant influence on world's ethics. This paper is centred on Genesis 11:27- 12:20.

### **Who is Abraham?**

Derek Williams states that Abraham is a Hebrew name which means "Father of a multitude"; originally called Abram meaning "The father is exalted", (11) it was God who changed his name from Abram to Abraham as stated in Gen. 17:5. Abraham is a Bible character who has a clear faith in monotheistic God, unlike his ancestors (Jos 24:2). He revered God as almighty; He had a close relationship with God (Gen. 18:33) and received visions (Gen. 15:1) and angelic visitors. He was always willing to obey God's call, even when he was told to sacrifice his son Isaac at Moriah, he was stopped at the last moment when a ram was provided as a substitute (Gen. 22:1-14). Israel was considered Abraham's seed and throughout scripture God is called "The God of Abraham." He was an ancestor of the Messiah (Matt. 1:1). Paul sees Abraham's faith as that which leads to justification by God (Rom 4:3ff). Abraham plays unique role in Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions.

### **Abraham's Family (Gen. 11:27-30)**

As one studies this family, one notices several of interesting relationships. First, Abraham has married his half-sister ("The daughter of my father though not of my mother", Gen. 20:12). Second, Abraham's brother Nahor married his niece, Milcah, the daughter of his deceased brother Haran. Similar cases of marrying one's relation are found in Genesis as Isaac married his cousin Rebecca; and Jacob married his cousin Rachael and Leah. This kind of marriages within the clan, though later prohibited in the Mosaic law (Lev. 18) was not viewed as incestuous within the culture. Rather is an example of endogamy, marriage with a tribe or kinship unit, in order to maintain culture and religious values and property rights. One who is not convinced with the above explanation may ask, does God contradict himself by allowing the ancient people to practice incest. All these cases of incest took place before the Sinaitic period. Jamie Frater provides an answer to the above raised question when he comments that "God suspended the laws of incest in the early days of man in order to ensure that man spreads on earth" (5)

### **The Call of Abraham (Genesis 11:31-12:1) From Ur to Haran (Genesis 11:31-33).**

It is not certain whether Ur mentioned in this text was in lower Mesopotamia or northern Mesopotamia, not too far from Haran. No matter which location, Abraham's migration was in two phases: (1) From Ur to Haran and (2) from Haran to Canaan. According to Stephen's account in Acts 7:2-3, it was God's word to Abraham that had initiated the family's move from Ur. They had set out for Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. They stopped and settled, why? Ralph F. Wilson noted that "perhaps Terah the father of Abraham was in ill health, perhaps the grazing was too good in Haran to pass up. We are not sure. Abraham waited until Terah died; and then began the journey" (2).

Joseph S. Excel observes that "first steps of faith are not always giant steps, which explains why Abraham did not fully obey God. Instead of leaving his family, as he was commanded" (electronic copy). Abraham took his father and his nephew Lot with him when he left Ur; and then he stayed at Haran until his father died. Whatever you bring with you from the old life into the new is likely to create problems. Terah, Abraham's father kept Abraham from fully obeying the Lord; and Lot created serious problems to Abraham until they finally had to agree to part. Abraham and Sarah brought a sinful agreement from Ur (20:13), and it got them into trouble twice (12:10-20;20:1-18). The life of faith demands total separation from what is evil and total devotion to what is holy (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

#### **From Haran to Canaan. (Genesis 12:1)**

"The Lord had said to Abram, leave your country, your kindred and your father's household and go to the land I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). Whether this verse is recording a renewed call or a referral to the previous call in Ur is not certain. Mathew Henry stated that "the call of Abraham took place in about the year 1921 BC" (52). God called Abraham to leave his home and go to a new land, so that he might give humanity a new beginning. Because of God's call and Abraham's obedient faith; Abraham and Sarah ultimately gave to the world the Jewish nation, the Bible and the Saviour. Where would we be today if Abraham and Sarah had not trusted God? Consider the elements involved in their experience. Warren W. Wiersbe states that "salvation comes because God calls in grace and sinners respond by faith (Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Thess. 2:13-14)" (38). God called Abraham out of idolatry (Josh 24:2), when he was in the city of Ur of the country of Chaldea (citizens of Chaldea are called Chaldeans of Chaldees) (Gen. 11:28, 31;15:7; Neh. 9:7), a city devoted to Nannar the moon-god, inhabitants of the city

worshiped the sun, moon and stars. Abraham did not know the true God, and had done nothing to deserve knowing him, but God graciously called him. It was not Abraham that chose God but it was God who chose Abraham (John 15:16). Abraham was 75 years old when God called him, so age doesn't need to be an obstacle to faith. He trusted God for 100 years (Gen. 25:7) without giving up and from his experience, believers today can learn how to walk by faith and live to please God.

