

Abraham:

The Father of the Jews

VISION

The vision of the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia will reach and reproduce within its surrounding community, a people inspired and equipped with a passion for the truth of God's Word and His compassion for others who will be enablers of change.



Moving Forward as a Growing Church



Abraham:

The Father of the Jews

Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 – Chapter 25 v. 10

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The Review of the Summons



Genesis 12:1-3

REVIEW of the Summons

Faith

- That faith is very much involved in these precepts is seen in “unto a land that I will show thee.” (12:1) God ordered Abraham to go to a place that He did not reveal to Abraham at the time He gave Abraham the summons.
- The writer of the book of Hebrews emphasizes this faith aspect of the precepts when he says that Abraham, “went out [from Ur], not knowing whither he went” (Hebrews 11:8). Hence, Abraham must by faith walk step by step and day by day trusting that God would reveal the directions to him as necessary.

REVIEW of the Summons

Faith

- God did not tell Abraham everything at once. It was piece by piece. To obey under this situation is scorned by human nature. We want everything revealed at once. We want the destination, route, and purpose all revealed before we take one step towards the destination.
- However, that is not faith; and the precepts require faith if we are going to obey them. We must have the faith that God will show us what we need to know when we need to know it. We must have faith in God's wisdom and way. Without such faith, we cannot honor God well and will not serve God well.

REVIEW of the Summons

Faith

- It is important to note here the necessity for the application of faith in summons, “I will show thee.” A number of professing believers excuse their indecision and inactivity on the fact that God has not yet shown them His will. They talk much about the will of God and that someday God will show it to them. They claim He has not yet revealed His will to them—so they sit.
- You will note, however, that Abraham did not sit just because “I will show thee” had not come to pass; for there was much Abraham could and should do without, “I will show thee”, being fulfilled.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

Faith

- And when we do those things which we already know to do, then someday we will indeed find out what the “I will show thee” is all about.
- Christians who sit in idleness regarding the Lord’s service, or who seem to forever sit in a state of indecision, cannot excuse their attitude and conduct based they are waiting for “I will show thee.” Furthermore, if they continually sit in idleness, they will never see much fulfillment of the, “I will show thee” PROMISE.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

Faith

- Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen.
(Hebrews 11:1)

REVIEW **of the Summons**

Faith

- Faith is the vehicle that teaches us to believe God even when situations turn life upside down. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), but what about doubt?

REVIEW **of the Summons**

Faith

- When we doubt, we are expressing our thoughts of uncertainty, suspicion, disbelief, or skepticism. Thus, we seek clarity, self-satisfaction, verification, and confirmation through questioning. Doubt can be antagonistic (opposed, incompatible, unfriendly) to faith.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

Faith

- However, we should understand that doubts are normal. We're human, so, naturally, we'll have doubts. Doubt doesn't weaken our faith. Because doubt is natural, having doubts doesn't diminish our belief in God or your faith. Coincidentally, doubts can strengthen our trust in God and make His will for our lives stronger.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

Faith

- The Word of God is fueled with faith. When doubt comes about, it's the time to immerse yourself in prayer and douse your spirit and mind with encouraging scriptures. Arm yourself with the Word and when you feel your mind drifting away from the firm belief of God's faithfulness, combat it with the timeless truth of Scripture.

REVIEW of the Summons

Faith

- Having doubts is a part of the faith journey and growing as a Christian. There are just some things in life we will never fully understand. Human reasoning often refuses to accept this and therefore seeks to understand everything. The danger is that we're finite beings trying to understand an infinite God. When understanding is not granted, humble yourself and allow faith to forge ahead instead. God will steer the way.

REVIEW of the Summons

Faith

A Short Story About Faith:

The intersection of faith and doubt is demonstrated in the hymn, *“It Is Well With My Soul.”* Horatio Spafford wrote the hymn after a Job-like period between 1871 and 1873. He lost his business to the Great Chicago Fire, followed by the death of his 4-year-old son, and the loss of his remaining four daughters to a shipwreck. His wife was the sole survivor, breaking the news to him in a brief, heart-rending telegram: *“Saved alone. What shall I do.”*

Spafford set sail to reunite with his wife in grief, and he wrote the immortal words to his hymn as his ship passed near where his girls had drowned.

