

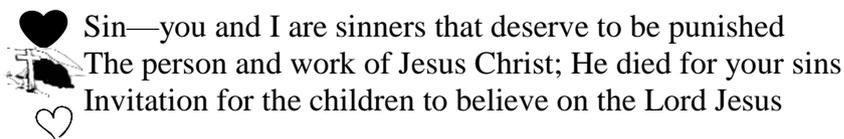
## Lesson One

### *The Call of Abram*

**Scriptures to Study:** Acts 7:2-4; Genesis 11:27-12:6; Gen. 15:7; Joshua 24:2; Nehemiah 9:7

**Lesson Aim for Unsaved Children:** That they would understand the Gospel and respond in saving faith (as Abram did).

Gospel truths for unsaved children are included in this lesson. Symbols are placed in the text and outline to show where the following truths can be taught:



**Lesson Aim for the Saved Children:** That they will understand the importance of knowing and obeying God's will for their lives. To emphasize this truth, a *main truth statement* has been included at appropriate places in the text for you to repeat, explain, and show how to apply. This statement is, **“You need to know and do God's will for your life.”** You are encouraged to say this exact sentence each time for emphasis and as a memorizing aid.

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 5:17

#### **Review Game Questions:**

1. Abram's city of Ur was located in what modern-day country? (*Iraq*)
2. What was the main false god the people of Ur worshipped? (*Nannar; the moon god*)
3. Who went with Abram on his long journey? (*Terah, his father; Sarai, his wife; and Lot, his nephew*)
4. Why did Abram need to leave his family and friends in Ur? (*Because they worshipped idols; they might influence him*)
5. What was Abram doing in Haran for those ten years? (*Witnessing and waiting for God to lead him*)
6. Who can say our memory verse from memory? (*Ephesians 5:17*)
7. Name and explain the three main promises God gave in His covenant with Abram. (*Land, descendants, and blessing*)
8. What was Abram's responsibility in this covenant with God? (*Trust and obey*)
9. How was Abram to be a blessing to others? (*Telling them of the one true God so they too could believe in and follow Him*)
10. Name one thing that is God's will for you to do. (*Answers will vary. You decide what's right*)
11. Ask a question from a song you sang today.
12. Ask a question from another song you sang today.

## Lesson One Outline The Call of Abram

### *Introduction:*

#### **Scene 1: Abram in Ur (Gen. 11:27-30; 15:7; Neh. 9:7; Acts 7:2-4; Joshua 24:2)**

1. Abram lived in the land of Ur
-  2. Abram was raised to worship idols (Josh. 24:2)

#### **Scene 2: God Calls Abram (Acts 7:2-3)**

1. The God of glory appears to Abram
- ➡ 2. Abram was told to separate from his country and relatives and go to a new land

#### **Scene 3: Abram Obeys God's Call (Acts 7:4a; Gen. 11:31; Heb. 11:8)**

1. Abram decides to leave Ur
- ➡ 2. Abram begins traveling to Haran

#### **Scene 4: Abram Lives in Haran (Gen. 11:31b)**

#### **Scene 5: God Calls Abram Again (Gen. 12:1-3)**

1. God calls Abram again
-  2. God makes a covenant with Abram

#### ➡ **Scene 6: Abram Moves into Canaan (Gen. 12:4-6)**

*Climax:* Abram travels to Shechem.

*Conclusion:* Abram builds an altar to Jehovah.

 *Invitation:* Galatians 3:26

➡ *Challenge:* Ephesians 5:17

## The Call of Abram

**Introduction:** How many of you have ever moved before? What was it like (discuss the things that make moving difficult or fun)? Did you realize that even in Bible times people moved? In today's lesson we're going to learn about one such man that God told to move to a whole new country.

### Scene 1: Abram in the Land of Ur (Gen. 11:27-30; Neh. 9:7; Josh. 24:2; Acts 7:2,4)

#### A. Abram lived in Ur

Many years ago (about 4,000 years ago)<sup>1</sup> there was a man named Abram who lived in the city of Ur [*show Ur on a map*]. Ur was close to what we call the Persian Gulf (in modern-day Iraq).<sup>2</sup> At Abram's time Ur seemed to be a very important seaport city,<sup>3</sup> which meant it was a very wealthy city. This made it one of the most important cities in that part of the world. It was also one of the biggest cities at that time, having a population of 300,000 to 360,000 people, and taking up some seven square kilometers of land (four square miles).<sup>4</sup>

Archaeologists (people who dig up and study remains of old cities like Ur) have been able to tell us a lot about what life would have been like for Abram. Many of the houses were two stories high. Perhaps Abram was like many of the other wealthy businessmen in Ur that lived in houses of twenty rooms or more and even had running water.<sup>5</sup> They have also found finely crafted jewelry, golden helmets and daggers, and beautifully carved musical instruments and furniture.