Abraham was married to Sarah, his half-sister (20:12), because in the ancient days when the population of people was not much on earth, incest was not firmly established as a taboo. Abraham and Sarah were childless; yet God used them to found a great nation. Wiersbe noted that "God called Abraham after the gentiles had failed and turned away from the true and living God" (39). That process of devolution is described in Rom. 1:18-32; man, originally knew the true God, but he would not glorify him or give thanks to him for his gracious provision. Man substituted idols for the true and living God. Idolatry led to immorality and indecency; and before long, the Gentile world was so corrupt. Then He called Abraham, the first Jew, and made a new beginning. B. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck acknowledge that the idea of faith is stressed in this passage; "Abraham was told to leave several things- his country, his people and his father's household. But he was told nothing about the land which he must go; his departure required an unparalleled act of faith" (electronic copy).

**How God Called:** The God of glory appeared to Abraham (Acts 7:2). How God appeared to Abraham, we are not told: but it was the first of the seven God's communications to Abraham recorded in Genesis. The revelation of God's glory would have shown Abraham the variety and folly of the idol worship in Ur, who wants to worship a dead idol when he has met the living God! God spoke to Abraham and the word brought about the miracle of faith. "So, then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). It was a call to separate himself from the corruption around him, and Abraham obeyed by faith. (Heb. 11:8). True faith is based on the word of God and leads to obedience. Wiersbe comments that lost sinners today are not likely to receive special revelation of God's glory as did Abraham and Sarah; however, "they can see his glory in the lives of his people (Matt. 5:16), and hear his word of faith when they share their witness" (40). God spoke to Abraham directly, but today we hear the truth of salvation through the witness of his people (Acts 1:8).

**Why God called Abraham:** Wiersbe pointed out three reasons why God called Abraham and Sarah as paraphrased here; one, in His love, God was concerned about their salvation. Two, God had the purpose of blessing the whole world. This was accomplished when God sent his son into the world through the Jewish nation. Christ died for the sins of the world and wants his church to tell the good news to the whole world. Three, the life of Abraham is an example for all Christians (40). Abraham was saved by faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:1-5; Gal. 3:6-14) and lived by faith (Heb. 11:8-19) and his obedience was the evidence of his faith. Abraham obeyed when he did not know where (Heb. 11:8-10), how (vv. 11:12), when (vv.13-16) or why (vv. 17-19) and so should we. Abraham and Sarah were not perfect, but their walk was generally characterized by faithfulness. When they sinned, they suffered for it; and the Lord was always ready to forgive when they repented. As one studies the life of Abraham and Sarah one will learn what faith is and how to walk by faith.

### **God's Covenant with Abraham (Gen.12:2-3)**

Fruchtenbaum states that this passage is the first of the six passages in Genesis dealing with Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3; 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; and 22:15-18). (14). God and Abraham are involved in this covenant, in which Abraham stood as the representative head of the whole Jewish nation. The covenant is a promise of blessing. Eight provisions of the covenant are pointed out as follows: First, A great nation was to come out of Abraham, namely the nation of Israel (Gen. 12:2); second, he was promised a land, specifically the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1). Third, Abraham himself was to be greatly blessed (12:2b), Forth, Abraham's name would be great (Gen. 12:2c); fifth, Abraham would be a blessing to others (Gen. 12:12d) sixth, those who bless Israel will be blessed (Gen. 12:3a); seventh, those who curse Israel will be cursed (Gen. 12:36); and eight, in Abraham, all families of the earth will ultimately be blessed (Gen. 12:3c) (15). These provisions are here discussed. **I will make of you a great nation:** Robert Jamieson, Andrew R. Fausset and David Brown noted that nothing was more improbable at the time, since he was childless (Gen. 11:30). Yet this promise was verified in his numerous posterities, the Arabs (Gen. 17:20; 21:13) and Edomites etc, but especially the Jews, who though comparatively small in number, have, their influence on the moral and religious interest of the world, been a great nation (Gen. 18:18) (electronic copy). **Abraham will be greatly blessed:** many special token of the divine favour, temporal as well as spiritual, are recorded in