It concludes: *“And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll; The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, Even so, it is well with my soul.”*

REVIEW of the Summons

Genesis 12:1-5 – (KJV)

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

² And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

⁴ So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

REVIEW of the Summons

Genesis 12:1-5 (MSG)

GOD told Abram: “Leave your country, your family, and your father’s home for a land that I will show you. ²⁻³ I’ll make you a great nation and bless you. I’ll make you famous; you’ll be a blessing. I’ll bless those who bless you; those who curse you I’ll curse. All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you.” ⁴⁻⁶ So Abram left just as GOD said, and Lot left with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot with him, along with all the possessions and people they had gotten in Haran, and set out for the land of Canaan and arrived safe and sound. Abram passed through the country as far as Shechem and the Oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites occupied the land.

REVIEW of the Summons

The Promises:

- After telling Abraham what he was to do, God gave Abraham some promises to encourage and inspire him to obey the precepts. God said, *“I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* (12:2,3)

REVIEW of the Summons

The Promises:

Notice it was promises and not reasons that God gave to encourage service. F. B. Meyer contends that “God’s commands are not always accompanied by reasons, but always by promises, expressed or understood. To give reasons would excite discussion; but to give a promise shows that the reason, though hidden, is all-sufficient. We can understand the promise, though the reason might baffle and confuse us. The reason is intellectual, metaphysical [philosophical], spiritual; but a promise is practical, positive, literal.”

REVIEW **of the Summons**

Six Aspects Concerning These Promises

- o The future of the promises
- o The number of the promises
- o The location of the promises
- o The opposition to the promises
- o The fulfillment of the promises
- o The Gospel in the promises

REVIEW of the Summons

The Future of the Promises:

- Considerable time must go by for the fulfillment of all the promises given to Abraham. In fact, many hundreds of years must go by before some of the promises are fulfilled. This will definitely not appeal to the flesh, but it will give faith an opportunity to thrive.
- The flesh wants everything now and has little patience for waiting for God's timing. Therefore, the flesh is seldom excited by the promises of God though they are great blessings indeed.
- Abraham's story was different, however, his faith was great, and so he valued the promises.

REVIEW of the Summons

The Number of the Promises

- There are at least seven promises in the summons.
 - (1) ***“I will make of thee a great nation,”***
 - (2) ***“I will bless thee,”***
 - (3) ***“I will ... make thy name great,”***
 - (4) ***“thou shalt be a blessing,”***
 - (5) ***“I will bless them that bless thee,”***
 - (6) ***“I ... will curse them that curseth thee,”*** and
 - (7) ***“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”***
- When we compare the number of precepts requirements (separation, sacrifice, labor, and faith) with the number of promises, we observe that what God will do for Abraham is much more than what Abraham is asked to do for God.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Number of the Promises

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REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Number of the Promises

- Many complain that God's commandments are restrictive, kill-joy, and burdensome. But we should never complain of God's commandments when we consider His promises. God's promises more than compensate for any effort we must give, and for any cost, sacrifice we must pay/incur, and for any distasteful thing we must do to obey His precepts. **No one ever loses who honors God's precepts—God's promises will see to that!**

REVIEW of the Summons

The Location of the Promises

- Notice the promises are given while Abraham is still in Ur. Abraham must choose to leave one place and go to another (two-fold precept). God usually gives the precepts before He gives the promises. Thus, God first tells Abraham what he is to do; then God tells him what He will do. God first impresses upon us our duties; then He speaks of our wages/blessings.
- Sometimes we seem more interested in the blessings, benefits, or privileges than we are in our responsibilities, duties or obligations. There is a sense of entitlement which is a self-centered attitude. It is an attitude that FIRST says, “What’s in it for me!” Such an attitude is one that does not perform one’s duties well because the emphasis is on, ‘me instead of Thee’...and on ‘How you treat me than how I treat you.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Location of the Promises

- Abraham will realize all the promises of the summons if he gives due attention and respect to the precepts. The same holds true for anyone.
- Note: It was promises and not reasons that God gave to encourage service. F. B. Meyer contends that, “God’s commands are not always accompanied by reasons, but always by promises, expressed or understood. To give reasons would excite discussion; but to give a promise shows that the reason, though hidden, is all-sufficient. We can understand the promise, though the reason might baffle and confuse us. The reason is intellectual, metaphysical [philosophical], spiritual; but a promise is practical, positive, literal.”