#### B. Abram was raised to worship idols

Although Abram must have enjoyed a very comfortable life with many beautiful things in his house, there was something in Ur that made God very, very unhappy. That something was idols. Idols are false gods that people pray to and worship (honor as a god). Many times they carved an idol from stone or wood. Sometimes they built a temple for the idol so that many people could gather to worship this false god. The people who lived in Ur and the other cities of Mesopotamia [*show map*] worshipped as many as 4,000 gods and goddesses.<sup>6</sup> They worshipped "Shamash" (the sun god); "Ishtar" (the goddess of love and war; "Adad" (the storm god) and many, many other gods. Each city chose a main god to honor and protect them. The main god of Ur was Nannar, the moon god.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, one of the greatest discoveries in Ur was a Ziggurat that was dedicated to the worship of Nannar. A Ziggurat is a large pyramid-like tower that had a wide stairway that wound around it all the way to the top. The Ziggurat in Ur was in the center of the city and was 50 meters wide and some seven stories high (22 meters).<sup>8</sup> Abram and everyone else in Ur would have seen this temple to Nannar wherever they were.

The Bible tells us that Terah, Abram's father, worshipped idols like Nannar (Joshua 24:2). This means that Abram would have been taught to worship them too as he was growing up in Ur. How sad!

God says that worshipping idols like Nannar is sin. Sin is anything that breaks God's commandments. The very first of the Ten Commandments says in Exodus 20:3:

"You shall have no other gods before Me."

*[Read this verse from your Bible, or have an older student ready to read it for the class]*



Ex.  
20:3

When Abram or anyone else prays to, honors, or worships anything but the one true living God, it is sin and must be punished. Maybe you don't worship a wooden, stone, or golden idol as Abram did, but some of you here today may be worshipping other kinds of idols. The Bible says that anything that you love or honor more than God is an idol. If you care more about your toys, clothes, friends, computer games, sports, or even studies more than God, then you are sinning. You are putting them above God in your life, and this makes God sad.

*[You may want to ask students what other things children their age honor more than God. Interactive learners like this kind of participation.]*

This makes Him sad because He will have to punish you for this and the other sins you do in your life unless you ask to be forgiven someday.

## Scene 2: God Calls Abram (Acts 7:2-3)

### A. The God of Glory appears to Abram

God knew that neither Nannar nor any of the other idols could help Abram to receive forgiveness of his sins. So one day the true God of glory appeared to Abram to show him what He was like. We don't know exactly how God appeared to Abram. Maybe it was in a dream . . . or maybe it was in the appearance of a bright light or thick cloud as He appeared to others in the Bible. But whatever way it was, Abram realized this God was different from all the idols he had been taught to worship. The name He used was Jehovah, the eternal, ever-living one. He alone is worthy of worship. He began showing Abram what He was like so Abram would put his faith in Him.

### B. Abram was told to separate from his country and people

This God, the one true and living God, told Abram to "Separate from your country and from your relatives and come to a land that I will show you" (Acts 7:3). This would not be an easy thing to do, but God had a special plan for Abram. He knew that Abram must separate himself from the place and people so involved in worshipping idols and the things that the true God created (like the sun and moon). In order to follow Jehovah, the God of glory, he would have to pack up and leave his neighbors and many family members.

Where was Abram supposed to go? God had told Abram to "come to a land that I will show you." In other words, God did not even tell Abram where he was supposed to end up living. That would take faith to leave his friends and family behind and follow a God he could not see to a place he didn't know about. But already he had come to realize that this God who had created him was wise enough and powerful enough to put his faith in. He knew now that the most important thing in life was to find out and do what the true God wants you to do. It is still the same today for you who have received a new life from God.

➡ **You need to know and do God's will for your life.** God has a plan for your life just like he had a plan for Abram. Once you find out the things He wants you to be doing, you have to choose whether you will obey or not. Abram now had to make that choice. Would he obey God's call to leave Ur and his loved ones behind, or would he choose to stay?

