

The Broadmoor Bulletin

A Monthly Publication for the Christians at Broadmoor

June 2006

Abraham, the Friend of God

Ur, the City Abraham Left

Genesis 11:27 - 31 says that Abraham and his family left the city of Ur of the Chaldeans when they set out to go to Canaan. What type of city was Ur, and what type of character would Abraham have needed in order to remain true to God?

Ur enjoyed great prosperity and prominence among the city-states of ancient Sumer. Ur stood just south of Shinar and the Euphrates River. The land was very fertile and lush, and the people developed a very effective method of irrigation using canals. The Sumerians also developed and used an advanced written language and number system, and they were the first people to use the wheel. Many artisans in Ur were very talented, especially in metalworking and in fashioning figurines, statues, and idols. The craftsmen produced extremely detailed and fine works of gold, lapis lazuli, copper, and other metals and stones. The people of Ur traded goods with shipmen from Persia, allowing them to obtain materials not native to their region. Abraham would have faced many temptations similar to those present in today's prosperous America. As Luke 12:13 - 21 reminds us, we must be rich toward God and not focus on storing up earthly wealth (see also Ecclesiastes 5:10 - 17, 1 John 2:15 - 17, and Psalm 39:6).

In Ur, worship of the moon-god Nanna and his wife Ningal took the forefront in the lives of nearly every citizen. Worshipers paid homage to their city's gods at the ziggurat, an imposing temple structure (see picture on p. 3). Abraham might have faced much pressure to worship these false gods, but he chose to serve the one true God. Jeremiah 10:6 - 7a says "No one is like You, O Lord; You are great, and Your name is mighty in power. Who should not revere You, O King of Nations?" We must always remember that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13 - 14). It is wrong to serve anyone or anything like the nations served their idols. Jesus said to "seek first the kingdom of God" and not earthly things.

Finally, it would have been easy for Abraham to have become attached to the high quality of life in Ur. Yet there is no indication that he left his city reluctantly. It is our duty to always be ready to leave this earth (2 Peter 3:8 - 15 and Philippians 1:21 - 24). Life is short (1 Peter 1:24). We must all try with our full might to serve and please God (Philippians 3:10 - 14) while we are on the earth and look forward to the day when we are with Him in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1 - 10).

Adam Booher

He Looked for a City

God had a special purpose for Abraham, as evidenced by His covenant with him. He promised him a great nation, land and a seed (Gen. 12:1-9). Abraham, in turn, was a man of faith. He trusted God and believed his promises, even when the outcome looked bleak. By faith, Abraham heeded the call of God to leave his home and go to the Promised Land. Notice Abraham's faith as he searched for a city.

1. *He did not know where he was going, but he knew whom he served (Heb. 11:8).*

No one likes to be lost, which is why we often use maps and road signs. They are intended to keep us from taking a wrong turn. Abraham embarked on a journey without the normal preparation, unaware of his destination. Yet, he was not without direction. He relied upon the guidance of the Lord, completely trusting Him.

2. *As a pilgrim on this earth, he was a stranger to men, but he was called a friend of God (Heb. 11:9; James 2:23).*

A familiar saying states that there is no place like home, indicating a place of comfort and warmth. It is enjoyable to take a vacation, but it is always good to go back home. Abraham sacrificed his home because he believed the word of the Lord. Although he became an alien and a stranger in a foreign land, he was not alone. God was with him, providing him with everything that he needed.

3. *He lived in temporary structures, but he sought a city with foundations, built by God (Heb. 11:9-10).*

Tents are portable structures, intended to provide temporary shelter. They can easily be assembled and disassembled when traveling from place to place. Abraham lived a nomadic lifestyle, occupying tents with his family. He realized that living in tents was a temporary solution. They housed him while he was looking for a permanent dwelling, a city built by God.

Because of Abraham's faith, he made many sacrifices. He was willing to leave his home and undergo difficulties in order to receive the promises of God. He lived with a certainty and conviction that God would fulfill His word. Abraham died without receiving the promises, but God will still keep his word, rewarding Abraham and all those who seek Him with a heavenly city (Heb. 11:6).

Jeremy Sweets

It Was Credited to Him as Righteousness – Romans 4:3

The word translated “credited” in Romans 4:3 is a word that was commonly used in accounting. On the basis of Abraham’s faith, God considered Abraham to be righteous. Using the illustration of accounting, God recorded Abraham’s faith as credit for righteousness. How did God make this righteousness available to Abraham? In Romans 3:21 – 26 Paul tell us that God was able to be forbearing with the sins of Abraham and others who lived prior to Christ because of the sacrifice that Jesus made. Christ’s sacrifice paid the penalty for sin so that God could be just and still justify those who have faith. What can we learn from Abraham’s example of faith?

1. Abraham was willing to leave his home in Ur and his relatives when God called him even though he did not know where he was going (Hebrews 11:8, Acts 7:2 – 4). The gospel sometimes calls us to leave familiar areas, relationships, or practices. Are we willing to follow the call of the gospel even when we are not sure where it may lead us?