the personal history of Abraham. **Abraham's name would be great:** Although not renowned in science or arts, in civil or military affairs, Abraham has been distinguished by higher honours and more extensive fame than any mere man; he was revealed by the Jews as the founder of their nation. Abraham is looked up to by the Christians as "the father of the faithful;" honoured by the Arabians as their progenitor; and the religion of Islam trace their example from Abraham. **Abraham would be a blessing to others:** Jamieson, Fausset and Brown interpret the Hebrew word *braakaah* in Genesis 12: 2 to refer to object of blessing (electronic copy). History shows this in various ways, Abraham was a blessing to his numerous household, and many were specifically favoured for his sake. All the true blessedness the world is now, or ever shall be possessed of, is owing to Abraham and his posterity: Through Abraham, we have a Bible, a savior and the Gospel. They are the stock on which the church is grafted. **Those who bless Abraham will be blessed and he who curses Abraham will be cursed:** His friends and his enemies would be regarded as the friends and enemies of God, who would reward their kindness and avenge their wrong done to him as done to Himself. It is observable, however, that the former are mentioned in the plural, while the latter is in the singular, as if multitudes would be sure to bless, but few to curse him. **In Abraham all families of the earth will ultimately be blessed:** God told Abraham that through "your seed" i.e. Christ all the nations of the earth will be blessed. The families of the earth will be blessed with the knowledge and the means of salvation. Adam Clarke explains that "in you means in your posterity, in the Messiah who shall spring from you shall all families of the earth be blessed" (82). He shall take on him human nature from the posterity of Abraham, he shall test death for every person, his Gospel shall be preached throughout the world, and innumerable blessings be derived on all mankind through his death and intercession.

These provisions of the Abrahamic covenant can be categorized in three areas: to Abraham, to the seed- Israel and to the Gentiles. **To Abraham:** Abraham was to be the father of great nation, Israel. He was to possess all of the Promised Land. Other nations including the Arab states were ultimately to descend from Abraham. Many of his descendants would become kings both Jewish and non-Jewish kings. Abraham was to receive personal blessings. Abraham was to be a blessing to others. His name was to become great, and so it is among Jews, Muslims and in all Christendom. **To the Seed- Israel:** The nation of Israel was to become great. It was ultimately to become innumerable. It was to possess all of

the Promised Land. It was to receive victory over its enemies. The fact that the promises were made to both Abraham and his seed shows that these blessings have not yet received complete fulfillment but await the Messianic kingdom. **To the Gentiles:** The Gentiles would be blessed for blessing Israel and cursed for cursing Israel. Also, they were to receive spiritual blessings but ultimately these were to come through one specific seed of Abraham, the Messiah. The Abrahamic covenant contains both physical and spiritual promises while the physical blessings were limited to the Jews only, the spiritual blessings were to extend to the Gentiles but only through the Messiah.

### **Abraham's Journey to Canaan (Genesis 12:4-5)**

God had called Abraham to go to Canaan, but Abraham didn't really know where he was going. He was pointed to Canaan, a land he had heard about, but he was going "To the land I will show you" (Acts 7:3). The writer of Hebrew puts it that:

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. By faith he made his home in the promise land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God (Heb. 11:8-10).

Wilson attests that it is easy when God calls people to do something that they are familiar with; "but when he asks them to do something they don't know anything about or to go far away from their home or their family, and their support system that takes real faith." (5). God has put the kind of faith of father Abraham within the hearts and minds of faithful Christians. Abraham's removal out of his country, out of Ur first and afterwards out of Haran, was in compliance with the call of God. So Abraham departed; Henry states that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but did as he was directed, not conferring with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:15, 16) (59). His obedience was speedy and without delay, it was with submission and without dispute; for he went out not knowing where he went (Heb. 11:8) but knowing whom he followed and under whose direction he went. His age when he was called was seventy-five years old, an age when he should rather have had rest and settlement; but, if God will have him to begin the world again now in his old age, he will submit. Here is an instance of an old convert.

