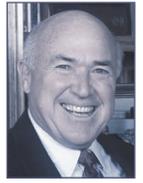


# THE LOOK OF FAITH

## SIMPLY TEACHING THE WORD SIMPLY—PASTOR CHUCK SMITH

This article was edited by permission and taken from the book *Faith* by the late Pastor Chuck Smith of CC Costa Mesa, CA.



### ABRAHAM: Man of Faith

... *Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

2 PETER 3:18a

Some of us might tend to think, “If only I had the faith of Abraham, I’d have instant spiritual success.” What we’re forgetting is that Abraham’s faith grew through a prolonged fellowship with God. It didn’t happen right away or overnight. It was only as he got to know God better that Abraham’s faith expanded and developed.

### Leaving Home

At the time God first called Abram, his father, Terah, was an idolater. Although God had instructed Abram to separate from his relatives and leave Ur of the Chaldeans, Abram ended up traveling only as far as Haran with his father and his nephew, Lot. Abram did not totally obey the command of God.

The text tells us that Abram and his family acquired many servants and goods while living in Haran, suggesting that they enjoyed a time of prosperity. Perhaps that’s why Terah, whose name means “delay,” wanted to linger there. Abram delayed in Haran until he reached the age of 75. Even though the Lord had clearly told Abram, “*Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you*” (Acts 7:2-4), Abram didn’t finish the journey that God had commanded him until Terah died. Only then did Abram begin searching for a city whose foundation and maker and builder was God (Hebrews 11:10).

It’s amazing when you stop to think that Abraham took that first step without knowing his destination. Faith enabled Abraham to begin that journey, and faith sustained him along the way.

Abram traveled about 450 miles from Haran until he came to Canaan, the future land of Israel. By faith, he lived in that land—but always in a tent. He never built a home. Abram lived as a stranger and a sojourner in the land all the while still believing the

promise of God: “This is the land that God will give to my descendants.”

Of course, the Lord had something much bigger in mind for Abram than just a guarantee of land. He promised, “*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.*”

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How would God make Abram a “blessing”? He said, “*In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (Genesis 12:2,3b). This blessing was to come upon all the families of the earth—a clear prophecy of the Messiah. It is through Abraham’s seed, Jesus Christ, that the blessing of God has come upon all of us.

### One Step After Another

The Lord appeared to Abram several times as recorded in the book of Genesis. Each appearance drew Abraham a little deeper into communion and fellowship with God.

The first appearance occurred in Babylon when God said to Abram, “Get out of this place.” God caused Abram to become discontent so that he might search out another place to worship God. The Lord did not appear again to Abram until he entered the land of Canaan. His disobedience stalled the work of God in his life.

God leads us a step at a time. I would appreciate it if God told me exactly what He has in mind for me by the end of the year. If I knew only a little further in advance, I could

plan accordingly—but God gives you and me only one step at a time. And He won’t give us the next step until we take the first. A genuine walk of faith always comes one step at a time—a lesson Abram had to learn.

When God gave Abram instructions to move away from Babylon, the Lord did not appear to Abram again until he reached the land to which God had called him. How many months or years had elapsed by then? We don’t know. But in Canaan, Abram had finally reached the place where God could give him the next step.

“... *To your descendants I will give this land*” (Genesis 12:7a). Abram hadn’t known where God was leading him when he left Babylon. But in time he discovered God’s chosen place for him.

Abram happily remained in Canaan until a severe drought hit the region, then his faith wavered and he started weighing his options. Thinking that he could take better care of his family in Egypt, he hightailed it there. This was yet another misstep of faith. Disaster awaited him in Egypt: fear, lies, rebuke, and deportation. At the close of this sad affair, Abram returned to Bethel, “... *where his tent had been at the beginning*” (Genesis 13:3a). The name Bethel means “the house of God.” Abram came back to the place where God had last appeared to him, back to where he had built an altar to the Lord.

Abram’s choice, Egypt, had proven to be a time of spiritual barrenness. A lack of faith led Abram to turn to a pagan nation for help, instead of depending upon God to supply his needs in Canaan. His Egyptian adventure caused him not only physical problems, but also spiritual ones. So Abram returned to Canaan, the Land of Promise, and called upon the Lord once more at Bethel.

It’s always good to return to that place where you first met God. Blessings await you there. Returning to your spiritual roots has a way of getting you back on track with the Lord that you might resume your walk of faith. 