2. In Genesis 15:6, Abraham believed God’s promise regarding the multitude of his descendants even when he had no son. Faith is the conviction of things not seen. When we trust God, we have confidence that He will keep His promises even when we do not understand how He will do it. Abraham had to wait a long time to see God’s promise fulfilled. When Abraham was 85 years old, Sarah suggested that they help God fulfill His promise by having a child through Hagar. When Abraham was 100 years old, God fulfilled His covenant with Abraham by granting him a son through Sarah. We must be willing to wait on the Lord as Abraham did, even when it takes the Lord 15 years or more to fulfill His promise. Abraham did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith (Romans 4:20).

3. We cannot rush God. When Abraham listened to Sarah’s advice and tried to help God, he brought misery upon his immediate family and his descendants even to the present day. We must patiently wait on God’s timing. His vision is not limited by time as ours is. He knows what timing is best.

4. Abraham passed the test when God called him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. I am sure that this command made no sense to Abraham. Why should he slay his promised son when he had waited so long to receive him? Nevertheless, he submitted to God’s command, trusting that God knew what was best. He believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead if necessary in order to fulfill His promise. Are we willing to trust God when His commands do not make sense?

Gilbert Booher

Curt’s Corner Congregational Worship

Let Us Go to the House of the Lord

Congregational worship is the simultaneous expression of praise and devotion by those believers who have united together in their service of God. Individuals can and should worship the Creator and Sustainer in their daily lives, but there is something special when disciples join themselves together to offer the fruit of their lips to God.

Worship is directed toward God because of who He is and what He has done. But it is also true that congregational worship encourages those who offer their worship. The metaphors in scripture to describe the church (body, family, and temple) suggest that the togetherness of the church is important.

This fact raises the question we each must answer: how much encouragement do I give to others with whom I worship? My presence alone can be an encouragement, especially if others can depend on my presence even when it may not be convenient for me. The singing I do can be encouragement, especially if my singing reflects sincerity and zeal. But are these enough? Is it sufficient to simply sit by another in worship? Or can I do more to give encouragement to my brothers and sisters in the Lord?

As trivial as it may seem, a necessary precondition to my encouraging a brother or sister is to first *know* that brother or sister. So, if I may suggest, take time to get to know each of those who regularly assemble at Broadmoor. Use the time before and after services to spend *time* talking with others that you don’t know well. Only then will you be in a position to encourage. May we each do our part to *jointly* worship our Father.

Curtis Byers

The Value of a Smile

It costs nothing but creates much.

It enriches those who receive without impoverishing those who gave.

It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.

None are so rich that they can get along without it and none so poor but richer for its benefits.

It creates happiness in the home fosters good will in business.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen.

It is something that is no earthly good to anybody until it is given away.

If at times you meet someone who fails to give you a smile, may I ask that you give one of your own?

For nobody needs a smile as much as those who have none left to give.

What Holds First Place?

"Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:21,22).

God alone is to be worshiped, and we must make sure nothing else takes His place within our hearts. Surrounded with so many things that attract our devotion, it is not easy to love God with a pure, wholehearted devotion. But this is the very thing we must learn to do.

Even Abraham, the very father of the faithful, had to be taught to surrender his heart completely to God. As Isaac, the beloved son of Abraham's old age, began to mature, God saw that Abraham's attachment to Isaac was growing deeper by the day. Abraham needed to be tested. He needed to be taught that, if necessary, he could do without . . . yes, even Isaac, the dearest blessing he'd ever received from God. "Take now your son," God said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:2). Though his hand was stayed at the last moment from actually taking Isaac's life, the agony through which Abraham had passed to get to that point had taught him that none of God's gifts must ever be allowed to occupy the place in our hearts reserved for the Giver alone. Whatever we hold on to besides God must be held loosely.

As our Creator, God is unique. We have a need for Him unlike our need for any other thing that exists. He is the only being we have to have, the only thing we can't do without. We are to be inseparably devoted to Him alone; He is to be our only real "possession." All other things must be loved with a love we can let go of, and if our attachment to anything other than God is so strong that we can't let go of it, then that thing, whatever it is, has become an idol to us. Yet God loves us too much to leave us where we are. The "trials and tribulations" that break our hearts are often the providence through which God is teaching us that He is, in fact, the only One we can't do without. Although painful, this is the best thing that can happen to us.

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee" (William Cowper).

Gary Henry

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type. (Heb 11:17ff)

?? Did You Know??

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1. The Sumerians invented writing. Originally, they only had a system of pictographs, but later they developed it into a system of over 600 wedge-shaped marks called cuneiform.

1. The Sumerians also invented the wheel, the plow, and mathematics.

2. The Sumerians developed a number system, based on the number 60.

3. Abram means "father of height" or "exalted father", and Abraham means "father of a multitude".

Evan Booher