**The Company and Cargo that He took with Him:** He took his wife, and his nephew Lot, with him; not by force and against their wills, but by persuasion. Sarai his wife, would be sure to go with him; God had joined them together, and nothing should put them asunder Sarai means quarrelsome. God later changed her name to Sarah meaning princess (Gen. 17:15). It is very comfortable when husband and wife agree to go together in the way to heaven. Lot also his kinsman was influenced by Abraham's good example, who was perhaps his guardian after the death of his father and he was willing to go along with him too.

They took all their substance and movable goods (recush) which consisted chiefly in livestock particularly cattle; Lot and Abram were nomads. Abraham was a wealthy man and walked out of Haran with quite an entourage of staff and livestock. To have thrown away his substance, because God had promised to bless him, would have been to tempt God, not to trust him. They would not be under any temptation to return; therefore, they left not a hoof behind, least that should make them mindful of the country from which they came out. They took with them the souls that they had gotten, these refer to the servants they had bought, which were part of their substance, but are called souls, to remind masters that their poor servants have souls, precious souls which they ought to take care of and provide food for. The souls that they had gotten according to Henry also refer to "the proselytes they had made, and persuaded to attend the worship of the true God, and to go with them to Canaan" (61). Followers of God must persuade others to follow them and serve God.

By the good hand of their God upon them, they arrived in Canaan. Through a fresh revelation they were told that this was the land God promised to show them. They were not discouraged by the difficulties they met with in their way, nor diverted by the delight they met with, but pressed forward. Note, those that set out for heaven must persevere to the end. Abraham had confidence to obey God to the extent that when famine came in the land of Canaan (12:10) he was not discouraged to reverse and return back to his father's land. Henry states that "the arrival of Abraham in Canaan took place in about 1920 BC" (62).



**Abraham's Devotion (Genesis 12:6-9)**

**Abram travelled through the land (v.6).** Here Moses the writer of Genesis shows that Abram did not immediately, on his entering into the land, find a habitation in which he might rest. For the expression travel through and the position of the place (Sichem) to which he passed showed that the length of his journey is not great. Sichem is not far from Mount Gerizim, which is towards the desert of the Southern region. It is just as Moses had said, that the faith of Abram was again tried, when God suffered him as a wanderer to traverse the whole land, before he gave him any fixed abode. The Hebrew word "Elon" mentioned in this verse is translated by some as an oak forest, by some a valley; others take it for the proper name of a place. Calvin does not doubt that Moreh is the proper name of the place; but he explains Elon to mean "a plain, or an oak, not that it was a single tree, but the singular is put for the plural number" (59). According to John Walton, Victor H. Mathew, and Mark W. Chavalas, "Sichem mentioned in this verse has been identified with Tell Balatah, east of modern Nablus and thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem." (70). H. D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Excel also support the fact that "the modern name of Sichem is Nablus. Perhaps because of its proximity to two nearby peaks, Mount Zerizim and Mount Ebal, it has long history as a sacred site" (83). Gordon Wenham attests that Sichem is mentioned in the Egyptian texts of Pharaoh Sesostris III in 1880 BC-1840 BC (48). **And the Canaanite was then in the land (v.6).** Although the Canaanites were occupying the land but centuries later, God would give the land to Abraham's descendants; but when Abraham and Sarah arrived, they were strangers and pilgrims in the midst of a pagan society (Heb. 11:13). Wilmington states that "entering Canaan is a picture of the believer claiming his or her inheritance by faith. God has appointed a "Canaan" for each of his children (Eph. 2:10), and it is obtained only by faith" (33). Claiming your inheritance involves tests and temptations, challenges and battles, but God is able to see believers through (Phil. 1:6).

One would have expected that Abram having such an extraordinary call to Canaan some great event should have followed upon his arrival there, that he should have been introduced with all possible marks of honour and respect, and that the kings of Canaan should immediately have surrendered their crowns to him, and done him homage. But he comes not with observation, little notice is taken of him, for still God will have him to live by faith, and look upon Canaan, even when he was in it, as a land of promise.

