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Stephen Bugno

Leaving Ur

Genesis 11:26–Genesis 12:10



HITTITES

URARTU

UR OF THE CHALDEANS

YAMHAD

YAMINUM

SUTI

AKKAD

SUMER

GUTI

PATRIARCHAL JOURNEYS TO AND FROM HARRAN

- Place from which God calls Abraham
- ← Abraham migrates from Ur of the Chaldeans to Harran (North view)
- ← Abraham migrates from Ur of the Chaldeans to Harran (South view)
- ← Abraham migrates from Harran to the promised land (*Gen. 12:4ff*)
- ← Eliezer brings Rebekah from Paddan-Aram (Harran) to marry Isaac (*Gen. 24:50ff*)
- ← Jacob returns to Shechem from Paddan-Aram (Harran) (*Gen. 33:1ff*)

- ◆ Ur— An ancient Mesopotamian city first mentioned in the Bible in reference to Abraham's early life. The Bible mentions this Ur only four times (Genesis 11:28, 31; 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7). The majority view locates it in southern Mesopotamia, but a few scholars prefer a northern Mesopotamian location closer to the ancient city of Haran. The name Ur may derive from Akkadian *Uru* or Sumerian *Urim*. (*The Lexham Bible Dictionary*)

The well-preserved ruins of houses, temples, and a temple tower at Ur show life at the time of Abram. The city possessed an exceptionally high culture. Houses were well constructed, and usually two stories high. Rooms on the ground floor were grouped around a central courtyard, and a staircase led up to the second story. The city had an efficient sewage system. In the schools of Ur reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography were taught, as the many school exercises that have been recovered show. In the Bible this city is usually called “Ur of the Chaldees,” probably because the region of Ur was later inhabited by Aramaic Chaldean tribes and even possibly earlier. These tribes were closely related to the family of Terah, and both were descendants of Arphaxad, a son of Shem.

Sumerians

- ◆ Knew how to make bronze. They made wheeled vehicles and built dams, irrigation canals, and boats. They cultivated wheat, barley, and other cereals. They kept business accounts and created a system of marking time, using sixty second minutes and sixty minute hours. They divided the circle into 360 degrees and developed a wide range of mathematical applications, including addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, quadratic and cubic equations, fractions, and formulas for determining the circumference and area of geometric shapes. They established schools, built aquariums, and used legal precedents in deciding court cases. They developed the first known written language.

From Ur they traveled to:

- ◆ Haran
- ◆ Sichem
- ◆ Plain of Moreh
- ◆ East of Bethel
- ◆ Egypt because of a famine

Gudea Cylinders



Rama



Genealogy

- ◆ Shem . . .
- ◆ Nahor
- ◆ Terah
- ◆ Abram, Nahor, Haran
- ◆ Haran begat Lot
- ◆ Abram's wife Sarai
- ◆ Terah took Abram, Sarai, and Lot and departed from Ur of the Chaldees and went to Haran where Terah died. Nahor and his family also accompanied them as far as Haran.

After the dispersion from Babel idolatry again became well-nigh universal, and the Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while **He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future generations.** Abraham had grown up in the midst of superstition and heathenism. Even his father's household, by whom the knowledge of God had been preserved, were yielding to the seductive influences surrounding them, and they "served other gods" than Jehovah. But the true faith was not to become extinct. God has ever preserved a remnant to serve Him. (*PP* 125.1)

Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, in unbroken line, had preserved from age to age the precious revealings of His will. The son of Terah became the inheritor of this holy trust. Idolatry invited him on every side, but in vain. Faithful among the faithless, uncorrupted by the prevailing apostasy, he **steadfastly adhered to the worship of the one true God.** “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.” Psalm 145:18. He communicated His will to Abraham, and **gave him a distinct knowledge of the requirements of His law and of the salvation that would be accomplished through Christ.** (*PP* 125.1)

By faith Abraham, when he was **called** to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

(Hebrews 11:8–10)

The message of God came to Abraham, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.” In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham **must be separated from the associations of his early life**. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant. Now that Abraham was, in a special sense, connected with heaven, **he must dwell among strangers**. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. **He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends**. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and his motives and actions were not comprehended by his idolatrous **kindred**.

