

**A Historically Grounded Narrative Series**

## **Leaving Everything Behind**

***How Abram Chose God's Call Over Family Security and  
Began a Journey That Would Shape Nations***

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A biblically faithful retelling rooted in Scripture, historical context, and careful theological clarity.

### ***About this Account***

This narrative is drawn directly from the biblical record and presented using widely recognized translations such as the ESV, NIV, NASB, and KJV. Cultural, geographical, and historical insights are included to deepen understanding while remaining faithful to the text.

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## 1. Setup – A Life Rooted in Family and Tradition

The ancient city of **Ur of the Chaldeans** stood as one of the most prosperous centers of the early Near East. Massive brick structures rose above crowded streets, markets bustled with merchants from distant lands, and the towering ziggurat dedicated to the moon god dominated the skyline. Within this thriving city lived a man named **Abraham**, known at the time as Abram.

Abram belonged to the household of **Terah**, the patriarch of a large family clan described in the **Book of Genesis** (Genesis 11:27–32). In the ancient Near Eastern world, identity and security were deeply tied to one’s extended family. Property, inheritance, and protection all flowed through the clan structure. Remaining within the household ensured economic stability and social belonging.

Abram’s life reflected this pattern. He was married to **Sarah** (Sarai), and together they lived among their relatives in a tightly connected family network. Yet one painful detail defined their situation: Sarai had no children. Genesis 11:30 records this fact simply but significantly, noting that she was unable to conceive. In a culture where lineage and descendants were central to family legacy, childlessness created both emotional grief and social uncertainty.

At some point during this period, Abram’s family began migrating northwest to the region of **Haran**, another important trade center along the great caravan routes of Mesopotamia. Genesis 11:31 states that Terah led this move, taking Abram, Sarai, and other family members with him. Haran would become their new home for a time.

It was there, amid ordinary family life, that Abram received a call unlike anything recorded in his family's history.

According to Genesis 12:1, God spoke to Abram with a command that cut directly against the cultural expectations of the time:

“Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.”

The instruction carried extraordinary implications. Abram was not simply being asked to move to a nearby city or expand trade routes. He was called to leave the very system that defined his identity, his homeland, his extended family, and the security of his father's household.

For someone living in the ancient world, this request meant abandoning the structures that guaranteed survival.

Yet alongside the command came a promise: God would make Abram into a great nation and bless all families of the earth through him (Genesis 12:2–3). The promise was breathtaking, but also deeply puzzling. Abram had no children, no visible path to such a future, and no map showing where he was being led.

The moment placed Abram at a crossroads between two powerful forces: the expectations of family and tradition, and the call of God pointing toward an unseen future.

Everything that followed would depend on which voice he chose to follow.

## **2. Conflict – A Call That Breaks the Pattern**

The words Abram heard in **Haran** were not merely an invitation; they were a command that cut across every expectation of the ancient world. The voice of God instructed **Abraham** to leave behind the very foundations of his life: his country, his people, and his father's household (Genesis 12:1).

In the culture of the ancient Near East, such a request carried enormous consequences. Family was not simply a personal relationship; it was the structure that organized society. Protection, inheritance, and identity flowed through the authority of the household patriarch. Leaving that system meant stepping away from the network that ensured survival.

Abram therefore faced a conflict that went far beyond geography. To obey God's command meant walking away from the security of the clan led by **Terah**, his father. It meant leaving the familiar trade routes and established settlements that had sustained the family's livelihood. The journey ahead would not follow a known destination. God did not provide a detailed map, only a promise that Abram would be shown the land when he arrived.

That promise was extraordinary. God declared that Abram would become the father of a great nation and that through him all families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2–3). Yet the promise stood in direct tension with Abram's present reality. Abram and **Sarah** remained childless, and Abram himself was already seventy-five years old (Genesis 12:4).

From a human perspective, the promise seemed impossible.

This tension created the central conflict of Abram's story. On one side stood the visible world, the expectations of family, the logic of inheritance, and the practical concerns of survival. On the other side stood a divine promise that could not yet be seen or measured.