### Scene III: Abram Obeys God's Call (Acts 7:4a; Gen. 11:31; Heb. 11:8)

#### A. Abram decides to leave Ur

The Bible tells us that Abram “obeyed when he was called . . . not knowing where he was going” (Heb. 11:8). This obedience shows he had faith in this God since he did not know exactly where God wanted him to go or exactly what he would have to do. But he had learned enough about God to realize that he could trust Jehovah to take care of him. It was Abram’s job to trust and obey God. It was God’s job to show the way and provide for him. Abram now had to tell his family about the God of glory and what he had asked him to do. Perhaps some of them thought he was a little crazy for wanting to pack up and start moving to a new place that he didn’t even know where it was. But in the end, some of them decided to go with him. Terah his father, Sarai his wife, and Lot his nephew agreed to go too. It seems that they too were beginning to believe in the God of glory. Abram was now a source of blessing in their lives as they began believing in and following the God of Abram.

#### B. Abram travels to Harran

Abram wasn’t sure how long the trip would take so he had to sell his house, business, and other possessions and buy the supplies necessary for the trip. He could be traveling for weeks or months. He would have to buy plenty of food. What kind would he take?<sup>9</sup> Some of the foods eaten in Ur were:

- \*Fruits: Apples, apricots, dates, figs, peaches, pomegranates, mulberries, grapes, lemons, and raisins
- \*Vegetables: Beans, cabbage, chick peas, cucumbers, lentils, lettuce, onions, and peas
- \*Grain: Barley (the biggest crop in Ur), millet, rye, and wheat

*[Visual and tactile learners may enjoy seeing and handling any samples of the items mentioned.]*

For meats, Abram probably took flocks of sheep and goats, as well as cattle. Ducks and geese were also meats they could probably find along the way. Since they were beginning to travel next to the Euphrates River, they could have also eaten fish. It would take a lot of food to feed Terah, Abram, Sarai, Lot, and the other servants and guards helping them.

They traveled mile after mile. The road was dirty . . . rough . . . and long. Abram and his little caravan traveled about 700 miles from Ur before they stopped. This would have taken from six to eight weeks (large groups like this could only travel about 15 miles a day at the most).<sup>10</sup>

Life on this highway would have been much more difficult and dangerous than living in a house back in Ur. They would have had to look for enough grass for the animals to eat. They needed to find water to drink and set up tents every night while someone went to gather sticks for a fire to cook on. At sunrise everything had to be packed up to start another day’s travel. They would also have had to watch out for robbers. You can see that knowing and doing God’s will is not always easy. In fact, the devil will make sure there will be problems. He knows God’s will for your life is best, but he will try to turn you from it. ➡ You, as a Believer, must never forget that **the most important thing is to know and do the will of God for your life.** [*Say the memory verse together.*]

Maybe some of you are wondering just what God’s will for your life is. God’s Word, the Bible, tells us much of His will. One thing it says is that it’s His will that all men (boys and girls) get saved from their sins (1 Timothy 2:4). He wants you to believe that Jesus took the punishment for your sins and be saved this very day, if you haven’t already. And for those of you who have, He wants you to study His Word (2 Timothy 2:15) and tell others how they can be saved (Mark 16:15). Maybe He will even want some of

you one day to travel to other lands to tell others about Him. You too may have to face hardships and dangers. That's what He was having Abram to do. And He wants you to have faith in Him and His will for you—even when it's not easy. That's what Abram did.

#### **Scene 4: Abram Lives in Haran (Gen. 11:31).**

##### A. Abram lives and witnesses in Haran

At least Abram and his family arrived in a city named Haran [*locate it on the map*]. It is in the country we call Syria today. It was an important city for business as caravans passed through on their way to Egypt and Canaan, Babylon, Assyria, and Ur in the east. Even the name Haran means “road” or “caravan.”<sup>11</sup> We are not sure exactly why or how long Abram stopped in Haran. Maybe God was only giving Abram His will for his life one step at a time (as He often does with people today). Maybe God told him to stop there for a while, or perhaps his father, Terah, was getting too old or sick to travel. While he was in Haran, Abram was witnessing to others about the eternal Jehovah God that he was following. Others were beginning to believe in the God of Abram. Abram was being a true blessing while he waited for God to tell him to move on.<sup>12</sup>

##### B. Terah dies

The Bible says that after Terah died, God again called him to leave.

#### **Scene 5: God Calls Abram Again (Gen. 12:1-3)**

Then God came to Abram again and told him to leave and go to the place that He would show Him (Genesis 12:1). God went on to make a very special “covenant” to Abram. This covenant was an agreement between God and Abram. In it God made several promises to Abram and all his descendants (children and grandchildren born to Abram's family in the future). Look at these promises:

1. *God promised land.* God told Abram that He was going to give him the land in the place He was leading him to. Abram would not have to buy it from others, but God would give it to him.
2. *He promised descendants . . . or a great nation.* God told Abram that He was going to have a great nation of people. Even though he still had no children, God promised to give him a son who would have more sons and grandsons until they became a great nation of people.
3. *He promised blessings.* This meant that God would be doing many special things for Abram. He would be providing health, strength, safety in travel, and animals that could be used for food, clothing, and tents to live in. These also included spiritual blessings, such as God appearing to and talking with Abram and his descendants. They would also be the people God trusted with the job of writing down God's word so that other people could read, study, and obey it (Romans 3:2).

