

ABRAHAM'S CALL WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROMISE

God's commands are not always accompanied by reasons, but always by promise, 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, spiritual; but a promise is practical, positive, literal. As a shell encloses a kernel, so do The Devine commands hide promises in their heart.

BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST	AND THIS IS THE PROMISE
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"	"And thou shalt be saved."
"Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor"	"Thou shalt have treasure in heaven."
Leave father and mother, houses and lands" Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7; Eph. 5:31	"Thou shalt have a hundredfold here, and everlasting life beyond."
"Be ye separate" 2 Chronicles 6:17	"I will receive you and be a Father to you."

THEREFORE, IN ABRAHAM'S CASE:

THOUGH THOU ART CHILDLESS, I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION.
THOUGH THOU ART THE YOUNGEST SON, I WILL BLESS THEE AND MAKE THY NAME GREAT.
THOUGH THOU ART TO BE TORN FROM THY OWN FAMILY, IN THEE SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD BE BLESSED!
<i>"And Each Of These Promises Have Been Literally Fulfilled!"</i>

It may seem that the hardships involved in the summons to exile are too great to be borne; yet study well the promise which is attached. And as the "city which hath foundations" looms on the view, it will dwarf the proportions of the Ur in which you have been content to spend your days; and you will rise to be gone from this place. Sometimes, therefore, it seems easier not to dwell on the sacrifice involved, but on the contents of the Divine and gracious promise, Bid people take; and they will give up of themselves. Let men find in Jesus the Living Water, and, like the woman of Samaria, they will leave their water pots. Fire the hearts of the young with all the beauty and blessedness of the service of Jesus; and they will not find it so hard to leave nets, fishing boats, and friends, to forsake all and follow Him.

"When it pleases God to reveal His Son in me...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

When the house is on fire, men are ready to throw everything out the window; and when the heart is full of God's true love, men are sure to count all else but worthless." (St. Frances de Sale)

THE JOURNEY BEGINS—"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: 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: and *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed* (Genesis 12: 1-3).

Note: Today the area of Mesopotamia is alive with legends concerning the life of Abraham. One, which supposedly answers the question, "Why did God cause Abraham to leave his country in the first place? Is the legend that Nimrod, whose kingdom began in Babel, hated passed through a half dozen military checkpoints, arriving at last in Ur, widely believed to be the birthplace of Abraham. He (tad) said he was utterly disappointed: Ur was dusty and forlorn, with no discernible pulse. The only visual point of reference was a pyramid-like brick tower, or ziggurat, built in tribute to Sin, the moon God, around 2100 b.c.

The ancient city covered about 120 acres. Founded about the 5th Millennium before Jesus. Ur was unearthed during the 1920's and 30's by an expedition under the British archaeologist Leonard Woolley. Along with

the ziggurat the team found royal tombs and the remains of houses on city streets, which Woolley gave such incongruous names as Church Lane and Paternoster Row. The Tombs held scores of stunning objects in gold, silver, and precious stones, confirming that Ur was at the heart of a rich and powerful civilization.

At the corner of Church Lane and Broad Street were the remains of the palace of Ur's glorious 3rd dynasty, which lasted from 2100 to 2000 b.c. In the pit were a square stone floor and partly restored walls—the ruins of one of the largest houses Woolley excavated in Ur—dating from between 2000 and 1595 b.c. Tad felt the remote possibility that Abram's family lived in this house. According to Piotr Michalowski, an authority on ancient Mesopotamia at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor,

In the third millennium, Ur was the metropolis of Mesopotamia—a port on the Euphrates very close to the Persian Gulf. The river brought rich alluvium down to Ur, creating a floodplain that gave generous sustenance to a population of around 12,000 at the city's peak around 2100 b.c. However, since then, the coastline retreated a hundred miles, leaving Ur behind—to the sands (desert).

According to Ted, the Mesopotamians have yielded thousands of clay tablets and cylinders chronicling life; Ur alone has yielded thousands of texts just from the third dynasty. Ur was a major commercial city—similar to Venice, Italy today.

Traffic in river vessels and cattle carts and donkey caravans linked Ur and Mesopotamia with present-day Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan, as well as with Syria, Israel, and Egypt. Date palms grew in the countryside, and irrigation canals from the Euphrates and the Tigris, which then flowed closer to the city, made farming possible: barley, lentils, onions, garlic. Sheep and goats supplied ghee and wool.