What a little comfort he had in the land he came to. He had it not to himself the Canaanites were then in the land. He found the country possessed by the Canaanites who were likely to be but bad neighbours and worse landlords and he could not have ground to pitch his tent but by their permission. Thus, the Canaanites seemed to be in better circumstances than blessed Abram. He had not a settlement in the land. He passed through the land. Abram sojourned first in a plain (v.6) then in a mountain (v.8). All good people must look upon themselves as strangers and sojourners in this world and by faith sit loose to it as a strange country, so Abraham did (Heb. 11:8-14). Obedience always leads to blessing. After Abraham arrived in Canaan, the Lord appeared to him to further assure him: to your offspring I will give this land. Abraham did not hesitate to confess his faith before the heathen in the land. Wherever he went, he pitched his tent and built his altar (Gen. 12:7,8;13:3-4,18). According to Lawrence O. Richards, "the tent speaks of the pilgrim, the person who trusts God and is always ready to move. The altar speaks of the worshipper who brings a sacrifice and offers it to God" (electronic copy). Interestingly, at Abraham's location, Bethel ("The house of God") was on the west, Ai ("The heap of ruins") was on the east.

As soon as Abraham had got to Canaan, though he was but a stranger and sojourner there, yet he set up and kept up the worship of God in his family. He not only minded the ceremonial part of religion, the offering of sacrifice, but made conscience of the natural duty of seeking to his God, and calling on his name, that spiritual sacrifice with which God is well pleased. Wiersbe interpreted that "he preached concerning the name of the Lord, that is he instructed his family and neighbours in the knowledge of the true God and his holy religion" (48). Those that would approve themselves the children of faithful Abraham, and would inherit the blessing of Abram, must make conscience of keeping up to the solemn worship of God, particularly in their families, according to the example of Abraham. Henry noted that "the way of family worship is a good old way, is no novel invention, but the ancient usage of all the saints" (66). Abraham was very rich and had a numerous family, was now unsettled and in the midst of enemies, and yet, wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar. Christians should not fail to take their religion along with them wherever they go. **Abraham called on the name of the Lord v.8.** Here the Hebrew word "gara" connotes "calling one to a specific task" in the context of a critical or chronic need. Abraham calls on the name of Yahweh in a new place. According to Wilson, "he recognizes His need, His loneliness; he needs Yahweh

for guidance and direction. God has revealed himself to Abraham and now it is in Abraham's spirit to respond and seek him" (8). To call on the name of God is to invoke God or ask for his help. On Mount Carmel, Elijah lays out the rules for the contest between the true God Yahweh and Baal, and instructed, "Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire - he is God (1 Kings 18:24). In this passage it is significant that Abraham is calling upon the name of Yahweh, not another god. The culture all around him was religious, calling on various supposed deities. But Abraham is now a believer in the one God-Yahweh. He has cast lot with him and now seeks him continually, openly and boldly.

### **Abraham in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20)**

Canaan is the land of promise for Abraham's household, but Canaan was not ready for them just yet. What could they do when there was famine in the land? Although God later warns Isaac not to travel to Egypt during a famine (26:1-2), he later instructs Jacob to do so (46:3). Here God simply seems silent since the narrative does not tell everything that was once known. At least it can be suggested that leading one's family to Egypt may have simply been the wisest course available. Craig Keener observes that "obedience pleases God, but it does not solve every problem or imply perfection in every other area of life" (4). When Abram and later his son Isaac, present their wives as their sisters (12:13; 20:2; 26:7), the Biblical text offers no indication that this strategy was divinely ordained. In fact, God had to rescue Abraham and Sarah, from this strategy.

**Abram's Deception:** Although a man of wealth and status such as Abraham often married multiple wives, and customarily did so if one wife could not bear children. Abraham did not marry another woman so long as Sarah lived (25:1-6). Abraham and Sarah may have been following a custom from Mesopotamia. There a wife of means might give her female servant to her husband as a concubine. If Abraham and Sarah attempt to follow this custom, certainly they did not attempt it as a first resort (Genesis suggest that Ishmael was not born until Abraham was 86 and Sarah 76. Sarah was presumably extraordinary special to Abraham).

Nevertheless, Abraham wanted her to claim to be his sister to protect his life (20:11). Perhaps, Abraham expected God to deliver them, but then why not trust God to protect them without this ruse? The narrative suggests that passing Sarah

off as Abraham's half-sister was a bad idea (12:18-19; 20:6, 9-10), even though it was a half-truth (She was his half-sister 20:12). Sometimes life presents us with only uncomfortable alternatives on the human level, none of them is good. Sometimes, at least the ruse might be the best viable alternative.