*He promised a great name.* God was going to make Abram an important man. Thousands of people all over the world would know about him. Even today, almost half of all the people in the world know about and honor him (including all Christians, Muslims, and Jews).

4. *God also promised that Abram would be a blessing.* This came both as a promise and a command. God would make Abram and his family a blessing to many others. In fact, He said “I will bless those who bless you and curse him who curses you.” This meant that God would bless other people who treated Abram and his family kindly. But for those who treated Abram or his descendants in a bad way, God would punish and oppose them.

Abram was also commanded to be a blessing to others. How could he do that? By telling them about the one true God that appeared to him. Most of the people living in Ur worshipped Nannar, the moon god, and other gods made of wood and stone. These gods could not save them. Neither could the false gods that the people in Haran worshipped (some of them worshipped Nannar too). Only one God can save, and that was the God of Abram. It was Abram's responsibility to tell the people about this God.

God pronounced that through Abram all families would be blessed. This means even you and your family can be blessed because of Abram and his family. How? Because from the nation that Abram started would come someone who would do something special for you that no one else could do. Do you know who that someone was? It was Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Matthew clearly shows us that Jesus was the great, great, great (many greats) grandson of Abraham (Matthew 1:1-11). And it was through Jesus that Abraham's family could be a blessing to all families, even yours.



1 Pet.  
2:24

It is important to remember that Jesus was no ordinary relative of Abram. He was God the Son, who had always lived in heaven. But at just the right time, He left heaven and took on the body of a baby. It was a miracle that Jesus, God the Son, "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Why did He become a man? Because as a perfect man, He was the only one who could pay for your sins and mine. The Bible says that Jesus "His own self bore our sins on the tree (cross)"—1 Peter 2:24. He bore our sins, not His own, for He had none. No one else could do that—only Jesus! Because He was God, death could not keep Him in the grave. He arose! He's alive today and wants to save you and everyone else from their sins. This is how He, as part of Abram's family, could bless all families who will believe in Him. This was all a part of the covenant (agreement) God made with Abram.

### Scene 6: Abram Moves to Canaan (Gen. 12:4-6)

What was Abram's part in this covenant? To believe and obey. The Bible does tell us that he did obey. It says Abram believed all that God told him, and he obeyed His command to travel again—to a land that God would show him. Abram is a good example for us. When he knew what God's will was for his life, he believed it and did it. **God wants each of you who have been saved from your sins to know and do His will for your life.** There are many things God wants every Christian to know and do. Psalm 119:11 says He wants each of you to memorize His Word so that you will not sin. Psalm 1:2 says he wants you to meditate or think on His Word throughout the day. That means thinking about what He wants you to do or understand from that verse. Psalm 37:4 says God wants you to delight yourself in Him. This means to find your joy in life by thinking about how great, loving, and kind He is to you. He also asks for you to obey Him, even when it's hard or when you don't understand all that is happening. **God wants you to know and do His will with all your heart each and every day.**

**Climax:** Abram, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, did pack up all their things again, along with some of the people who had believed in his God. They traveled from Haran into the land known as Canaan [*show on map*].

**Conclusion:** The first place he stopped was called Shechem. He built an altar there to the God of Glory that had led him on this long journey which had taken over 10 years. The sacrifice he made on the altar provided the payment for his sins. This was how to stay clean and pure for God at that time, as well as give praise to God.

♡ **Invitation:** Perhaps God is calling some of you today to leave your sins and idols and believe on Him, as Abram did. He has many blessings He wants to give you too, but first you must become part of God's family. It's your sin that keeps you out. Are you willing to admit to God that you have sinned? Are you willing to believe that Jesus came to earth to die for your sin? Will you choose, by faith, to let God save you today? The Bible says, "You are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). Have you ever put your faith in Jesus—in what He did for you on the cross? Have you ever asked Him to make you His child? If not, would you like to do it today? If you would like to do this, we will all bow our heads and you pray in your heart (not out loud) something like this:

"Dear God, I know I have sinned and I realize I must be punished for these sins. I do believe Jesus died for me—to take the punishment for my sins. I do want you to forgive me and make me your child today. Amen."

