

GENESIS

Lesson 24

Abram in Canaan

"⁵He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. ⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷The Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. ⁹Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev." Genesis 12:5-9 [NIV]

In this lesson, we continue our study of Abram's trip from Harran down into the land of Canaan. As you will recall from the previous lesson, Abram is leading a sizeable group in to Canaan, and among his family were Sarai and Lot. Considering "all the possessions they had accumulated," and the livestock, it would have been quite the trip! He would have been responsible for ensuring that there was adequate water and grazing land during the course of his following the path that God was leading him on. The text above records some of his stops as he traveled through Canaan from north to south all the way down to the Negev. This journey would have led him through the Judean highlands which parallel the Jordan river on one side and the Mediterranean on the other.

Shechem and the Great Tree of Moreh

One of the first landmarks identified is "the great tree of Moreh at Shechem." Located on what we know today as the West Bank area in central Israel, Shechem is sited in a pass between two mountains, Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Here, in the north central part of Canaan, which would eventually become the Holy Land, God makes Abram a great promise.

1. What was this promise that God gave Abram?
2. For Abram, what would have been the unusual nature of this promise? (See Genesis 11:30.)
3. What was Abram's response to this astonishing promise?

There is a great lesson here: when we follow God, it should be without question.

4. What does Numbers 23:19 tell us about God and His promises?
5. Read Genesis 28:16-19 and note what else is significant about Shechem.

As we will be able to observe throughout the lives of Abraham and his descendants, this promise, first made at Shechem, is a promise that they all believed—the fulfillment of which they looked forward to and did not question. We should have that same faith. God promised a savior, His only son Jesus, and we believe that without question. We believe that Jesus came, died, and rose again to atone for our sins, and we look forward to the day he returns again.

Shechem will be important to the descendants of Abraham.

6. What is significant about Shechem in the following verses?
 - a. Joshua 24:1-16

 - b. Joshua 24:26-28

 - c. Joshua 24:32

From Shechem Abram travels to Bethel.

Bethel: The House of God

Bethel was located eleven miles north of Jerusalem, near Ai. It was a crossroads location where trade routes ran from Jericho to the Mediterranean Sea in the east-west direction, and they ran from Shechem to Hebron in the north-south direction.

7. As described in Genesis 13:3-9, the locations of Bethel and Ai become a major decision point. What happened?

The Negev

From Bethel, Abram continued traveling south headed for the Negev, a semi-arid region in the southern end of Canaan.

8. As recounted in Genesis 12:10, what happened when Abram arrived in the Negev with all of his family, servants and livestock?

At first it may seem strange that Abram would head south into the Negev, already a semi-desert area, but we need to remember two things: (1) Abram had never traveled through the land of Canaan before and perhaps was unaware of the famine conditions there, and (2) God was leading him, so Abram went wherever God led him without question.

Just as Abram did, we should also be walking in faith, following God one day at a time. He was a man of faith who still demonstrates to us today what it means to have faith in God and to follow only Him.

Let's challenge ourselves this week to seek out God and his leading in all that we do.

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:17 [NIV]

In the next lesson, Abram, his family, his servants, and his livestock enter Egypt.

Have a great week everyone!

In Christ,

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