(PP 126.1)

- ◆ God communicated his will to Abram.
- ◆ He gave him a distinct knowledge of the requirements of his law.
- ◆ He gave him a distinct knowledge of the salvation that would be accomplished through Christ.
- ◆ He was a keeper of the sacred oracles.
- ◆ He must be separated from the associations of his early life, for the influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training the Lord wanted to give him.
- ◆ Therefore, he must dwell among strangers.
- ◆ His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world.

It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. **There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home.** But he did not hesitate to obey the call. He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise—whether the soil was fertile and the climate healthful; whether the country afforded agreeable surroundings and would afford opportunities for amassing wealth. God has spoken, and His servant must obey; **the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.** (*PP* 126.3)

We are called today.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying,
Come out of her, my people, that ye be not
partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of
her plagues. For her sins have reached unto
heaven, and God hath remembered her
iniquities. (Revelation 18:4–5)

Return, ye backsliding children, *and* I will heal
your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee;
for thou *art* the Lord our God. (Jeremiah 3:22)

That ye would walk worthy of God, who
hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.
(1 Thessalonians 2:12)

But *ye are* a chosen generation, a royal
priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;
that ye should shew forth the praises of him
who hath called you out of darkness into his
marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:9)

For we are labourers together with God: ye
are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.
(1 Corinthians 3:9)

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)

Many are still tested as was Abraham. They do not hear the voice of God speaking directly from the heavens, but He calls them by the **teachings of His word** and the **events of His providence**. They may be required to abandon a career that promises wealth and honor, to leave congenial and profitable associations and separate from kindred, to enter upon what appears to be only a path of self-denial, hardship, and sacrifice. God has a work for them to do; but a life of ease and the influence of friends and kindred would hinder the development of the very traits essential for its accomplishment. (*PP* 126.4)

He **calls** them away from human influences and aid, and leads them to feel the need of His help, and to depend upon Him alone, that He may reveal Himself to them. Who is ready at the call of Providence to renounce cherished plans and familiar associations? Who will accept new duties and enter untried fields, doing God's work with firm and willing heart, for Christ's sake counting his losses gain? He who will do this has the faith of Abraham, and will share with him that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," with which "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared." 2 Corinthians 4:17; Romans

8:18. (*PP* 126.4)

The call from heaven first came to Abraham while he dwelt in “Ur of the Chaldees” and in obedience to it he removed to Haran. Thus far his father’s family accompanied him, for **with their idolatry they united the worship of the true God**. Here Abraham remained till the death of Terah. But from his father’s grave the divine Voice bade him go forward. **His brother Nahor with his household clung to their home and their idols**. Besides **Sarah**, the wife of Abraham, **only Lot**, the son of Haran long since dead, **chose to share the patriarch’s, pilgrim life**. Yet it was a large company that set out from Mesopotamia. Abraham already possessed extensive flocks and herds, the riches of the East, and he was surrounded by a numerous body of servants and retainers. (*PP* 127.1)

Abraham's unquestioning obedience is one of the most striking evidences of faith to be found in all the Bible. (*PP* 126.2)

Many are still tested as was Abraham. They do not hear the voice of God speaking directly from the heavens, but He calls them by the teachings of His word and the events of His providence. They may be required to abandon a career that promises wealth and honor, to leave congenial and profitable associations and separate from kindred, to enter upon what appears to be only a path of self-denial, hardship, and sacrifice. God has a work for them to do; but a life of ease and the influence of friends and kindred would hinder the development of the very traits essential for its accomplishment. (*PP* 126.4)

The Lord selected Abraham to carry out his will. He was directed to leave his idolatrous nation, and separate from his kindred. **The Lord had revealed himself to Abraham in his youth, and gave him understanding, and preserved him from idolatry.** He designed to make him an example of faith, and true devotion, for his people who should afterward live upon the earth. His character was marked for integrity, generosity, and hospitality. He commanded respect as a mighty prince among the people. (*1SP 93.1*)

His reverence and love for God, and his strict obedience in performing his will, gained for him the respect of his servants and neighbors. His godly example and righteous course, united with his faithful instructions to his servants and all his household, led them to fear, love, and reverence, the God of Abraham. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and promised him that his seed should be like the stars of heaven for number. He also made known to him, through the figure of the horror of great darkness which came upon him, the long, servile bondage of his descendants in Egypt. (1SP 93.1)