If you just prayed that prayer, or if you want to talk more about becoming part of God's family, please meet me in the front of the class. This is the first step to take in knowing and doing God's will for your life.

➡ **Challenge:** If you have already become part of God's family, **it is important that you know and do God's will for your life.** As Ephesians 5:17 says, "Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." The Bible is the best place to find out what God's will for your life is. For example, [*can have older ones read verses*]:

\*Exodus 20:3 helps you know you should not worship other (false) gods.

\*Ephesians 4:28 helps you know whether or not you should steal.

\*Matthew 5:44 helps you know what to do to your enemies.

\*Psalm 119:11 helps you know how to avoid sinning.

He also helps you to understand His will for your life each day through the advice of other strong Believers and through praying each day. When you are faithful in doing the things He has told you to do in His Word, then you can trust Him to guide and show you what to do about things not written in the Bible, like which college to go to, or who to marry. Are you willing to try to find out and do God's will for your life? If so, begin by asking God each day to help you know and do what He wants you to that day. And then look for ways all that day to do what you know the Bible tells you to do. I am going to give you a bookmark to put in your Bibles this week. There is a special verse written for each day in the week. These verses will tell you what God's will for you is. After reading the verse, pray and ask God to help you see ways of applying that verse in your life that day. **God wants you to know and do His will for your life each day.** Will you? Next week you can show the class some of the things you did to apply these verses.



**God wants you to know  
and do His will for  
your life!**

**1 Thessalonians 5:18**

**Hebrews 13:17**

**1 Timothy 2:1-4**

**Ephesians 4:1-3**

**Ephesians 5:10**

**1 Peter 1:15,16**

**Galatians 6:2**

<sup>1</sup> There are about three major opinions among biblical scholars concerning the dating of Abram, varying from 1300 to 2100 B.C. The date that seems to follow the biblical chronological data given puts his birth at about 2165 B.C. For a more detailed discussion see John J. Davis, Paradise to Prison (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), pp. 156-160 or Alfred J. Hoerth, Archaeology and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), pp. 57-59.

<sup>2</sup> There have been two different locations suggested for Abram's "Ur." One tradition equates it with "Urfa" in modern day Syria, some 20 miles northwest of Haran. But the Bible further specifies it as "Ur of the Chaldees" in several places (Acts 7:2-4; Gen. 15:7; Neh. 9:7). The land of the Chaldeans is clearly documented in history as Babylonian (modern Iraq), not Syria. See Francis Steele, "Ur," in Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II; Charles Pfeiffer, Howard Vos, and John Rea editors (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), pp. 1758-60.

<sup>3</sup> Ancient texts have been found that state a son of the founding king of the reigning dynasty of Ur during Abram's time "took very good care of the town of Eridu (near Ur) which is on the seashore." See James Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> See Steele, p. 1759 and Merrill F. Unger, "Ur of the Chaldees," in The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, edited by R.K. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), p. 1321.

<sup>5</sup> Leslie Madison, Abraham's Tests of Faith (Saint Louis, MO: Bible Memory Association, 1982), p. 11. See also Hoerth's excellent description of houses of that time period, Archaeology and the Old Testament, pp. 60-61.

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<sup>6</sup> Hoerth, p. 66.

<sup>7</sup> For a listing of the main deities of Mesopotamia see F.A.M. Wiggermann, "Theologies, Priests, and Worship in Ancient Mesopotamia," in Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, Vols. III and IV, edited by Jack M. Sasson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995), p. 1860. It should be noted that "Nannar" is sometimes written as "Nana" or "Nanna," and was also referred to as "Sin" in Sumerian cuneiform texts.

<sup>8</sup> E.M. Blaiklock, "Ziggurat" in The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology, edited by E.M. Blaiklock and R.K. Harrison (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), p. 484.

<sup>9</sup> The list of foods are from Hoerth, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> Hoerth, p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Gundry, "Haran," in Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. I, edited by Charles Pfeiffer, Howard Vos, and John Rea (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), p. 753.

<sup>12</sup> We know this from Genesis 12:5. The Hebrew word translated "people" in Genesis 12:5 as "nepes" could more literally be translated "souls". I agree with Ross who points out that this "probably does not refer to the acquisition of slaves, for the Hebrew word "nepes" would not likely be used for that. And it certainly does not refer to their children because Sarai was barren until Isaac's birth (21:1-7). Cassuto argues that this expression probably refers to proselytes. . . . The narrative implies that, already in Haran, Abram had been sharing his faith in the Lord. See Allen P. Ross, Creation and Blessing (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 265.