**Sarah's Beauty:** Pharaoh's officials took Sarah into his harem. Young readers in particular, may wonder how a woman past 65 years of age might be considered beautiful to a king. Keener suggested that "Middle Eastern nomads tended to overestimate their ages, and she was younger in literal years than the text sounds to us" (6). One could also reason that when Sarah was nearly ninety and another king took interest in her, the issue may be more her nobility than her physical attractiveness, although the reason for the interest is not specified here (20:2). One consideration is that kings often want women in their harems who established ties with a range of other princess; Abraham had enough servants to constitute by the standards of that era, a small army or militia (14:14). Sarah was thus from wealthy and high-status middle-Eastern family, even if they were semi-nomadic pastoralists, her status of another culture might be a part of her beauty and appeal to Pharaoh.

**God Rescued Sarah:** Pharaoh gave Abraham animals and servants as a bride price for Sarah, this nomadic princess; undoubtedly one of the servants is the Egyptian woman named Hagar, who figured prominent in later chapter (16:1ff). But even by ancient standards, none of these could compensate for taking one's wife (2 Sam. 12:9; Deut. 5:21). Pharaoh sent Abraham and Sarah away, but they are able to retain the gifts that Pharaoh had given them (12:20). Perhaps the positive outcome was why Abraham unfortunately tried the ruse again later (20:2), and why his son Isaac, who had undoubtedly heard stories, did same (26:7). God plagued Pharaoh's household to protect the promise of Abraham's seed (12:17). Similarly, in Exodus, God will plague Pharaoh's household to bring Abraham's seed from Egypt and establish the promise land. The narrative does not invite the readers to follow Abraham's example of deception, but it does invite the readers to trust Abraham's and Sarah's God, because God kept his promise to imperfect followers who do their best to obey his explicit commands.

### **Implication of the Call of Abraham on the Christian Faith**

The call of Abraham is a pivotal passage. Everything that follows Genesis 12 throughout the Old Testament; the coming of Christ; the establishment of the

church; the spread of the kingdom of God all over the world; and the new heaven and the new earth all flow from this divine promise to Abraham. God's promise to Abraham was not limited to a small and ancient people in the Middle East. It extends far into the future, and it is not limited by national boundaries. God designed this promise to bring blessings to all nations. When people of any race or background enter into covenant relationship with Christ, they too become Abraham's seed as Paul made the assurance in Galatians 3:28-29.

Abraham answered the call of God and persuaded his wife, servant and all members of his household to join him respond to the call of God. Abraham left a legacy for the believers who receive the call of God to engage their family, servants and neighbours to join them to respond to God's call and engage in God's service. The service to God has to be done as a team work for one tree cannot make a forest. Christians should constantly learn to make devotion to God with their families through family alters such as Abraham frequently built alters to worship God with his family. Christians should have faith like father Abraham to respond to God's call to labour for His kingdom and transform the whole world with the gospel of Christ. Just as Abraham made a pilgrimage to Canaan, and he was motivated by his faith in God, Christians are also on their pilgrimage to heaven. Their journey to heaven must be motivated, guided and influenced by their faith in Christ the Messiah.

### **Conclusion**

Abraham was called by Yahweh right from the city of Ur of the country of the Chaldea, to go to an unknown land that He would show him. The land was unknown to Abraham, until he arrived at Canaan and God assured him that this land he will give to his descendants. This research has found out that Yahweh did not call Abraham because he was righteous (Abraham even demonstrated his shortcoming of deception in Egypt and elsewhere). He was called out of idolater. His call was a matter of choice that was not based on merit but by grace.

The author has revealed that the compromise of Abraham to God's call or his act of following God's instruction competently without knowing the destination he was going to and without knowing the final outcome of his journey reveals his great faith in Yahweh. This act exhibits his virtue of faith which made him to become the father of the faithful. Another research finding reveals that the Jews benefit physically from God's promise to Abraham, while the entire world

benefit spiritually from the promise, this is because God's primary aim of calling Abraham was to send the Messiah through his descendants. Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world originated from the descendants of Abraham to save and bless the entire world to fulfill God's promise to Abraham.

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