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Opposition to the Promises

Circumstances oppose just about every promise God ever made. Every promise is, therefore, a test of our faith—*should we give greater weight to the circumstances or to the promises?* Faith will vote in favor of the promises; unbelief will vote in favor of the circumstances.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Opposition to the Promises

What do we know about Abraham's circumstances, what did they look like?

They seemed to be against the promises in this summons. God promises said:

- that Abraham would be a great nation, but circumstances laughed at that promise, for Abraham had no seed, and he and Sarah were too old to have a child.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Opposition to the Promises

- He would bless Abraham; but circumstances predicted loss, not gain.
- that Abraham would be a great benefactor to the world, but circumstances said that Abraham was only causing hardship to those around him in leaving Ur and making the arduous trip to Canaan.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Opposition to the Promises

- God's promises said He would make Abraham's name great, but circumstances made Abraham look like a fool—not a great man—in leaving his native land and his family to go into a strange country.
- (**especially the “curse them that curseth thee”**) said Abraham would be safe, but circumstances said that obeying God's precepts would put Abraham right in the midst of unfriendly people.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Opposition to the Promises

So, Abraham's circumstances did nothing to encourage the fulfillment of the promises made to him in this summons. But as Scripture teaches repeatedly, circumstances are no match to God's promises. Every promise made to Abraham was victorious over the opposing circumstances. Now, that ought to lift our spirits and cause us to not let circumstances get us down when they seem so against the fulfillment of God's promises to us.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Fulfillment of the Promises

I want you to see some of the fulfillment of these promises. Why? They will help remind us of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises and help show us how wonderfully His promises are fulfilled even though circumstances seem to oppose their fulfillment.

The fulfillment of the first promise (*Abraham's seed would become a great nation*) is a matter of history and is going to be realized in an even greater way in the future. The greatness of

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Fulfillment of the Promises

Israel under the leadership of David and Solomon shows the fulfillment in the past of Israel being a great nation. When Christ comes back to sit on the throne of Israel in the millennium, the greatest fulfillment of this particular promise will occur.

To see the fulfillment of the second promise can be seen if you (*God would bless Abraham*), read a few chapters further in Genesis and you will see Abraham coming into great material prosperity; and the spiritual blessings which came to Abraham.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Fulfillment of the Promises

God truly fulfilled His promise about blessing Abraham.

The fulfillment of the third promise (*Abraham's name to be great*) is incontestable. For some four thousand years, the name of Abraham has stood above most names in terms of fame. Not only is his name revered by the Jewish people but he is also revered by many other people of the earth—from the followers of Mohammed to the followers of Christ.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Fulfillment of the Promises

The fourth promise (*Abraham would be a blessing to others*) like that of the second promise, begins to manifest fulfillment quickly in Scripture. Abraham's rescue of the inhabitants of Sodom is an excellent example of the fulfillment of that promise and is reported in Genesis 14. An important lesson we learn from this promise and fulfillment is that when God blesses us it is so we can bless others. God's blessings are not to be enjoyed selfishly, but they are to be used to bless others. "I will bless thee" is to be followed by "thou shalt be a blessing."

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Fulfillment of the Promises

The fifth and sixth promises (*bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee*) are two interrelated promises that mankind must not ignore, or they will miss great blessings and suffer great judgment. On the judgment side of the promise, Egypt, Babylon, Rome, and Germany are some of the well-known nations who were at one time great world powers but because of their mistreatment of the Jews were destroyed or became second-class nations.

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Fulfillment of the Promises

The seventh promise (*all the families of the earth to be blessed through Abraham*) has many fulfillments. The most important fulfillment is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the greatest fulfillments of this promise is the Bible. It is primarily a Jewish book. The Word of God was written by Jews with the exception of Luke (and some believe Luke was a Jew). A prominent Jewish scholar, Dr. S. Schechter, said, “Our great claim to the gratitude of mankind is that we gave the world the Word of God, the Bible.”

REVIEW **of the Summons**

The Fulfillment of the Promises

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