Biblical scholars often note that this moment marks one of the earliest expressions of faith in the Hebrew Scriptures. Abram was being asked to trust the word of God before any evidence of its fulfillment existed.

The decision would determine the direction of his life. If Abram remained in Haran, he would continue the predictable path of his family's history. But if he followed God's call, he would step into a journey defined by uncertainty.

The conflict was therefore deeply personal. Abram had to choose whether the security of familiar relationships would define his future, or whether obedience to God's voice would lead him into an entirely new story.

### **3. Turning Point – The Step Into the Unknown**

Morning light stretched across the hills surrounding **Haran** as preparations for departure began. Servants gathered livestock, supplies were loaded for travel, and the quiet routines of Abram's household gave way to the movements of a caravan preparing for a long journey. The moment marked the turning point in the life of **Abraham**.

The **Book of Genesis** records the decision with remarkable simplicity:

“So, Abram went, as the Lord had told him.” (Genesis 12:4)

With that brief statement, the conflict between security and obedience reached its resolution. Abram chose to follow the direction God had given him, even though the destination remained unknown.

He did not leave alone. **Sarah** traveled with him, along with their nephew **Lot**, members of their household, and the possessions they had accumulated during their years in Haran. Together they formed a migrating group typical of ancient pastoral families, moving slowly across the trade routes that connected Mesopotamia with the lands to the west.

Their path eventually led them south into the region known as **Canaan**. At the time, this land was inhabited by various peoples and city-states, including the Canaanites. Abram entered the land not as a conqueror but as a traveler and resident alien.

When Abram arrived near **Shechem**, the biblical text records another defining moment. God appeared to him again and reaffirmed the promise:

“To your offspring I will give this land.” (Genesis 12:7)

The statement carried profound implications. Abram had no descendants yet, but the land before him was promised to the generations that would come after him.

Abram responded in the way he would throughout his journeys, by building an altar to the Lord. These altars, constructed at places such as Shechem and later between **Bethel** and **Ai**, served as visible markers of worship and

remembrance. They signified Abram's recognition that the journey unfolding before him was guided by God.

This moment transformed Abram's life from that of a settled member of a Mesopotamian clan into a traveler living by promise rather than possession. The journey did not resolve every uncertainty. Abram still had no heir, and the land promised to his descendants remained occupied by other peoples.

Yet the turning point had already occurred. Abram had stepped beyond the expectations of family tradition and into a life shaped by trust in God's direction.

From this point forward, the story of Abram would no longer be defined by where he came from, but by the covenant God had begun to establish with him and the generations that would follow.

### **Reflection – When Calling Costs Something**

The story of **Abraham** begins with a decision that must have seemed both courageous and unsettling. God's call required him to leave behind the structures that defined his identity, his homeland, his extended family, and the security of his father's household. In the world of the ancient Near East, this was not a small adjustment but a life-altering break from the system that guaranteed survival and belonging.

What makes the moment remarkable is not simply that Abram heard God's voice, but that he chose to trust it before the promise had any visible evidence. When Abram left **Haran** and traveled toward **Canaan**, he carried no assurance beyond the word of God. The promise of becoming a great

nation stood in stark contrast to his reality, he and **Sarah** still had no child.

Yet the biblical narrative repeatedly returns to Abram's response: he believed.

His story shows that obedience to God often begins not with certainty but with trust. The future Abram stepped into could not be fully understood at the time. Only later would the significance of his decision become clear, as the covenant promises unfolded through his descendants and shaped the history of Israel.

Many scholars note that Abram's journey illustrates a central theme throughout Scripture: God's purposes frequently begin with individuals who are willing to step beyond familiar expectations. The transformation of Abram into **Abraham**, the father of many nations, began with a single act of obedience.

The deeper question of the story remains relevant far beyond its ancient setting. Faith often asks people to trust God's direction before they can see where it leads.

**Reflection Question:**

When God's calling invites someone to step beyond the expectations of family, culture, or personal security, how can they discern whether the uncertainty they feel is a warning to stay, or an invitation to follow God into a future that has not yet been revealed?

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