

**ABRAHAM – .. “CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD” -
(HIS SECOND DIALOGUE WITH GOD) - GENESIS 12:4-9**

[12:4] So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. [5] Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. [6] Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem (shoulder, strength), as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh (instruction).

- This is more than just a record of what happened to Abram when he first entered the land. It is also a very accurate picture of the conditions of a Spirit-filled life.
- The first thing we are told is that Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. These names are most revealing. Shechem means "shoulder," and the shoulder is to the Hebrew a symbol of strength. We think of the shoulder of a mountain in the same way.
- The name Moreh means "instruction" and when we combine these two words, we get our first glimpse of what it is like in the land. Only as we are taught the Word of God by the Spirit of God do we find strength to live.
- *1Pe 2:2-3 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, [3] if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

And the Canaanites were then in the land.

- The second picture we have here is that life in the land is to be a life of constant conflict. We read, "At that time the Canaanites were in the land." These Canaanites were the pagan tribes which afflicted Israel all through their history. When Israel came back into the land after their stay in Egypt, God ordered the extermination of these tribes, but Israel failed to carry it through. Therefore, these people hounded and bothered and afflicted Israel as a thorn in their side the whole of their history. They are thus an accurate picture for us of those manifestations of evil we live with and continually wrestle against. They are named for us in the New Testament in many places: pride, arrogance, conceit, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, evil speaking, hateful and hating one another, etc. They are our daily enemies -- these manifestations of self which make our existence a life of continual conflict.

[7] Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

- Thirdly, it is also a life of continual cleansing,
- We think of an altar as a symbol of worship, which it is, but the essence of its meaning is that it is first a place of cleansing, which provides the basis for worship. The reason for a daily altar is the urgent need for cleansing in our lives. Every believer needs the cleansing of blood, the cross of Christ, to which he can come and judge ourselves as it exhibits itself in His life. So many Christians seem to feel they need the cross only at the beginning of their Christian life, but we need it every day, for it is the word of the cross which is the power of God in daily life. This is why Paul cries, *"I die daily"* (1 Cor. 15:31b). Therefore, this life of the Spirit's fullness must be a life of continual cleansing by the cross of Christ.

[8] And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel (house of God), and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai (ruin) on the east;

- The fourth point is that **this is a life of unending choice.** Abram pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai. Bethel means "the house of God," Ai means "ruin." **This is just where we must live the Christian life, ever looking either to the things of God, or to the ruin of the flesh.** We can **choose to go to Bethel or to Ai, to Christ or self -- it can never be both.** I am **either pleasing myself, or pleasing him.** I am either at Bethel, the house of God, or at Ai, the place of ruin. **I must continually choose.**

there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. [9] So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Abram pitched his tent

- The last characteristic is **represented by the tent.** What did Abram do when he got to the land? **He journeyed on! He never stopped for long.** He lived in a tent because he was a pilgrim in the land. He could never settle down; he could only sojourn for awhile. All through the New Testament **the Christian pilgrim is exhorted to walk in the Spirit. Walk, walk, walk!** When you have learned a lesson from God, that is not the end. That is just another step. Tomorrow there is another step to be taken, and another the day after that, and another the day following. How the flesh resents this. We are always delighted when the Spirit of God drives us to the place where we achieve some victory, overcome some habit, take some needed step. And then we want to settle down there. We say to the Lord, "You go on for a while and leave me here. I want to enjoy this for a bit." But he will not let us stop. **Life in the land is a life of continual progress, a never-ending journey.**
- Everyone is living in **one of three places -- Ur, Haran, or Canaan. Do you have dual or even a triple citizenship?**
- **Where do you live? What a question to search the heart!**
- **Ur is the land of death and darkness, the land into which we were born.**
- **Haran is the half-way house where we gain the outward appearance of being religious but where there is no inward reality.**
- **Canaan is the land of power and blessing, the place of the Spirit's fullness.**
- **Have you entered the land of power and blessing, the place of the Holy Spirit's fullness?**

Summary:

- **Abram passed through the land - Only as we are taught the Word of God by the Spirit of God do we find strength to live.**
- **A life of enemies, of constant conflict - pride, arrogance, conceit, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, evil speaking, hateful and hating one another, etc. They are our daily enemies.**
- **A life of continual cleansing, this life of the Spirit's fullness must be a life of continual cleansing by the cross of Christ.**
- **A life of unending choice.**
- **A life represented by the tent. The Christian pilgrim is exhorted to walk in the Spirit. Walk, walk, walk!**
- **Where do you reside? In Ur? In Haran? In Canaan?**
- **Have you entered the land of power and blessing, the place of the Holy Spirit's fullness?**